
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Gender, Politics and War in Disney's *Frozen* Film Series

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ABSTRACT

Ever since its release in 2013, Disney's *Frozen* has been watched and beloved by both children and adults in the world. The film caused worldwide sensation and has been commercially successful, and hence, Disney decided to create *Frozen* film series. The purpose of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of Disney's *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) from interdisciplinary perspectives by investigating the connotation of feminism and political correctness. From the viewpoint of "gender representation", how are main female characters in the *Frozen* film series depicted? What is the difference between the image of princesses in the *Frozen* film series and that of princesses in former Disney movies? How did Disney attempt to reflect the idea of "political correctness" as well as the perspective of "war and peace" in the *Frozen* film series? With a view to exploring answers to these research questions, this article conducts a content analysis of Disney's *Frozen* film series from the interdisciplinary viewpoints, especially from the perspectives of gender representation, political correctness, as well as war and peace.

KEYWORDS

Feminism, gender representation, LGBTQ, political correctness, *Frozen*, *Frozen II*, war and peace

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1. Introduction

Frozen (2013) is an adventure musical fantasy film, created and produced at Walt Disney Animation Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures (hereinafter, referred to as Disney) (IMDb, 1990-2025a). *Frozen* was inspired by an internationally famous fairytale, *The Snow Queen*, published by Hans Christian Andersen in 1844 (Disney Fandom, 2025), and it would be more accurate to consider that the film is "loosely" based on the Andersen fairytale, because the storyline was changed "dramatically". Incidentally, Andersen's fairytales placed a considerable influence and impact on Russian readers and the media culture in Russia (Jessen, et. al, 2020), and an animated musical fantasy film, *The Snow Queen*, was released in the Soviet Union in 1957 (Soviet Cartoons, 2025). Based on Andersen's original fairytale and the 1957 film, *The Snow Queen* (2012), was produced as an animated fantasy adventure film in Russia (IMDb, 1990-2025d). *Frozen* is different from the Russian version, and main characters in the Disney version are Anna and Elsa unlike Gerda and Kai in *The Snow Queen* (Lowman, 2017).

Ever since its release in 2013 (IMDb, 2025), Disney's *Frozen* has been watched and beloved by both male and female audiences from children to adults in the world (Butler, 2016). Notably, *Frozen* was reviewed in *The Guardian* that "Disney's latest is a big-hearted charmer of a family film with terrific musical numbers" (Bradshaw, 2013). It was nominated for several awards including Golden Globes 2014 (USA Today, 2014), Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song ("Let It Go") (Hollywood Reporter, 2014), Annie Awards (Los Angeles Times, 2014), and Grammy Awards (Morris, 2014). Since *Frozen* became globally popular and commercially successful, *Olaf's Frozen Adventure* (2017) and *Frozen II* (2019) were produced by Disney. *Olaf's Frozen Adventure* is a Christmas-themed spin-off story in which Olaf (snow man) is a main character (IMDb, 1990-2025e). In *Frozen II*, main characters of *Frozen* leave Arendelle to an ancient forest of an enchanted land where they found the origin of Elsa's magical

power (IMDb, 1990–2025b). Since the *Frozen* film series have been profitable and successful, Disney reportedly decided to produce *Frozen III* to be released in 2027 (IMDb, 1990–2025c).

Globally, the box office of *Frozen* (2013) including re-release amounted to 1,310,333,380 U.S. dollars, whereas it reached 249,036,646 dollars in Japan (Box Office Mojo, 2025a). The box office of *Frozen II* (2019), however, ended up with 1,450,026,933 U.S. dollars worldwide (Box Office Mojo, 2025b). In Japan, Disney's *Frozen* and *Frozen II* have been broadcast on "Friday Road Show" by Nippon Television Network Corporation on November 29 and December 6, 2024 respectively. On December 13, 2024, *Olaf's Frozen Adventure* was broadcast on Friday Road Show for the first time, achieving high audience rating as well (Nippon Television Network Corporation, 2024). The *Frozen* film series have been influential in Japan and the world, and not only children but also adults enjoy cosplaying as Anna and Elsa, representing the influence of the *Frozen* film series in the entertainment and media culture in Japan (Oricon News, 2019). Implications of Disney's *Frozen* film series for popular culture in Japan have been profound, and now guests of Tokyo Disney Resort can experience the world of the *Frozen* film series in a new attraction, "Anna and Elsa's Frozen Journey", at Fantasy Springs opened June 6, 2024 (Tokyo Disney Resort, 2024).

Academically, there are a large number of academic publications on Disney's *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) examined by international scholars with different research expertise (Alsaraireh, et. al, 2020; and Rogers, 2019). Earlier research tended to investigate the connection between Andersen's fairytales and Disney's *Frozen* by conducting a comparative analysis from the perspective of gender studies (Llompert and Brugué, 2020). According to some earlier research, it has been pointed out that Disney's *Frozen* was inspired not only by *The Snow Queen* (1844), but also by two other Andersen fairytales, *The Ice-Maiden* (1861) as well as *The Snow Man* (1861) (Ishii, 2020). Other researchers have focused on "gender representation" depicted in *Frozen* in the light of feminism and gender studies (Wu, 2020). However, it is also critical to conduct a "content analysis" of the *Frozen* film series from the perspective of "political correctness" as it can be perceived as key animation philosophy of Disney in recent years (Akimoto, 2025). Although Disney itself does not declare that it has adopted political correctness as business philosophy, it has supported "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) as a key policy of the company (King, 2025). Given the congruousness of political correctness and DEI, it is logical to contend that Disney has facilitated political correctness as part of its DEI policy.

Table 1: Chronology of Disney Princess Films from *Snow White* (1939) to *Frozen* (2013)

Name of Film	Year	Name of Princess	Gender Representation
<i>Snow White</i>	1939	Snow White	Being saved by a prince
<i>Cinderella</i>	1950	Cinderella	Being saved by a prince
<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	1959	Aurora	Being saved by a prince
<i>Little Mermaid</i>	1989	Ariel	Saves and chases a prince
<i>Beauty & the Beast</i>	1991	Belle	Saves a prince and loves him gradually
<i>Aladdin</i>	1992	Jasmine	Not interested in arranged marriages
<i>Tangled</i>	2010	Rapunzel	Saves a male protagonist with magic
<i>Frozen</i>	2013	Anna	Prioritizes her sister over a prince
		Elsa	Shows no romantic interest in a prince

Note: Created by the author based on the Disney princess films.

In other words, earlier research tended to overlook the influence of "political correctness" on the *Frozen* film series, and this is a so-called "research gap" in this case study. Keeping this research gap in mind, the purpose of this article is to examine Disney's *Frozen* film series from the interdisciplinary perspectives by investigating the influence of feminism and political correctness. As examined by Stephen Langston, a senior lecturer at the University of the West of Scotland, both Anna and Elsa prioritize sisterhood or "sisterly bonds" over heterosexual romance (Langston, 2023), unlike previous Disney princesses who tend to be preoccupied by heterosexual romance as shown in Table 1. From the viewpoint of gender representation, how are main characters in the films depicted? What is the difference between the image of princesses in *Frozen* film series and that of princesses in former Disney movies? How did Disney attempt to reflect the idea of political correctness in the *Frozen* film series? With a view to exploring answers to these research questions, this article conducts a content analysis of the *Frozen* film series from the interdisciplinary viewpoints, especially from the perspectives of gender representation, political correctness, and war and peace.

2. Literature Review: Earlier Research on Disney Princess Films

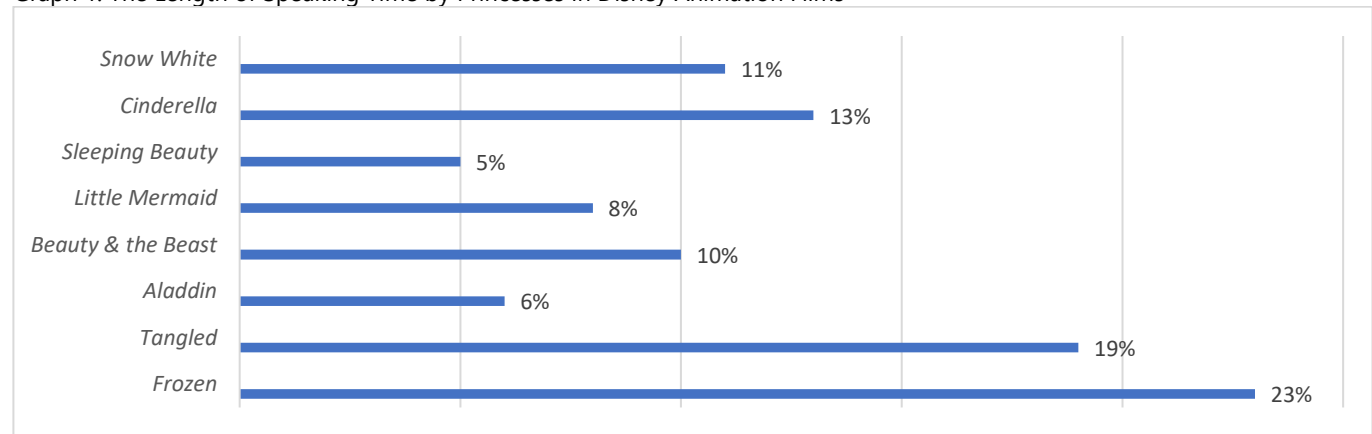
As one of the earlier studies, Chris Pallant, a senior lecturer in film and digital media at Canterbury Christ Church University, analyzed Disney's contribution to the development of animation technology and practice in terms of "Classic Disney", "Disney

Renaissance”, and “New-Disney” periods. It also added an analysis of the Disney-Pixar relationship (Pallant, 2011). Another earlier research categorized Disney princess films into three waves, and investigated the three waves of Disney princess films (Wenzel, 2014). Wenzel conducted a comparative analysis of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) as the first wave, *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) as the second wave, and *Frozen* (2013) as the third wave (Ibid). Robyn Muir, a lecturer of media and communication at the University of Surrey, conducted a critical analysis of Disney princesses from the perspective of gender studies as a “feminist analysis” (Muir, 2023). She observed Disney princesses as a cultural phenomenon by examining 16 Disney princesses from *Snow White* to *Moana* in terms of the five waves in Disney princess films (Ibid).

In Japan, Yumiko Kamise and Yuko Sasaki conducted a quantitative analysis of Disney princess movies in terms of “gender role transition” (Kamise and Sasaki. 2016: 18). Kamise and Sasaki focused on the length of speaking time by Disney princesses in the animation films. According to their research, the length of talking time of *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, and *Aurora*, are respectively, 11 percent, 13 percent, and 5 percent in the animated movies. Interestingly, it turned out that the length of speaking time by Disney princesses in the first wave are longer than those of princesses of the Disney Renaissance in the second wave, i.e. *Ariel* (8 percent), *Belle* (10 percent), and *Jasmine* (6 percent). In the third wave, however, the length of talking time by Disney princesses became longer than the princesses in the previous waves. Indeed, the length of speaking time by *Rapunzel* is 19 percent, whereas the that of *Anna* and *Elsa* is respectively, 16 percent and 7 percent, amounting to 23 percent altogether, as shown in Graph 1 (Ibid).

The data in Graph 1 indicates that the length of talking time by *Anna* and *Elsa* in *Frozen* surpassed that of the previous Disney princesses. It is comprehensible because there are two princesses in *Frozen*, whereas there is only one princess in other Disney princess films. It simply shows that the gender roles of the two sister princesses in the film became more central and critical in comparison with the other previous Disney princesses. *Aurora* in *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) falls asleep and *Ariel* in *Little Mermaid* (1989) becomes speechless, and it is natural for these two female characters do not talk as opposed to other Disney princesses. In *Aladdin* (1992), Princess *Jasmine* is not a protagonist, and therefore, it is understandable for *Aladdin* to talk longer than *Jasmine* in the animated film. In comparison with the previous films, gender role and gender representation of *Anna* and *Elsa* in the *Frozen* film series are of significance as a research case in the study of Disney princesses in the light of feminism and political correctness. The gender representation visualized in the *Frozen* film series have influenced a variety of novelized versions as well (Mancusi and Lee, 2020), and it suggests that it is necessary to academically examine the *Frozen* film series with a certain analytical framework.

Graph 1: The Length of Speaking Time by Princesses in Disney Animation Films



Note: *Frozen* (2013) includes the time of talks by both *Anna* and *Elsa* (Kamise and Sasaki, 2016: 18).

3. Interdisciplinary Frameworks: Gender, Political Correctness, War and Peace

As a research method, this article is primarily based on a “qualitative data analysis”, such as a “content analysis, thematic analysis, textual analysis, and discourse analysis” (Bhandari, 2025), rather than a “quantitative data analysis” especially in application of statistics, which is also effective approach in the study of the social sciences (Maxim, 1999). Academically, a content analysis is defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004: 18). Here, films and film reviews on media could be regarded as “other meaningful matter” in the content analysis as a qualitative data analysis approach. Some earlier studies conducted a “speech act analysis” on *Frozen* as a case study of qualitative analysis in terms of linguistics (Widayanti and Kustinah, 2018). In earlier research, for example, a content analysis has been applied to the study of children’s animation film characters by paying attention to gender stereotypes (González, et. al., 2020). Understandably, some earlier studies conducted a content analysis of Disney animation films (Lavoie, 2008), and there exists some previous research on Disney animation film *Frozen* (2013) from the perspective of hegemony (Arnold, et. al., 2015), gender

representation (Rudloff, 2016), and gender sensitive messages (Mujam, et. al., 2016). Hence, it is possible to conduct a content analysis of Disney's *Frozen* film series as a case study in academic research. As a research approach of the content analysis, this research mainly focuses on "secondary sources", such as books, journal articles, and film reviews (Harvard Library, 2025a), rather than conversation or songs by main characters in the *Frozen* film series as "primary sources" (Harvard Library, 2025b).

In addition to the content analysis approach, a critical discourse analysis has been applied to the study of Disney animation films. In particular, some researchers shed light on the content analysis of Disney's animated film *Frozen* in terms of gender representation as a case study (Alsaraireh, et. al., 2020). Notably, Anna S. Rogers, a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Georgia, paid attention to "ambiguous sexual identities" and pointed out that a "new stereotype" of Disney princesses can be seen in the 2013 animated film, *Frozen*. The new gender stereotype depicts "a princess who thinks that she is independent, but who often still needs to rely on a man who will point her lack of autonomy out to her" (Rogers, 2019: 24). Obviously, the critical discourse analysis is an important research method to analyze Disney animation films including *Frozen* film series as demonstrated in earlier studies. Yet, it is also possible to examine not only "gender representation" but also "political correctness" portrayed in Disney animation films, including the *Frozen* film series.

As an analytical framework, gender representation in Disney animation films can be examined by applying a "feminist critical discourse analysis" (Lazar, 2007), whilst paying attention to gender role of Disney princesses in the light of LGBTQ. Indeed, the *Frozen* film series can be investigated from the perspective of "feminism", which is defined in *Cambridge Dictionary* as a "belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men, and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025a). Albeit the definition inevitably differs from researchers to researchers, there are several variants of feminism, such as "liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, radical feminism, ecofeminism, cultural feminism, black feminism, and postmodern feminism", etc. (Mohajan, 2022: 4). In the light of feminism, *Frozen* can be categorized as a feminist film and Elsa has feminist elements, because "she is strong, independent and doesn't allow any man to help her thanks to her ice powers" (Kelly, 2019).

Historically, there are four waves of feminism as a political movement in pursue of empowerment of women. The first wave feminism (1848-1920) pursued the political rights of women in the United Kingdom and the United States in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. The second wave of feminism (1960s-1980s) attempted to achieve the rights of African American women as part of women empowerment. The third wave feminism (1990s-2008) addressed the issues of sexual harassment and gender inequity while fighting against backlash of anti-feminism. The fourth wave feminism (2008 to the present) is also called "online feminism", because the movement has been based on SNS to stand up against sexual harassment and sexual violence, best exemplified in so-called "Me Too" campaign (Kakroda, 2023). Through a lens of feminism, therefore, Disney's *Frozen* film series can be categorized as the fourth wave feminism (Wang, 2025).

Similarly, the *Frozen* film series can be analyzed by utilizing "political correctness" as another analytical framework, which is defined as "the act of avoiding language and actions that could be offensive to others, especially those relating to sex, gender, and race" in *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025b). Meanwhile, it also defined as "language that seems intended to give the least amount of offense, especially when describing groups identified by external markers such as race, gender, culture, or sexual orientation" in *Britanica* (Roper, 2025). It is also necessary to keep in mind that the concept of political correctness gives rise to a various types of controversies as reviewed in *Harvard Business Review* (Ely, et. al., 2006). As Paul Krugman observed, people tend to associate political correctness with the argument by the left-wing, but there has existed so-called "right-wing political correctness" (Krugman, 2012). Krugman argued that "the big threat to our discourse is right-wing political correctness, which - unlike the liberal version - has lots of power and money behind it... to make it impossible to talk, and possibly even think, about ideas that challenge the established order" (Ibid). The left-wing observers tend to analyze social and political issues related to race, ethnicity, and environment, but "even talking about 'immigration and ethnicity' or 'environmental history' becomes part of a left-wing conspiracy" for supporters of the right-wing political correctness (Ibid). Thus, political correctness can be categorized as "liberal political correctness" and "conservative political correctness" at least. As a matter of convenience, however, this research employs the former as an analytical framework of political correctness throughout this article.

Through a lens of political correctness, this article conducts a content analysis of the *Frozen* film series by focusing on gender roles of Princesses Anna and Elsa who later become queens in the films, gender controversy including LGBTQ elements, especially "#Get Elsa a Girlfriend" campaign as the fourth wave feminism, racial controversy in relation with the Sámi people as native Scandinavian, and implications for war, colonialism, as well as environment protection.

In addition, this article extends its analysis to the representation of war, colonialism, and environment destruction, which can be categorized as both "direct violence" (war, terrorism, genocide, etc.) as well as "indirect violence" or "structural violence" (social discrimination, economic inequity, environmental destruction, etc.) as conceptualized by Johan Galtung (Galtung, 1969). Galtung

argued that the lack of direct violence is “negative peace” and that of structural violence is “positive peace” (Ibid). At the same time, Galtung employed the term “cultural violence” to criticize the violence related to “religion, ideology, language, art, empirical science, formal science, and cosmology” (Galtung, 1990). Moreover, Galtung criticized “imperialism” as a form of indirect/structural violence (Galtung, 1972), and such anti-imperialist war and peace perspective could be applied to the analysis of the *Frozen* film series as well. In the light of direct/indirect violence, this article sheds light on a critique of war and colonialism as well as environmental destruction in the *Frozen* series. By employing these interdisciplinary frameworks (gender, political correctness, war and peace), this article attempts to conduct an interdisciplinary re-examination of the *Frozen* film series which have been influential and impactful for the global audience as well as changing media culture in the world.

4. The Gender Controversy of *Frozen* and *Frozen II*

When it comes to gender representation, the *Frozen* film series have been regarded as progressive feminist films, but some critics pointed out that such feminist representations in the films are “lukewarm” in the light of gender studies. For instance, Afshan Jafar, an associate professor of Sociology at Connecticut College, argued that although Anna is out of romance with Hans, she eventually falls in love with Kristoph, repeating the traditional heterosexual gender representation like previous Disney Princess films (Jafar, 2014). Likewise, the gender representation of Elsa is consistent with the traditional gender stereotype on Disney princesses. In fact, Elsa “is portrayed as white with extremely fair skin and very light blonde hair. She is thin with an hourglass figure and is always seen wearing a dress” (Rogers, 2019: 29). Some critics have argued that the *Frozen* series could be regarded as a “neocolonial white feminism” (Sandras and Hoerl, 2024). It might be true that although the *Frozen* film series are not sexist or anti-feminist movies, but it can be recognized that they are still based on the conventional gender representations.

The gender roles of Anna and Elsa in *Frozen* (2013) are different from these of female characters in the Andersen fairytale, *The Snow Queen* (1844). It has been argued that Anna can be viewed as one of the modern-type Disney princesses in that she is not a “damsel in distress” (Merry, 2013). It has been discussed that Disney princesses can be divided into three categories in terms of gender roles: pre-transition (1937-1959), transition (1989-2010), and progression (2012 to the present). Whereas the pre-transition category includes three classical Disney princesses (Snow White, Cinderella, Aurora), the transition category is in the so-called Disney Renaissance period, and the *Frozen* film series are categorized as the progression period (Garabedian, 2014: 23). Unlike classical Disney princesses, Princess Anna in *Frozen* goes to adventure with three male companions (Kristoff, Olaf, and Sven) in search of her sister, Elsa. As opposed to traditional Disney princesses, Anna protects herself instead of being rescued by Prince Hans. Anna’s “true love”, not for a male character but for her sister, is considered to be “progressive” as her gender role in the history of Disney princess films (Ibid: 24). Thus, the film, *Frozen*, challenged the conventional concept of “true love” which used to be regarded as heterosexual romance (Law, 2014: 23).

Disney princesses are apt to fall in love with princes or male characters, and more often than not, end up with marriage at the end of the film and they live happily ever after. Anna is not an exception as a Disney princess because she falls in love at first sight and accepts a marriage proposal by Hans, but she later realizes that her instant romance is not sustainable at all. Notably, Elsa as a queen does not show her sexual preference or romantic interest in male characters at all, and hence, does not fall in love throughout the film series. Therefore, it has been observed that Elsa attempts not to expose her sexual preference, metaphorically “concealed” with her “gloves” (Streiff and Dundes, 2017: 4). Elsa is not explicitly depicted as a straight in terms of sexual preference, therefore, a bunch of audiences speculated that she is a “queer” queen (James, 2019). Furthermore, it was discussed in the LGBTQ community that Elsa could be a “lesbian” character, and that this may be the reason why she does not show her romantic interest in male characters (Mahdawi, 2018). More importantly, a movement occurred in the LGBTQ community, which was dubbed “#Get Elsa a Girlfriend” campaign in the middle of the filmmaking process of *Frozen II* (Mason, 2019). Indeed, it has been argued that Disney needs more LGBTQ heroines and “what *Frozen* needs is a lesbian Elsa” not only in the LGBTQ community but also in the mass media (Ramaswamy, 2016).

Despite the “desperate need for Elsa to be a lesbian” in the LGBTQ community (Margolis, 2019), Elsa does not reveal her sexual preference in *Frozen II*. Evidently, the reason why Elsa does not come out is because of the fact that *Frozen* “made millions in Asian and Middle Eastern markets, where there are heavy restrictions on LGBT content” (Duffy, 2018). In fact, LGBTQ content in a live-action film, *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), sparked a “moral panic” in Indonesia and Malaysia (Ibid). Likewise, the issue of Elsa’s sexual preference has been opposed by the Christian community as well. For example, Kevin Swanson, a pastor and host of a right-wing Christian-themed radio show, criticized the film *Frozen* encourages “homosexuality and bestiality” (Denham, 2014), and stated that “Friends, this is evil, just evil”, calling *Frozen* the “work of the devil” (BBC News, 2014). Similarly, Kathryn Skaggs, a Mormon blogger, argued that Disney tried to normalize homosexuality by producing *Frozen*, and pointed out that the song “Let It Go” contains a subversive message of “coming out” and that “the words to *Let It Go* are clearly not Christian-values friendly” (Ibid). Thus, Disney was forced to choose between the LGBTQ community and the religious community. For these reasons, Disney must have decided not to make Elsa a queer queen in *Frozen II*.

5. The Racial Controversy over *Frozen* and *Frozen II*

In addition to the gender representation, *Frozen* and *Frozen II* have received another public attention and have been a source of controversy over both racism and racial diversity. Simply put it, *Frozen* has been denounced as a “whitewash” film based on racism. Indeed, main characters in the film are all white people (Caucasians) excluding Olaf (snow man) and Sven (reindeer) (Tucker, 2014). In response to the whitewash characteristics of the princess and queen of *Frozen*, critics in rage created their own ethnic princesses with colored skins as Tibetan, Mongolian, black, and Inuit, hashtagging “This Could Have Been Frozen” (Whitelocks, 2013). Although Disney added the role of the Sámi as an image of the indigenous people in Norway, it was still criticized that “the story is chock-full of colorblind racism and conflation of biology with race” (Stanley, 2019), representing the limitation of racial diversity of the *Frozen* film series. Thus, the *Frozen* film series have been under criticism over Disney and racism from the perspective of political correctness.

This racial controversy of *Frozen* became a real social problem as racial discrimination. For example, it was reported that a three-year-old indigenous girl in Australia was racially abused when she lined up for a *Frozen* movie event in Melbourne. Reportedly, the girl was told by a woman in a line that “I don’t know what that girl’s getting excited about because Elsa isn’t black” (ABC News Australia, 2015). Moreover, the child of the woman said to the girl that “black is ugly” (Ibid). Another incident occurred to a 11-years-old black actor who worked with Disney in the United Kingdom. Her mother claimed that the daughter’s contract for *Frozen* was terminated without a reason and that her unfair treatment was based on racial discrimination against a black woman (Fleary, 2022). On top of that, Michelle Ann Abate, an associate professor at Ohio State University, argued that Olaf as a snow man in the film derives from an American mode of entertainment, namely blackface minstrelsy despite this Norwegian name (Abate, 2019). Thus, the racial controversy over the *Frozen* film series has continued even after the release of *Frozen II*.

Nonetheless, *Frozen* has been examined in the light of “indigenous representation” of Sámi (Fuller, 2020). The Sámi people are native people of Scandinavia, and most of them live in the Lapland of Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Kola Peninsula in Russia. Kristof in *Frozen* has some characteristics of the Sámi people and *Frozen* was seemingly inspired by the Sámi culture (Pekantytär, 2020). According to Christina Henriksen from the Saami Council, Disney representatives had travelled to Sápmi and had also talked to the Sámi people during the film production process. In preparation for the filmmaking and release of *Frozen II* however, Disney filmmakers made more efforts to understand the Sámi culture and conducted actual negotiations which led to an organized cooperation with representatives from the Sámi community. Henriksen pointed out that “the fact that the movie is dubbed into North Sámi means a lot to the Saami audience especially to kids, who are now able to watch a popular movie like this in their own language” (Arctic Council, 2020). Furthermore, it can be observed that Disney paid respect for indigenous religion as a culture of the Sámi people in *Frozen II* (Fonneland, 2020). Cultural considerations for the Sámi people in the *Frozen* film series, including its paganism and animism (Low, 2021), could be regarded as Disney’s political correctness and a reflection of its policy toward ethnic diversity.

6. *Frozen II* as a Critique of War and Colonialism

As opposed to *Frozen*, *Frozen II* includes more serious themes, such as war and peace as well as the memory of colonialism. In the film *Frozen II*, a war between the Arendellians and the Northuldra suddenly breaks out but what are the historical and political implications? Some observers have argued that *Frozen II* sheds light on “imperialism” in an attempt to criticize it metaphorically. Priya Satia, a professor of history at Stanford University, shrewdly detected the allegorical meaning of the political confrontation in *Frozen II*, which was thought to be a “brilliant critique of imperialism” (Satia, 2019). Satia noted that:

Frozen II is more radical and politically imaginative than most popular history books about empire, which continue to justify colonialism as the fault of disorderly indigenous people. The movie’s contemplation of reparations for historical wrongs is a call for a new kind of public ethics, one that asks us to extend the values we teach our children to our politics (Ibid).

As discussed in an article published by Princeton University’s political journal, the war between the Arendellians and the Northuldra is dramatically depicted, and the latter symbolizes the Sámi people who have been persecuted in the Scandinavian history (Markley, 2020). So why did Disney seek to depict such a military confrontation in the animated film basically designed for young audience in the world? From the perspective of political correctness, it can be argued that Disney attempted to emphasize the significance of multiculturalism and show respect for the indigenous cultures, while critically reviewing the history of colonialism (Frankel, 2019). Notably, it has been observed that whereas a dam that the Arendellians gave to the Northuldra as a token of amity is a symbol of betrayal, false peace, and colonization. It has been discussed that the destruction of the dam in the film symbolizes reparation for the indigenous people and decolonization (Ristola, 2020). In this respect, Anna sings a song, “The Next Right Thing” in the film, and the right thing is considered to be the destruction of the dam in order to restore the peace between the two parties (Harper, 2019). As a matter of fact, the Sámi people who are traditionally reindeer herders have been politically oppressed and culturally

discriminated against since the 1800s. They underwent "forced sterilization programs, segregation, scientific study and ethnic discrimination and prevented from speaking their indigenous languages" and lost their lands by the settlement (Marshall, 2019).

Moreover, it is logical to infer that the dam in the film is based on the Atla Dam built near the Atla River in Finnmark of northern Norway where the Sámi people utilized for wild salmon fishing and reindeer herding as shown in Figure 1 (Briggs, 2006: 152). The Sámi people expressed their objection to the creation of the dam by conducting hunger strikes outside the Norwegian Parliament in Oslo. Although their protests to stop the dam construction was unsuccessful, this controversy drew international attention regarding the right of the indigenous people, and eventually led to the enactment of the Finnmark Act of 2005, which gave the Sámi people more rights over the country's property (Callahan, 1979). In this sense, the depiction of the war between the two conflict parties and the destruction of the dam stem from the historically silenced conflict from the perspective of postcolonialism. Thus, *Frozen II* can be utilized as an educational tool to critically learn about war and colonialism, but at the same time, it can be a research case on the culture of the indigenous people in the Scandinavian Peninsula in the study of media and communication studies (Kvidal-Røvik and Cordes, 2020).

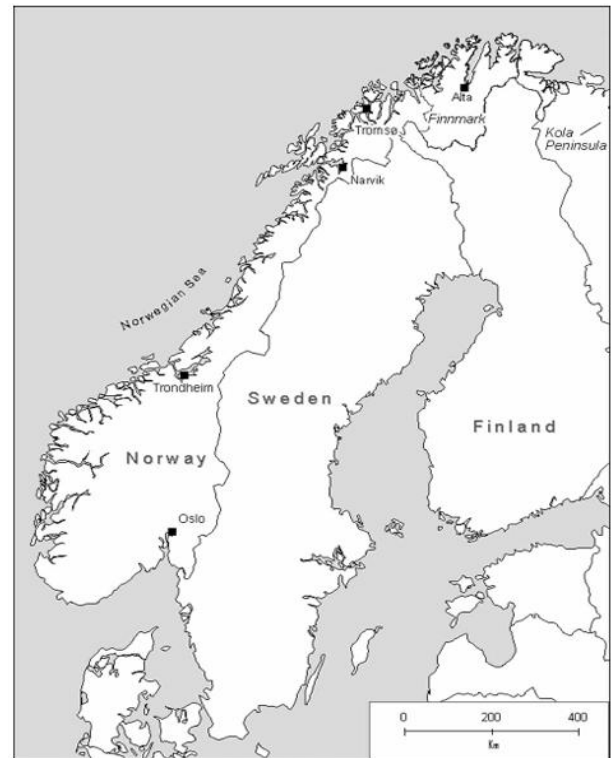
7. Implications for Climate Change and Environment Protection

In addition to the criticism against colonialism, *Frozen* film series contain a message of environment protection and indigenous ethics, including the complicated human and non-human relationship (Huuki and Kyrölä, 2023). It has to be noted that researchers and observers of political correctness could be rather argumentative, when it came to "environment" (Mathiesen, 2004), and some critics might feel that environment is beyond the scope of the analysis of political correctness. Yet, it is fair to argue that "climate change" cannot be "depoliticized" (Moneer, 2024), and hence, it is important to examine implications of the *Frozen* film series for climate change and environment protection. In Japan, Studio Ghibli has created animated films that conveyed messages for environment protection and coexistence between human beings and non-human creatures (Akimoto, 2014). Likewise, Disney has made efforts to create animated films from the perspective of "ecocriticism" and it attempted to shed light on the importance of nature on the earth in *Frozen* film series (Midkiff and Austin, 2021). In *Frozen* and *Frozen II*, a "forest of mature trees blazing with autumnal colors, stormy winter seas, a glacier's ice caves, a reindeer stampede" are depicted to stir up a feeling of reverence of audience (Mayer, 2019). In the opening scene of *Frozen II*, the father of Anna and Elsa, Agnarr, tells his little daughters about the four elemental spirits: earth, air, fire, and water, which protect the forest in cooperation with the people of the Northuldra (Ibid). The depiction of the nature and the mention of the five elemental spirits conveys a message for climate protection as well as climate justice as observed in some earlier studies (Ibid).

It is evident that Disney's *Frozen II* portrayed ecological concerns and environmental ethics in the animated film as pointed out by Thamizhini Nagarajan, an assistant professor at Thiruvalluvar University (Nagarajan, 2021). Other researchers, such as Artanti Eka Ellasari Putri and Pratiwi Retnaningdyah investigated *Frozen II* in the light of "ecofeminism" by concentrating on the relationship between women and nature in the film, arguing that the film contains a message that women can become a leader in environment protection in order to overcome environmental exploitation and nature destruction (Putri and Retnaningdyah, 2021). Since the film reflects implications for climate change, especially with the scene where Elsa turns everything into ice at her coronation, *Frozen II* has been utilized as an educational tool at some universities, including Louisiana State University, in the world (Shepherd, 2019).

Unlike other Disney animation films, it has been pointed out that there is no particular villain in *Frozen II*. Instead of fighting villains, Anna and Elsa in *Frozen II* confront with climate change as a problem to be solved for the harmony between human and the environment. This film does not show explicit solutions to "build popular support and political will for climate action or replace fossil fuel infrastructure" (McGinn, 2019), but its educational implications for climate and environment protection is profound enough to influence the audience around the globe. Notably, the climate change in the film represents human-caused natural

Figure 1: Map of the Scandinavian Peninsula



Note: The Atla Dam is located in south part of Atla, Finnmark, northern Norway ((Briggs, 2006: 152).

disasters, and it is sorted out by the female protagonists at the end of the film. Therefore, the *Frozen* film series deliver an “eco-feminist” message especially for female audience (Buck and Lee, 2013), and message of climate and environment justice by visualizing the significance of ecological restoration (Buck and Lee, 2019).

In addition, a message of climate change and environment protection can be seen in another spin-off film, *Olaf's Frozen Adventure* (2017) as well. Olaf's buttons are made from “coal”, and it would remind environment activists of environmentally unfriendly fossil fuel. The coal buttons of Olaf are nothing more than an irony because Olaf as a snow man cannot exist with heat that melts him. More explicitly, Olaf satirically says to a family in preparation for a Christmas tree that “You cut down the tree, and then you dress its corpse with candles” (IMDb. 1990-2025e). Olaf's remark comically implies that human beings emit carbon dioxide with the candles while destroying the trees for the sake of Christmas. As a snow man, Olaf is supposed to melt inside the sauna, which can be regarded as a symbol of global warming stemming from the carbon dioxide emission. All these aspects in the *Frozen* film series indicate that Disney intends to send messages of climate and environment protection toward the goals of the Paris Agreement (Walt Disney Company, 2024).

8. Conclusion

This article has examined the gender representation, racial diversity, postcolonial reparation, and environment protection in Disney's *Frozen* (2013), *Olaf's Frozen Adventure* (2017), and *Frozen II* (2019). Although there exists Disney's live-action adaptation, this article excluded it from the scope of analysis as it is merely a parody of the original animated film (IMDb, 1990-2025f). Likewise, another live-action adaptation has been reportedly under production, but it is also beyond the scope of this research (Novack, 2025). First, this article confirmed that Disney's *Frozen* was inspired by Andersen's *The Snow Queen*, but Disney's animated adaptations have been influenced by the feminist philosophy as well as political correctness. The feminist influence was salient in *Frozen* in which the nature of love is different from that of previous Disney princess movies. Although Anna falls into Hans at first sight, she realizes that the romance is not sustainable because of the betrayal of Hans who takes advantage of the status of Anna in pursuit of power. Anna becomes aware of the importance of love for her sister, Elsa, rather than the heterosexual romance.

Second, it was examined that Elsa is depicted as an asexual princess and queen throughout the *Frozen* film series. Since Elsa does not come out her sexual preference whatsoever, it has been speculated in the LGBTQ community that she is a queer queen. Also, “#Get Elsa a Girlfriend” movement occurred requesting Disney to produce more LGBTQ heroines for gender diversity. Although Elsa does not have a girlfriend in *Frozen II*, the role of Elsa has placed considerable influence over the gender diversity not only in the LGBTQ community but also in the mass media worldwide. As argued in this article, it is noteworthy that Disney's *Frozen* film series themselves can be regarded as in the fourth wave feminism, regardless of the successfulness of the “#Get Elsa a Girlfriend” movement in *Frozen III* to be released in 2027 (IMDb, 1990-2025c).

Third, the *Frozen* film series became a source of racial controversy, and critics argued that the film series are Disney's whitewash in the current filmmaking culture. In fact, some racial discrimination incidents were reported just because the two main protagonists are white princesses rather than colored ordinary people. Still, Disney took racial diversity into consideration by depicting the Sámi people, particularly in *Frozen II*. Kristof in *Frozen* has already exhibited the characteristics of the Sámi, but the main theme of *Frozen II* was directed at the complicated relationship between the Arendellians and the Northuldra. In the filmmaking process, Disney representatives consulted with the Sámi community and hence succeeded in achieving a certain degree of racial diversity in *Frozen II*. Although critics might point out that Disney intentionally changed Andersen's original story as a princess story which is a “royal family” story, it is fair to consider that Disney intended to overcome the “patriarchal monarchy” in the *Frozen* film series (Lévai, 2014). Consulting with concerned communities is what Disney attempted in the filmmaking process of the live-action remake of *Aladdin* (2019) as pointed out in earlier research on Disney's political correctness (Akimoto, 2025).

Fourth, this article reviews *Frozen II* from the postcolonial perspective, by shedding light on the war memory and colonialism of the people of the Northuldra who symbolize the Sámi people who have been politically, culturally, and racially discriminated against in the Scandinavian history. The destruction of the dam in *Frozen II* has a symbolical implication for the history of the Sámi people who were opposed to the construction of the Atla Dam by which their salmon fishing and reindeer herding culture was affected and damaged. These depictions on the indigenous people in Scandinavia indicate that Disney sought to enlighten audience of the film regarding the right of oppressed and persecuted indigenous people. In this sense, the film series can be categorized as postcolonial and cross-cultural related animation films, which contain profound implications for war and peace.

Finally, this article has revealed that Disney had paid special attention to climate change and environment protection through the creation of the *Frozen* film series. All these feminist aspects, gender representation, LGBTQ elements, racial diversity, antiwar and anti-colonialism, and environment protection in the *Frozen* film series substantiate that Disney has respected political correctness and produced animation and live-action films in the changing filmmaking culture. In conclusion, it can be argued that Disney's

Frozen film series can be regarded as significant masterpieces that depicted Disney's philosophy and policy on political correctness in the midst of the fourth wave feminism that has influenced the transforming the media culture around the globe.

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