
The Representation of LGBT in Disney Films (Semiotic Analysis in The Films *Strange World* and *Lightyear*)

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ABSTRACT

Disney, as a global film publisher, now heavily emphasizes woke culture values, including advocating for *LGBT* minorities through film messages. *LGBT* representation in media often appears through side characters who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer within the main character's life. This research analyzes how Disney represents *LGBT* behavior in films through a literature study collecting scene images and dialogue. Christian Metz's semiotics method was used to interpret cinematic elements and extract message meanings. The study is supported by the theory of multiculturalism in politics. Results show that in *Strange World* (2022), Ethan, the main character, is gay and loves his male friend, Diazo. In *Lightyear* (2022), Commander Hawthorne, a friend of Buzz Lightyear, is a lesbian. Both films explicitly portray *LGBT* representation by normalizing same-sex attraction. This is seen in Ethan's father's support of his child's feelings and Buzz's relationship with her commander, who is married to a person of the same sex. *Lightyear* notably portrays a lesbian couple building a household, complete with children and grandchildren. Disney's inclusion of *LGBT* characters in popular films serves as an effort to voice gender discrimination, injustice, and sexual orientation issues, aligning with key agendas of the wokism movement.

Keywords: Representation; LGBT; Disney Films; Semiotics Christian Metz

INTRODUCTION

According to the Studio Responsibility Index research (GLAAD, 2022), there has been an increase in the percentage of films featuring LGBTQ characters. Most of these characters are also substantial main characters. Approximately 80% of the films released in 2020 included LGBTQ characters with screen time exceeding 10 minutes. Furthermore, according to GLAAD (the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), the largest LGBT media advocacy organization in the world, 18.6% of the 116 films released by major studios in 2019 featured lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) characters. Compared to the record from 2012–2013, which stated that only 4.4% of all characters were LGBT, this represents a significant increase of approximately 14%. However, despite the increasing number of queer representations in the media, the biggest issue lies in their portrayal (GLAAD, 2019). Scholars argue that while representation has improved in quantity, the quality of portrayal remains problematic—often stereotypical or tokenistic (Avila-Saavedra, 2018; Sender, 2020). Media still frequently struggles with presenting multidimensional LGBTQ characters, which undermines efforts toward full inclusion and acceptance (Capuzza, 2019). Nonetheless, media

remains a vital tool in challenging heteronormativity and promoting gender and sexual orientation justice (Cavalcante, 2018).

Film is chosen as a medium or tool to voice social awareness, injustice, diversity, and inequality because it is considered the only form of communication that has the ability to mimic the real world or present reality through the big screen (*representasi*). For Turner, the meaning of film as a representation of societal reality is not merely a reflection of reality (G. Turner, 2020; V. Turner, 2018). Films are also a construction of the reality of the society in which the film is made and present them again in shaping the reality of society based on the codes, conventions, and ideologies of their culture on the big screen. Through film media, individuals can see simulations of real life and how individuals as a society should behave. Film as a medium of representation has the meaning of a mirror, where this mirror is two-way: on the one hand, it reflects society; on the other hand, society reflects through this media (Wang et al., 2024).

However, in contrast to cancel culture, where the perpetrators of the struggle focus on the public, *Wokisme* (as supporters of Woke Culture are called) focuses on the media. Woke culture was originally also referred to as awareness of racial prejudice and discrimination that occurred against Black people in America. However, it then developed into awareness of other social inequality issues, such as gender and sexual orientation. The form of struggle of *Wokism* that emerged can be understood as a form of *multikulturalisme* which is understood as a perspective of seeing human life as full of diversity and how to respond to this diversity. Meanwhile, seeing diversity not as a threat, loss, or obstacle, but as wealth and as a mosaic that beautifies life (Lubis, 2016). Starting from this understanding, the movement carried out by *Wokism* is a form of multiculturalism politics or recognition politics. In its concept, the politics of recognition meant here is not just accepting diversity, but also appreciating, honoring, and celebrating existing diversity.

This formation of public perception is in line with one of the missions of film as mass media, as stated in social construction theory (McCombs, 2004). Films with the essence of "woke culture" do not really use storylines as promotional "weapons." Simply by uploading a film poster to social media or other online platforms and mentioning the representation of groups or social issues raised in the film, potential audiences are expected to respond positively to their work without having to pay attention to the quality of the story (Clair, Fox, and Bezek, 2009). Judging from the great enthusiasm of the Indonesian people for watching films via video streaming services, Disney as a video streaming service and the most popular film production house in Indonesia with a percentage of 70% of respondents (goodstats.id, May 2023) appears to be full of displays of woke culture values, one of which is the idea of *LGBT* minorities through film characters.

Sexual orientation, in the view of queer theory, is rooted in individual gender identity and performativity, which shapes an individual's sexual orientation. Identity is something that is fluid and always changes following the experiences an individual goes through in life. When it comes to Butler's view, one cannot impose self-identity within a particular body. A man can display both male and female identities. This view is the basis for the gay community, which feels discriminated against and rejected because they are considered

contrary to human sexual nature. *LGBT* people desire justice and equality in the eyes of the public and equate their conditions with discrimination against Black or Asian communities in the West. Disney, as a world film production house, has received criticism for its timid steps in voicing equality for minorities such as Blacks, as well as other social disparities, such as gender and sexual orientation. In an interview, Disney CEO Bob Iger, who will return to office in 2023, said he emphasized that "inclusion" and "tolerance" of the *LGBT* community would continue to be implemented in Disney products.

Seeing some of Disney's small steps as a global brand, the alignment of liberal society, especially those who adhere to awareness of racial discrimination in fighting for social justice for *LGBT* people, has encouraged Disney to be more vocal in voicing its side through the clear introduction of *LGBT* characters. The films released between 2022 and early 2023, namely *Strange World* and *Lightyear*, spin-offs from the popular film *Toy Story*, have begun to dare to clearly and openly display lesbian and gay characters. If we look at previous years, Disney's first gay character appeared in *Zootopia* (2016). However, the *LGBT* message was still faintly displayed at that time with a duration of no more than 10 seconds, and this trend continued until 2022. Known Disney films that contain messages of acceptance of *LGBT* people include *Zootopia* (2016), *Beauty and The Beast* (2017), *Onward* (2020), *Cruella* (2021), *Raya and The Last Dragon* (2021), and *Turning Red* (2022). These six films share the common feature that *LGBT* representation messages are few and not part of the main characters.

Until the end of 2022, Disney released two films, *Strange World* and *Lightyear*, which are enough to prove Disney's big steps in voicing *LGBT*. As a mass communication medium, film bears the responsibility of the communicator to convey messages to the audience. Compared to other mass media, film can be said to be the strongest medium for conveying messages and has a good influence on society, both as individuals and social groups (Symeou, Bantimaroudis, and Zyglidopoulos, 2013). Based on this description, through this research, the author analyzes how *LGBT* messages are conveyed by Disney as a world film production house in representing *LGBT* in its film works released at the end of 2022 through the films *Strange World* and *Lightyear*. To analyze research data in the form of film scenes and dialogue, the author uses Christian Metz's semiotic method so that the meaning of the message in the film can be explained well.

Firdaus's (2020) previous study, "SJW, Horseshoe Theory, and the Woke Culture," criticized *LGBT* representation in media as part of a political agenda but lacked in-depth technical analysis of the films' symbolic aspects. Meanwhile, Hamad's (2004) work, "The Construction of Political Reality in Mass Media," focused on media framing of social issues, including *LGBT* issues, but did not specifically address Disney or semiotic methods. This study fills this gap by incorporating Christian Metz's semiotic analysis to systematically analyze *LGBT* representation in Disney films and linking it to previously unexplored political theories of multiculturalism. Thus, this study enriches our understanding of *LGBT* representation in media and provides a new perspective on how film can serve as a tool for advocating inclusivity.

This study aims to analyze *LGBT* representation in Disney films through Christian Metz's semiotic approach and a political multicultural perspective. The results are expected to contribute to academic research in media and cultural studies, particularly regarding gender inclusivity, and serve as a reference for film producers in creating more diverse and inclusive content without compromising the core narrative.

METHOD

The type of research chosen by the researcher was a qualitative descriptive analysis approach. The qualitative approach emphasized meaning, reasoning, and defining specific situations (in a certain context). Qualitative research aimed to analyze and describe the representation of *LGBT* within the framework of film media. Additionally, the researcher used the constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm states that individuals interpret and act according to conceptual categories of thought. The method used was a literature review, which involved collecting data from audiovisual documents. According to Mestika Zed (2003), literature study can be defined as a series of activities related to the method of collecting bibliographic data, reading, taking notes, and processing research materials. Metz's semiotic analysis was used to process research materials such as scene images and film dialogues.

Through Christian Metz's semiotics, each scene in a film was identified into eight main types of syntagmatic analysis: autonomous shot, parallel syntagma, bracket syntagma, descriptive syntagma, alternate syntagma, scene, episodic sequence, and ordinary sequence (Wahjuwibowo, 2018: 38–41). Syntactic analysis was understood as an analysis that examined how each shot, scene, or sequence interconnected to delineate syntactic categories in narrative films (Wahjuwibowo, 2018: 41). Each film scene presented a story or message through various cinematic elements, which were later grouped into those eight types. The different categorizations were adjusted according to each definition of the eight syntagmatic analysis types. In the process, each scene in the film did not always fit into all eight types, as it was possible to find fewer than eight types.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the first stage, the researcher conducted a semiotic analysis using Christian Metz's syntagmatic elements. Christian Metz's syntagmatic analysis is understood as an examination of how each shot, scene, or sequence is interconnected to articulate syntagmatic categories within a film (Wahjuwibowo, 2018: 41). Syntagmatics is defined as the relationship between elements that are arranged systematically in a sequence of scenes in a film. In films, syntagmatics is used to analyze systematically arranged elements of cinematography in conveying the message or meaning of the presented story in the film.

Semiotic Analysis of Christian Metz Films

1) *Film Strange World (2022)*

Strange World is a film that tells the story of the life of a father and son. Where the child tries to follow his father's path in life, but has a different outlook on life and desires. This film, produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios, tells the adventures of a legendary family of explorers. Through the results of watching films that researchers have conducted,

apart from the main story which tells the story of a family's cooperation, this film was identified as showing the romance of gay teenagers. This film is 1 hour 40 minutes long with 65 segments. Through the reduction process carried out by the researchers, 5 segments were identified that contained LGBT elements in them. The following is a more detailed description of the film analysis that the researcher carried out using Christian Metz's semiotics from the five segments which consist of scenes and dialogue in the film.

a) Segment 10 (00:10:05 - 00:10:50)



Image 1. Scene of Ethan's meeting with his best friend and Diazo (Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

In segment 11, it is seen through Ethan's body gestures and attitude when he meets Diazo that he changes and responds awkwardly to seeing his presence. Next, Ethan made a leaning gesture while folding his arms to look more relaxed to cover up his nervousness when he saw Diazo. Diazo seemed to care about Ethan who couldn't join the queue for the special edition game card because he had to work to help his family in the garden in the morning, so he bought Ethan the game card. Next, Ethan's other friend interrupted their conversation by saying that enough was enough for teasing each other. In this case, the sentence "enough for teasing each other" is meant for Diazo who teases Ethan by paying attention.

Syntagmatic category: Scene is a chronological syntagma and continuity showing specific or particular scenes. Can be in the form of place settings, events and actions

Message Meaning: The change in Ethan's attitude and expression when Diazo is not present and present is clearly visible in this scene. When Diazo hasn't shown himself, Ethan seems cool and cool in front of his friends. However, Ethan changes to become more feminine by showing shy and nervous gestures when he sees and greets Diazo. This scene is interpreted as the beginning of the film explaining that the relationship between Ethan and Diazo is not just ordinary friends.

b) Segment 11 (00:10:58 - 00:10:50)



Image 2. Diazo cheers for Ethan who gets an unwanted card
 (Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

Shows a scene of Ethan and his friends opening game cards together. Everyone got what they wanted, however, Ethan seemed disappointed with the toy card he got, namely Farmer. Ethan showed a sad face because he didn't like being a farmer.

Diazo realized that Ethan didn't like his card, so he invited Ethan to exchange it with his card. Diazo said that Explorers fit Ethan's character because Ethan's grandfather was an explorer. The following gesture was given by Diazo, who was next to Ethan, at first a little distance away but tried to get closer so that he slowly stuck to Diazo. This scene means that Diazo displays an expression that expresses the same interest as Ethan's feelings.



Image 3. Ethan and Diazo blushed when they looked at each other
 (Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

Furthermore, awkward gestures were displayed again in this segment, where Diazo and Ethan were accidentally caught looking at each other, immediately averting their gaze and showing shy smiles. The next scene is still in the same segment, when Diazo tries to discuss his grandfather who is a famous explorer, Diazo appears to be slowly getting closer to Ethan. Diazo said that because Ethan's grandfather was a great explorer, it was possible that this talent had passed on to Ethan.

Syntagmatic categories: 1) Descriptive Syntagma, namely a chronological syntagma that lines up events on one screen and sets them directly. The shots that are sequenced have continuity in space and time. Descriptively explain the message that is connected directly and relate the facts to what is displayed on the screen. 2) Scenes are used to show specific events. It can be a setting of events, actions, or places.

▪ **Message Meaning:** The scene in this segment is considered quite brave because it seems to have elements of romance in it. Ethan, who is standing side by side, seems to be getting closer until he sticks to each other, which is then accompanied by a scene of staring at each other until both of them feel embarrassed. So the scene in this segment contains the meaning of a romantic scene message.

c) Segment 12 (00:11:20 - 00:12:00)



Image 4. Ethan's father looks enthusiastic to see Diazo
(Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

Segment 12 shows Ethan's father Searcher joining in greeting Ethan's friends. Ethan looked surprised and a little embarrassed to see his father's presence. Next, Ethan's father said Searcher: wuu is he the one? (gives a whispering gesture to Ethan)

Ethan looked panicked and surprised to see his father wanting to greet Diazo. Searcher immediately approached Diazo and greeted him

Searcher : Hi, I'm Ethan's father! You must be Diazo, he (Ethan) always talks about you. So, Diazo tell me about yourself (with a face full of interest)

Ethan felt embarrassed by his father's attitude in trying to make Diazo ignore his father's words. Searcher didn't care about Ethan's shy attitude and continued talking to Diazo

Searcher : do you like farming? Because Ethan's an amazing farmer, if only you'd seen him work. He's strong, smart, super cool, or in young people's terms cool!

Searcher tries to brag about Ethan in front of Diazo so that he will be impressed with Ethan. Ethan couldn't stand his father's actions and pulled him away so as not to embarrass him further.

Syntagmatic categories: 1) Descriptive Syntagma, namely a chronological syntagma that lines up events on one screen and sets them directly. The shots that are sequenced have continuity in space and time. Descriptively explain the message that is connected directly and relate the facts to what is displayed on the screen. 2) Scenes are used to show specific events. It can be a setting of events, actions, or places.

▪ **Message Meaning:** Showing Ethan's father's enthusiasm when he met Diazo, this scene will look normal, like parents meeting their children's friends and trying to brag about what is in their child.

a) Segment 13 (00:12:03 - 00:12:10)



Image 5. Ethan's father knows Ethan's feelings for Diazo and supports their relationship
 (Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

After successfully saying goodbye to his friends, Ethan's father immediately praised Diazo but Ethan still felt embarrassed to talk about it and tried to stop his father from teasing Diazo. Seacher : Hey, it turns out Diazo (He) is good! No wonder you like it. I remember my first love, he had braces, me too and it wasn't bad

Syntagmatic categories: 1) Autonomous Shot with Single Shot Sequence type is a scene shown in one shot. Explain the facts in the scene concisely and clearly. 2) Scenes are used to show specific events. It can be a setting of events, actions, or places.

Message Meaning: This scene seems to confirm the attitude of Ethan's father who is very enthusiastic about seeing Diazo in segment 12. Through dialogue that confirms Ethan and Diazo's relationship, namely "you deserve to like him" which in this case leads to romantic feelings. The meaning of the message contained in this segment is to confirm the romantic relationship that exists between Ethan and Diazo, so that segments 10 to 13 feature gay characters.

b) Segment 65 (01:27:35 – 01:28:00)



Image 6. Ethan ends up together with Diazo as a couple
 (Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

This is the last segment in the film which shows the end of the Clade family's adventure story. The scene shows Ethan who decides to become an explorer with his team. Furthermore, one shot in this segment shows Ethan and Diazo embracing each other and looking at each other lovingly. This scene shows that Etan's character finally becomes a couple with Diazo.

Syntagmatic categories: 1) Autonomous Shot with Single Shot Sequence type is a scene shown in one shot. Explain the facts in the scene concisely and clearly. 2) Scenes are used to show specific events. It can be a setting of events, actions, or places.

Message Meaning: Making Ethan and Diazo's romantic relationship clearer, this segment at the end of the film shows the two of them embracing each other intimately and looking at each other with affection. It is clear that the meaning of this scene is a same-sex relationship, namely gay.

2) *Film Lightyear (2022)*

This film is a spin-off from the popular film Toy Story, where the film Toy Story tells the story of Andy's toys, a child who likes collecting toys. Andy's toys are said to be alive and have feelings, Andy really loves his toys, and Andy's toys are happy because Andy is a child who appreciates toys and doesn't like destroying them. The film gained great popularity because it was considered to be able to educate the character of children who like to buy toys but like to damage and do not love their toys.

With its great popularity, the animated film Toy Story has had 4 series where, Toy Story 1 was released in 1995, Toy Story 2 was released in 1999, Toy Story 3 was released in 2010, and finally Toy Story 4 was released in 2019. Lightyear, which is a spin-off from the film Toy Story, is a story that tells one of Andy's toys, Buzz Lightyear, from his favorite film character. Lightyear is Andy's favorite film.

The film, which has a duration of 1 hour 45 minutes, has 38 segments containing Buzz Lightyear's struggle to save the crew who are trapped on a planet because of his selfish actions as a plane pilot. This film tells the story of space rangers who have the task of exploring the universe and making evaluations on each planet they visit. Commander Hawthorne was Buzz Lightyear's partner at that time. When they were evaluating a planet, Buzz and Commander Hawthorne had an accident which resulted in their spaceship being damaged and requiring a long process to repair the plane's engine. So Commander Hawthorne, Buzz and the rest of the plane crew decided to stay until the plane's engine could be repaired.

In this film, researchers will carry out semiotic analysis on film segments that relate to the focus of the research, namely scenes and dialogue that are identified as forms of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender). Through the data reduction process that the researchers carried out, the following were obtained as many as 4 segments from the total of 38 film segments that were identified as featuring LGBT, namely segment 5, segment 8, segment 9 and segment 27. Following is the analysis that the researchers carried out on the 4 segment using Christian Metz's semiotic method.

- a) Segment 5
(00:17:30-
00:18:10)



Figure 7. Segment 5 Commander Hawthorne reports that she is engaged

(Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

Buzz tested the machine he had developed, but failed and spent 4 years returning. Buzz, which traveled through space and time for several minutes at high speed, apparently took 4 years to return. When reunited with Commander Hawthorne, Buzz seems to see the ring on Commander Hawthorne's ring finger and asks "what is that?"

Commander Hawthorne answered "I've got engaged, Kiko, she is one of the science crew (I'm engaged, she (woman) is one of our science crew)". In this segment, it is quite clear, Commander Hawthorne is a lesbian. Type The syntagmatic used in this segment is descriptive syntagmatic, namely a chronological syntagma that sequences events in one screen and setting simultaneously. The use of this type of syntagma serves to display the fact that Commander Hawthorne is wearing a ring on his ring finger, which then attracts Buzz's attention and clearly showing the ring he was wearing was a sign that he was engaged.

Syntagmatic categories: 1) Autonomous Shot with Single Shot Sequence type is a scene shown in one shot. Explain the facts in the scene concisely and clearly. 2) Scenes are used to show specific events. It can be a setting of events, actions, or places.

Message Meaning: Making Ethan and Diazo's romantic relationship clearer, this segment at the end of the film shows the two of them embracing each other intimately and looking at each other with affection. It is clear that the meaning of this scene is a same-sex relationship, namely gay.

a) Segment 8 (00:21:15 – 00:22:22)



Figure 8. Segment 8 Shows Buzz Lightyear's Return Always Welcomed by Commander Hawthorne
(Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

To shorten time, the film runs without narration and dialogue, showing Buzz's efforts to test space machines but always fail. To show the background of the long time that Buzz has spent in testing the machine, it appears when Buzz returns to Hawthorne, pregnant. The scene continues sequentially without dialogue but shows the passage of time, because Buzz's subsequent return shows that Commander Hawthorne has had a child with his wife.

Previously it was known that Commander Hawthorne was engaged to a woman, but in this segment, the scene shows Buzz's second return while testing Commander Hawthorne's plane while pregnant. In this segment, the scene contains a series of repeated events in which Buzz carries out airplane trials which always end in failure. It is clear that the syntagmatic type used in this segment is Episodic Sequence. This syntagmatic type is used when the scene shows a shot that occurs repeatedly but displays the same topic, or better known as timelapse.

Syntagmatic category: This Episodic Sequence type is used to shorten the same scene that occurs continuously chronologically. The same scene, namely Buzz's failed flight attempt, is explained chronologically through the changes that occur in Commander Hawthorne, where on the first flight Commander Hawthorne is engaged, followed by Commander Hawthorne being pregnant, then Commander Hawthorne has given birth, Commander Hawthorne's child appears to be big, Commander Hawthorne's child has finished college studies, until when Buzz returns, Commander Hawthorne celebrates his 40th wedding anniversary. Apart from Episodic Sequence, this segment also combines the Ordinary Sequence syntagmatic type. Similar to the Episodic Sequence, the Ordinary Sequence emphasizes action that occurs continuously, namely the scene of Buzz taking off and then landing which continues to fail.

Message Meaning: Commander Hawthorne conveys that he is engaged to his girlfriend which is clear through the character and dialogue. Commander Hawthorne is a woman but is also engaged to a woman. Meanwhile, Buzz, who heard the news of Commander Hawthorne's engagement to a same-sex couple, did not show a strange or surprised expression, but instead showed a happy and moved expression while congratulating him. This scene contains the meaning that same-sex relationships are not strange or abnormal, but rather relationships that are naturally the same as relationships that occur between the opposite sex.

a) Segment 9 (00:22:38 – 00:24:22)



Figure 9. Segment 9 shows the last message for Buzz Lightyear in the form of a video of Commander Hawthorne and her grandson before she died
(Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

This scene shows that Commander Hawthorne has died and left a video recording containing a message that Commander Hawthorne wants to convey to Buzz when he gets home. In this scene, Commander Hawthorne's grandson appears, calling him "Grandma."

Through Sox (Buzz's robot cat), the film explains the time that Buzz has spent testing space machines, namely 62 years, 7 months, 5 days. In this scene, a parallel syntagma type is used, by showing a video containing Commander Hawthorne's last message. This segment displays a contrasting image, namely that Commander Hawthorne has died but Buzz still looks young because he experienced time travel while testing the plane.

Syntagmatic category: Parallel Syntagma is an achronological syntagma which consists of a combination of several different shots and has no relationship in space and time

Message Meaning: Making Ethan and Diazo's romantic relationship clearer, this segment at the end of the film shows the two of them embracing each other intimately and looking at each other with affection. It is clear that the meaning of this scene is a same-sex relationship, namely gay.

b) Segment 27 (01:00:30 – 00:01:20)



Gambar 1. Segment 27 Izzy Mentioned Grandma Kiko
(Source: processed by researchers, 2023)

When Buzz expressed his disappointment with himself, he felt he had destroyed Commander Hawthorne's hopes and destroyed all his hopes. Izzy doesn't agree with Buzz's opinion, because he is trapped on that planet, "She had Grandma Kiko, My dad and me, all of friends," answered Izzy.

In the previous segment, namely segment 9, when Izzy was still small, she called commander Hawthorne Grandma, in this segment 27 scene, Izzy also called Grandma Kiko, so it was clear that commander Hawthorne and Kiko were a same-sex couple. This segment has no connection to the three previous segments, but is a supporting scene to further clarify that the character Kiko, who is Hawthorne's commander partner, is truly a woman.

Syntagmatic categories: Scenes are used to show specific events. It can be a setting of events, actions, or places.

Message Meaning: Still the same as segment 9, this adgena also confirms that Commander Hawthorne's partner is a woman through the dialogue of her grandson who also calls her 'grandmother' Kiko.

LGBT Representation in Disney Films

The first film, entitled *Strange World*, was released in early 2022 with a duration of 1 hour 40 minutes with 65 segments. Through the reduction process carried out by the researchers, 5 segments were identified that contained LGBT elements in them. The film *Strange World* is the first Disney animated film to feature a gay main character. The film represents Ethan as a gay man who loves his male friend named Diazo. Through analysis of the scenes and dialogue in the film using Metz semiotics, it is known that Diazo also has the same feelings as Ethan. The two male couples in this film appear like teenagers who are in love and trying to approach each other. The scene where the two gay actors blushed did not cause any strange feelings from the surrounding environment (their friends). On the other hand, Ethan and Diazo's friends seemed happy to see the two of them being shy when they were close together.

Apart from that, Ethan's father's attitude is highlighted in this film. The film shows that Ethan's father knows that his son likes his male friend, Diazo, so he supports his son's feelings of liking and tells him to be braver in expressing his feelings for Diazo. Through this scene, it appears that Disney represents gayness as a normal behavior like other opposite sex couples who fall in love and blush. The second film, *Lightyear* (2022), which has a duration of 1 hour 45 minutes, has 38 segments containing Buzz Lightyear's struggle to save the crew who are trapped on a planet because of his selfish actions as a plane pilot. This film tells the story of space rangers who have the task of exploring the universe and making evaluations on each planet they visit. Through the data reduction and analysis process that the researchers carried out using the Metz Semiotics method, it was obtained that 4 segments of the total 38 film segments were identified as featuring LGBT, namely consisting of segment 5, segment 8, segment 9 and segment 27.

In this second film, the film represents a lesbian couple who can live a normal life like an opposite sex couple. Through the syntagmatic technique of Episodic Sequence, the film presents scenes chronologically through the changes that occur in commander Hawthorne, where on the first flight commander Hawthorne is engaged, followed by commander Hawthorne being pregnant, then commander Hawthorne has given birth, commander Hawthorne's child appears to have grown up, commander Hawthorne's child has finished studying college, until Buzz returns when Commander Hawthorne celebrates his 40th wedding anniversary and has a grandson. This syntagmatic type is used when the scene shows a shot that occurs repeatedly but displays the same topic, or better known as timelapse.

The representation presented by Disney through the films *Strange World* (2022) and *Lightyear* is the normalization of the behavior of loving same-sex couples and acceptance of the differences of LGBT people. Disney tries to insert the message of diversity as naturally as possible through the love feelings of the main couple without destroying the desired main

storyline, therefore both films only present no more than 5 segments out of a total of more than 70 segments. The author sees this as one of Disney's efforts to avoid alienating other groups and trying to take a balanced approach between the issue of social struggle raised, namely diversity of sexual orientation and gender, with the main storyline.

However, Disney as a world film production house has received criticism for its timid steps in voicing equality for minorities such as the black race, as well as other social disparities, such as gender and sexual orientation. So in an interview, Disney CEO, Bob Iger, who will return to office in 2023, said that he emphasized that "inclusion" and "tolerance" of the LGBT community would continue to be implemented in Disney products. This is proven by Disney's two newest films, namely *Strange World* and *Lightyear*, which represent gays and lesbians more clearly than Disney films with LGBT content in 2016-2021.

Analysis of LGBT Representation Results through the Perspective of Multiculturalism Political Theory

According to Fay, multiculturalism can be understood as a perspective to see human life which is full of diversity and how to respond to this diversity. Meanwhile, seeing diversity not as a threat, loss, or obstacle, but as wealth and as a mosaic that beautifies life (Lubis, 2016). Lawrence Blum, professor of philosophy from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, United States in his book entitled *Antiracism, Multiculturalism, and Interracial Community: Three Educational Values for a Multicultural Society*, defines multiculturalism as an understanding, appreciation, and assessment of other people's ethnic cultures that are not means agreeing with all aspects of a culture, but rather trying to see how an authentic culture can express the values of its own members.

The politics of multiculturalism is a politics of recognition. The politics of recognition meant here is not just accepting diversity, but also appreciating, honoring and celebrating existing diversity. The politics of multiculturalism can be interpreted in several forms. First, the politics of multiculturalism can be manifested through efforts to provide space for others (different identities/others/minority groups). Through providing space that allows different entities or identities to grow, develop and articulate themselves without fear and pressure. This can be seen through the two Disney films that the author uses as research objects, where the two films represent a gay couple and a lesbian couple.

Disney provides space through its films for people to recognize themselves as LGBT so that this can increase feelings of acceptance and belonging for LGBT minorities.

Second, the politics of multiculturalism can be manifested through efforts to call for and fight for the rights of minority groups, whether religious/belief, cultural, ethnic, social, linguistic and other minorities. The struggle and appeal for the rights of minorities can be carried out, for example, through legislative changes or subtle positive planting through communication media. The issue that the researcher raises is that homosexuals, transgenders and heterosexuals

in this theoretical concept have the same rights as citizens. Therefore, several countries in America and Europe accept and legalize freedom of sexual orientation, including same-sex marriage.

Therefore, Disney as an American multinational mass media and entertainment conglomerate company carries a vision of social struggle against injustice and discrimination. This vision is known as the Wokism agenda or Woke Culture. Woke culture was initially also referred to as awareness of racial prejudice and discrimination that occurred against black people in America, but later developed into awareness of other social inequality issues, such as gender and sexual orientation. Disney is famous for its films that contain positive messages about family and friendship. Through the perspective of Multiculturalism theory, Disney as a film production house does not only provide entertainment shows, but also provides film shows which aim to represent stories that reflect the world around them and foster understanding, perspective and acceptance of everyone, especially marginalized minorities. Even so, it must be admitted that it is difficult to represent LGBT identity positively in Indonesia because it is taboo and there is no strong foundation for constructive representation.

CONCLUSION

Disney's representation in *Strange World* (2022) and *Lightyear* (2022) focuses on normalizing love between same-sex partners and promoting acceptance of *LGBT* differences, integrating these messages naturally within the main storyline without disruption. Both films dedicate fewer than five segments out of over seventy to *LGBT* themes, reflecting Disney's balanced approach to include diversity of sexual orientation and gender while avoiding alienation of other audience groups. Using Christian Metz's semiotic analysis, the most common syntagmatic types identified were Descriptive Syntagma and Scene, which effectively convey clear and regular sequences that communicate the intended messages. From a multiculturalism perspective, Disney aims not only to entertain but also to reflect societal realities, fostering empathy and acceptance of marginalized minorities through its films. Given film's accessibility and broad reach, it serves as a powerful medium for disseminating messages that promote understanding and inclusivity. Future research could explore the audience reception of these *LGBT* representations in Disney films to assess their impact on social attitudes toward diversity and inclusivity.

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