

# Frozen II: Decolonization in New Media

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## I. INTRODUCTION

THE Thanksgiving season is always a prime time for blockbuster films to hit theaters: as families gather for the holidays, a warm trip to the movies can bring everyone closer together. Disney's big release of 2019 is the long-awaited *Frozen II*, following the original *Frozen* released in the winter months of 2013.

While Disney's appropriative track record has historically been less than perfect, in recent years, we have seen a more conscientious effort of the franchise to bring a more accurate representation of diverse backgrounds to the silver screen.

It is quite evident that Disney can make inroads into the minds of developing youth, and they are starting to use their power for good. Talk to any parent with a child under ten, and they will know the words to "Let It Go".

It is no coincidence that this movie was released right before Thanksgiving, a relevant time to discuss ideas of colonialism and ongoing oppression against indigenous people. *Frozen II* has strong themes of decolonization while depicting the very present reality of conflicting syncretic identities; the movie prescribes methods of destroying abusive imperialist structures and breaks down the stereotypical "idea of the Indian", all the while, being engaging and fun, to cater to a new generation of creative thinkers.

Be thee warned: spoilers ahead!

## II. THE PORTRAYAL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- OTHBs!!! - diversity of person-hood
- reciprocal relationships
- women as leaders (white haired person and the mother) while the men as diplomats, Anna and Elsa at the end being in charge in both places
- "we listen to nature and do as it says"
- compared to Pocohontus' soundtrack of completely white music, to Brother bear's Bulgarian woman choir, Disney is now using more authentic modes – ex: Moana used indigenous language to blend with English and now with Frozen used actual Nowegian artist (AURORA)

## III. THEMES OF CHANGE VS. FROZEN-NESS

- Olaf is always learning
- Forest is frozen in Autumn – time of change and death
- "the forest is a place of transformation"
- "Into the Unknown" song
- The idea of "Indian" – trapped in history=forest, hasn't made it to the present yet; the movie shows the indigenous people emerging into the present day

## IV. SYNCRETISM

- Anna and Elsa are both descendants of both sides – they are bridge
- grew up in castle but learned the songs of the indigenous people without knowing what they were
- Elsa feels out of place "into the unknown" and "show yourself" from both sides, but movie concludes with the acceptance of both and breaking down the "us vs. them" mentality – elsa is accepted by indigenous people

## V. PRESCRIPTIVE METHODS OF DECOLONIZATION AND REPARATION

- indigenous leader (woman!) and captain from colonialist force walk out of the forest "history" together, arm in arm
- Dam breaking – person from both societies instigate the process – using the indigenous power and convincing the colonialist power to move forward; people need to get on the same side; Arendale is saved – argues against radical decolonization: everyone alive now is still a person – forces of nature cleared out the kingdom before the possibility of destruction: shows that the ultimate goal of decolonization is not to destroy the "civilized" society
- "They trust magic which is reason enough to not trust them", "they have too much power and they can't be trusted" → "fear is what can't be trusted" : building a counterimage, created dam as a front (similar to the introduction of rum and weapons) make them dependent on aerendel
- anna and elsa don't know about their colonialist family, movie champions the acquiring of that knowledge and being open to the idea of reflection on past relatives and moving forward – "this is not what arendale stands for": contradiction between the fake "we are (better and) all good, grandfather is a hero" and other side of history revealed

REFERENCES

[IMDb] Frozen II IMDb page.  
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4520988/>.