

Disney Films as a Medium of Woke Culture: The Politics of Multiculturalism in the Films *Strange World* (2022) and *Lightyear* (2022)

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Keywords

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Abstract

Disney, as one of the major players in the global animated film industry, has undergone a significant transformation in the last two decades. This study examines the construction of *woke culture*, gender, and the politics of multiculturalism in Disney's *Strange World* (2022) and *Lightyear* (2022) films through Christian Metz's semiotic approach. The focus of the study is on how visual elements and cinematic structures in film, as part of the practice of *Visual Communication Design*, shape the construction of LGBTQ identity and the values of inclusivity. By analyzing Metz's syntagmatic categories such as scene, descriptive syntagma, and autonomous shot, it was found that Disney strategically constructed ideological constructs through imagery, visual narratives, and cinematic symbols. Film is not only a narrative medium but also a social construction tool that redesigns the public's understanding of gender and diversity. This construction process takes place through directed visual techniques, relationships between characters, and scene-making that emphasizes acceptance of non-normative identities. The results of the study show that cinematography in Disney films serves as an active visual communication device in shaping meaning and creating a new ideological framework in the midst of the global popular culture landscape.

Keywords: Visual Communication Design, Gender Construction, Film Semiotics, Woke Culture



INTRODUCTION

Film, as a form of popular cultural expression, serves not only as entertainment but also as an ideological medium loaded with symbolic meaning and social representation. Films are a reflection of social construction that influence collective consciousness and public discourse (Hall, 1997; Shohat & Stam, 2014). In this context, films are able to reflect, shape, and even question prevailing social norms, including issues of identity, gender, and cultural politics (Mulvey, 1975; Tasker, 2002). In today's era of globalization and digitalization, the animated film industry—especially those produced by large corporations like Disney—plays a crucial role in shaping cultural hegemony (Wasko, 2001; Giroux & Pollock, 2010). As the holder of the world film industry, Disney plays an important role in spreading certain values to a global audience. Disney's narratives, characters, and visual strategies often reinforce dominant ideologies while also offering sites for resistance and reinterpretation (Brode, 2005; Wells, 2002). As stated by Bordwell and Thompson (2019), film is a complex system of

representation, in which each cinematographic, narrative, and symbolic element plays a role in shaping the viewer's experience and conveying ideological messages.

Disney, as one of the major players in the global animated film industry, has undergone a significant transformation in the last two decades (Dinç, 2023). Whereas *Disney* films used to be synonymous with conservative traditional narratives, they now begin to feature contemporary issues that reflect the spirit of the times, including more fluid gender representation, racial and ethnic inclusivity, and a celebration of cultural diversity. This phenomenon is often associated with so-called *woke culture*, a social movement that emphasizes awareness of structural injustice, discrimination, and the need for fair representation in public spaces (Yglesias, 2020).

In the realm of cinema, *woke culture* acts as a symbolic force that changes how characters, narratives, and visualizations are presented. This is reflected in the films *Lightyear* (2022) and *Strange World* (2022), two recent works from *Disney* that feature representations of LGBTQ+ characters, multicultural families, and egalitarian intergenerational relationships. These films have become a wide arena of public debate because they contain content that is considered to represent a progressive agenda of identity politics and diversity. The presence of characters representing sexual or racial minorities in the midst of mainstream films, for example, marks a paradigm shift in popular culture representation. As explained by Kellner (1995), mass media, including films, is a field for the production and reproduction of dominant and alternative ideologies.

Strange World, for example, features a dark-skinned teenage boy who is the protagonist and is open about his sexual orientation, something very rare in the tradition of mainstream animated films. Meanwhile, *Lightyear* raises the issue of non-traditional families through the portrayal of female characters who are in same-sex relationships. Both reflect *Disney's* efforts to respond to the demands of representation from marginalized communities, while presenting cinema as a space for negotiation between conservative and progressive values.

This dynamic becomes increasingly complex when it is associated with the cinematography and aesthetic aspects of the film. Through visual composition, lighting techniques, and framing, films not only convey stories but also instill a deeper meaning regarding social identity and position. Christian Metz (1974), in his semiotic theory, views film as a system of signs that are cinematic—that is, a combination of linguistic and non-linguistic aspects that produce meaning. According to Metz, film has its own language that works through the mechanisms of visual and sound signs, which cannot be fully explained by conventional linguistic approaches. Therefore, Metz's use of the semiotic approach in analyzing *Lightyear* and *Strange World* allows us to unravel how the meaning of gender, multiculturalism, and *woke culture* is symbolically constructed through the medium of film.

In this context, it is important to understand how gender constructs work in the narrative and aesthetics of film. Gender is not a fixed biological category, but rather the result of a cultural process that is constantly shaped and reshaped through representation (Butler, 1990). Film as a visual medium contributes to shaping people's perceptions of what is considered *masculine* or *feminine*, *normative* or *deviant*. When films begin to feature characters who reject traditional gender categories, they not only feature alternative stories but also offer a new framework of thinking about identity.

Meanwhile, the politics of multiculturalism carried out in recent *Disney* films also reflect an increasingly complex global reality. Multiculturalism in films is not just about the ethnic diversity that appears on screen but also about how intercultural relationships, power, and dominant narratives are constructed. According to Hall (1997), cultural representation in the mass media is never neutral; it is always related to power relations and ideology. In *Disney* animated films, for example, characters from ethnic minority backgrounds are not only present as a form of tokenism but begin to be given a central space in the narrative. This reflects a paradigm shift in representation politics that demands inclusivity more than just existence, but also in the form of narrative agency and character morality.

However, this shift also faces challenges. On the one hand, films like *Strange World* and *Lightyear* have been praised for their courage in voicing progressive issues. On the other hand, not a few parties consider that the representation is too political or even interferes with traditional values. This tension reflects how identity and cultural politics have become a complex arena of contestation in the midst of a global society. In this case, film becomes an ideological field that fights for various interests, values, and worldviews.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the meaning of *woke culture*, gender construction, and the politics of multiculturalism are represented in the films *Lightyear* and *Strange World*, using Christian Metz's semiotic approach. By deconstructing the narrative structure and cinematic signage system used in both films, this study seeks to unravel how *Disney*, as a producer of popular culture, uses cinematography and visual symbolism to convey certain ideological messages to a global audience.

Metz's semiotic approach is particularly relevant because it allows for an in-depth analysis of cinematic elements such as *mise-en-scène*, framing, montage, as well as the relationship between visual imagery and narrative. In Metz's eyes, film is not an ordinary narrative text, but "cinematic writing" that has its own semiotic logic (Metz, 1974). Therefore, the analysis of the films *Lightyear* and *Strange World* cannot be separated from the understanding of how cinematic signs work in constructing meaning and ideology.

Through this process of understanding these dynamics, this research also hopes to contribute to film studies, cultural studies, and contemporary discourses on gender representation and multiculturalism. Amid debates about the role of the media in influencing public opinion and social construction, this kind of study is important to understand how popular culture is shaping the current global social and political landscape.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used was a literature study involving the collection of audiovisual documents. According to Mestika Zed (2004), a literature study includes activities such as collecting library data, reading, recording, and processing research materials. Researchers applied Metz's semiotic analysis to process these materials.

Each film scene was identified according to eight main types of syntagmatic analysis based on how the scene was presented. Scenes conveyed stories or messages through various cinematic elements and were grouped into the following categories: Autonomous shot, Parallel Syntagma, Bracket Syntagma, Descriptive Syntagma, Alternate Syntagma, Scene, Episodic Sequence, and Ordinary Sequence. These groupings aligned with the definitions of each

syntagmatic type. However, not every scene could be classified into all eight types, as some films contained fewer than eight categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



Semiotic Analysis of Christian Metz Films *Strange World* (2022) and *Lightyear* (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 way of life but has a different outlook on life and desires. The film, produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios, tells the adventures of a family of legendary explorers. Through the results of watching the film that researchers have done, in addition to the main story that tells the story of a family's cooperation, this film was identified as featuring the romance of gay teenagers. This film is 1 hour and 40 minutes long with a total of 65 segments. Through the reduction process carried out by the researcher, as many as 5 segments were identified to contain LGBTQ elements in them.




Meanwhile, in the film *Lightyear* (2022), which lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes, there are 38 segments containing Buzz Lightyear's struggle to save the crew who are trapped on a planet due to his selfish actions as an airplane pilot. This film tells the story of space rangers who have the task of exploring the universe and making evaluations on each planet visited. Commander Hawthorne was Buzz Lightyear's colleague at the time. While they are evaluating a planet, Buzz and Commander Hawthorne have an accident that results in their spaceship being damaged and requires a long process to repair the plane's engines. So Commander Hawthorne, Buzz and the rest of the crew decided to stay until the plane's engines could be repaired.

In this film, the researcher will conduct a semiotic analysis of film segments that intersect with the focus of the research, namely scenes and dialogues that are identified as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) forms. Through the data reduction process that has been carried out by the researcher, the following are obtained as many as 4 segments from 38 segments of the total film that were identified featuring LGBTQ, consisting of segment 5, segment 8, segment 9 and segment 27. The following is a concise display table of the results of Metz's semiotic analysis of the two films.








Table 1. results of Metz's semiotic analysis in both films

1. Film <i>Strange World</i> (2022)			
Yes	Segment/Duration	Scene	Syntagmatic Categories and Message Meanings
1	Segment 10 (00:10:05 - 00:10:50) Information: shows a scene of Ethan welcoming his friends with enthusiasm. However, when he found out about the presence of his friend named Diazo, Ethan seemed to misbehave	 	<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Scene</i> is a chronological and continuous syntagma of displaying specific or special scenes. It can be a setting of places, events, and actions.</p> <p>Meaning of Message</p> <p>The change in Ethan's attitude and expression when there is no Diazo is evident in this scene.</p>



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			<p>When Diazo hasn't shown himself, Ethan seems to be <i>cool</i> and cool in front of his friends. However, Ethan turns into more feminine by displaying shy gestures and being nervous when he sees and greets Diazo</p> <p>This scene is interpreted as the beginning of the film explaining that the relationship between Ethan and Diazo is not limited to ordinary friends.</p>
2	<p>Segment 11 (00:10:58 - 00:10:50)</p> <p>Information: shows the interaction scenes that occur between Ethan and Diazo. Showing Diazo's special care and attention to Ethan. This segment also again shows Ethan's shy gestures and expressions when they are close together and staring at each other.</p>	<p>Shot 1</p>  <p>Shot 2</p> 	<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Descriptive Syntagma</i> is a chronological syntagma that lists events in one screen and setting them directly. The assembled shots have a continuity of space and time. Descriptively explain the message that is directly linked and relate what facts are displayed on the screen.</p> <p><i>Scenes</i> are used to display specific events. It can be an event, action, or venue setting.</p> <p>Meaning of Message</p> <p>The scene in this segment is considered quite bold because it seems to present an element of romanticism in it. Ethan, who was standing side by side, was seen getting closer and closer to each other, which was then accompanied by a scene of staring at each other until the two misbehaved.</p> <p>So that the scenes in this segment contain the</p>


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		 <p>Kartu ini lebih sesuai denganmu.</p> <p>Shot 3</p>   <p>Mungkin bakatnya menurun kepadamu.</p>	<p>meaning of the message of a romantic scene.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Segment 12 (00:11:20 - 00:12:00)</p> <p>Information: shows scenes of the interaction that occurred between Diazo and Ethan's father. It seems that Ethan looks panicked at the sight of his father trying to interact with Diazo and at the same time gives an embarrassed expression at his father's enthusiastic attitude of boasting about Ethan as a child to Diazo.</p>	<p>Shot 1</p>  <p>Hei, Anak-anak. Apa kabar?</p>  <p>Ayah sedang apa?</p> <p>Shot 2</p>  <p>Kau pasti Diazo.</p> 	<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Descriptive Syntagma</i> is a chronological syntagma that lists events in one screen and setting them directly. The assembled shots have a continuity of space and time. Descriptively explain the message that is directly linked and relate what facts are displayed on the screen.</p> <p><i>Scenes</i> are used to display specific events. It can be an event, action, or venue setting.</p> <p>Meaning of Message</p> <p>Showing the enthusiasm of Ethan's father when he meets Diazo, this scene will look ordinary like a parent meeting his children's friends and trying to be proud of what is in their child.</p>

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<p>4</p>	<p>Segment 13 (00:12:03 - 00:12:10)</p> <p>Information: shows scenes of interaction between Ethan and his father discussing Ethan's feelings for Diazo.</p>		<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Autonomous Shot</i> with a <i>Single Shot Sequence</i> type is a scene that is shown in a single shot. Explain the facts in the scene concisely and clearly.</p> <p><i>Scenes</i> are used to display specific events. It can be <i>an event</i>, action, or venue setting.</p> <p>Meaning of Message</p> <p>This scene seems to confirm the attitude of Ethan's father who is very enthusiastic about seeing Diazo in segment 12. Through a dialogue that confirms Ethan and Diazo's relationship, namely "you deserve to like him" which in this case leads to feelings of romanticism.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Segment 65 (01:27:35–01:28:00)</p> <p>Information: shows the closing scene of the film which shows the end of the story of Ethan and Diazo together as lovers.</p>		<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Autonomous Shot</i> with a <i>Single Shot Sequence</i> type is a scene that is shown in a single shot. Explain the facts in the scene concisely and clearly.</p> <p><i>Scenes</i> are used to display specific events. It can be <i>an event</i>, action, or venue setting.</p> <p>Meaning of Message</p> <p>Further clarifying Ethan and Diazo's romantic relationship, this segment is the end of the film featuring the two who together embrace each other and look at each</p>

			other with affection. Clearly the meaning of this scene is a same-sex relationship, namely Gay.
2. Lightyear Movie (2022)			
Yes	Segment/Duration	Scene	Syntagmatic Categories and Message Meanings
1	<p>Segment 5 (00:17:30-00:18:10)</p> <p>Information: shows a scene of Buzz asking which cicin Commander Hawthorne uses. Subsequently, Commander Hawthorne has become engaged to his girlfriend.</p>		<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Autonomous Shot</i> with a <i>Single Shot Sequence</i> type is a scene that is shown in a single shot. Explain the facts in the scene concisely and clearly.</p> <p><i>Scenes</i> are used to display specific events. It can be an event, action, or venue setting.</p> <p>Meaning of Message Commander Hawthorne conveys that he is engaged to his girlfriend which is clear through character and dialogue: Commander Hawthorne is a woman but also engaged to a woman.</p> <p>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 showed a happy and moved expression while congratulated him</p> <p>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</p>

<p>2</p>	<p>Segment 8 (00:21:15–00:22:22)</p> <p>Information: features scenes of Buzz continuing to conduct plane experiments and returning within a certain period of Commander Hawthorne getting pregnant, giving birth to a son, Commander Hawthorne's son completing his bachelor's degree, and Commander Hawthorne's 40th anniversary celebration with his wife.</p>		<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Episodic Sequence</i> in which this type of syntagmatic is used when a scene shows a series of several shots that occur repeatedly but show the same topic, or better known as <i>timelapse</i>.</p> <p><i>Ordinary Sequence</i> emphasizes action that happens continuously</p> <p>Meaning of Message Containing <i>timelapse</i> scenes, the film clearly contains an LGBTQ message through the character of Commander Hawthorne who is clearly confirmed to be a lesbian. The film presents a lesbian couple until Commander Hawthorne becomes pregnant which is medically impossible if a same-sex couple, seems to be shown smoothly, the Commander Hawthorne's partner who appears to be clearly a woman. It is not explained how Commander Hawthorne could conceive. Furthermore, there are also sexual scenes that are different from previous Disney films, this segment features same-sex kissing scenes.</p> <p>The entire scene is seen by Buzz, however, Buzz does not display any meaningful expressions like seeing a normal (opposite sex) partner in general. Until this segment has the meaning that LGBTQ behavior is something that needs to be normalized and does not need to be seen as strange or negative</p>
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<p>3</p> <p>Segment 9 (00:22:38–00:24:22)</p> <p>Information: shows the scene of Buzz returning, but Commander Hawthorne has passed away and left a video message.</p>			<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Parallel syntagma</i> is an achronological syntagma that consists of a combination of several different shots and has no relation to space and time</p> <p>Meaning of Message</p> <p>This segment again confirms Commander Hawthorne's sexuality through his granddaughter's call "grandma" or grandmother, not grandfather.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Segment 27 (01:00:30– 00:01:20)</p> <p>Information: shows the interaction scene that occurred between Buzz and Commander Hawthorne's grandson which tells the story of his two grandmothers, namely, Commander Hawthorne and his wife.</p>			<p>Category: Syntagmatik</p> <p><i>Scenes</i> are used to display specific events. It can be an event, action, or venue setting.</p> <p>Meaning of Message</p> <p>Still the same as segment 9, this adgena also reaffirms the Hawthorne Commander's partner who is a woman through the dialogue of her granddaughter who also calls her 'grandmother' Kiko.</p>

Discussion

Through the results of the analysis that has been carried out using Christian Metz's semiotic method, it appears that since the beginning of the release of films with LGBTQ characters until now, Disney is experiencing a difficult transition period by including elements of diversity and Woke culture in its films that fight for equality and openness against gender and sexual discrimination. Based on this, the researcher focuses on the Disney movement as a media production of world films to voice support and participate in the fight for LGBTQ rights through their film works.

Metz explains that a shot is more like an expression than a word, although it doesn't always resemble. The fact that must be understood in film semiotics is that film must be completely understandable. Iconic analogies also cannot necessarily explain the discourse in a film, so it takes a deep understanding to read a film using the function of "The Large

Syntagmatic Category". The language of the film structure consists of eight groups, as follows: the autonomous shot (establishing shot, insert), the parallel syntagm (image alignment), the bracketing syntagm (shooting briefly), the descriptive syntagm (depiction of scenes), the alternating syntagm (changing scenes), the scene (continuous scenes), the episodic sequence (the division of each scene), the ordinary sequence (the sequence of each act). These syntagmatic elements act as a tool to emphasize the message in every situation and atmosphere of the story so that it is well depicted through visual elements in the film.

In Rusbiantoro's book (2008:42), Greame Burton states that the media constructs the audience in various ways, such as common notions of gender, age, occupation, and region. The process of constructing meaning is related to semiology or the process of marking. Just as culture cannot be seen as universal, construction cannot be seen as separate from the various social conditions in which it is located (Strinati, 2007:124).

Gender is defined as a concept used to identify the difference between men and women, seen from a socio-cultural perspective. Gender in this sense identifies men and women from a nonbiological perspective (Umar, 1999:35). Therefore, gender is seen as a product of social construction, where a person's identity can undergo changes according to the environment and cultural culture. In line with his statement, Bob Chapek, who was also the CEO of Disney, replaced Iger from 2020 to 2022, when Chapek was still at the helm of Disney, the company openly opposed Florida's Parental Rights in Education law, which critics called the "Don't Say Gay" law, which prohibits teaching sexual orientation and gender identity to elementary school students. Disney issued a statement in March 2022 demanding that the law be repealed.

Disney is experiencing a crisis due to Disney's allegations of partiality towards identity politics, however, Disney denied this through Iger's statement that Disney's work is not a political product, but "the essence of our storytelling is inclusion, acceptance, and tolerance". The LGBTQ construct in the film *Strange World* is formed explicitly or openly. This is a big first step taken by Disney in inserting LGBTQ social issues in its work. The construction of LGBTQ is shown through real scenes and dialogue, where the main character of the film, Ethan Searcher's son, who loves his best friend, Diazo romantically. Ethan in the film is referred to as 'son' which means boy, and Diazo uses the pronoun 'he' which means he is a boy. Both are identified as men who have romantic interests until the end of the story showing the togetherness of the two as lovers.

The *Lightyear* movie is a *Toy Story* spin-off film that explains the origins of the character of Buzz Lightyear, a space ranger. The film focuses on the story of Buzz Lightyear and his colleague Commander Hawthorne as they lead their colleagues stranded in space and attempt to return to earth. The LGBTQ construction is built through the character of Commander Hawthorne who is a woman. She married her colleague who was also a woman, this is known through the pronoun used which is 'her' which means she is a woman. Meanwhile, the next scene is also shown that Commander Hawthorne is pregnant, which further explains her identity as a woman. The film was released the same year as *Strange World*, making it the second Disney film to openly construct LGBTQ.

Seeing some small steps as Disney as a global brand, the partiality of the liberal society, especially those who hold to the awareness of racial discrimination that fights for social justice for LGBTQ people, which is now known as the wokism movement, encourages Disney to be

more vocal in voicing its partiality through the clear introduction of LGBTQ characters. Until the film released in the last year of 2023, namely *Lightyear*, which is a spin-off of the popular film *Toy Story*, began to dare to display the Lesbian character clearly and openly. How many western media writes, researchers cite that this bold move was influenced by the big move made by the Marvel Cinematic Universe production house that featured the first scenes of a same-sex kiss in 2021.

Through this study, researchers view Disney as a medium for the production and publication of world films holding power as a medium for the production of knowledge and social control. Through representation to the construction of LGBTQ in its popular characters, Disney does so as an effort to voice discrimination and injustice of gender and sexual orientation. This goal is known as the Wokism movement, which is carried out to help raise awareness of social justice issues on the gender and sexual orientation of marginalized LGBTQ people. In some parts of the world, especially the East, many still oppose the presence of LGBTQ and condemn the act, so this concept is categorized by the West as a form of cancel culture.

However, in contrast to cancel culture where the actors of the struggle focus on the public, Wokism (as the supporters of Woke Culture are called) focuses on media coverage. Woke culture was originally also referred to as awareness of the racial prejudice and discrimination that occurred against blacks in America. However, it later developed into awareness of other issues of social inequality, such as gender and sexual orientation. The form of struggle of the Wokisms can be understood as a multiculturalism which is also understood as a perspective that looks at human life full of diversity and how to respond to this diversity.

Meanwhile, seeing diversity is not as a threat, loss, or obstacle, but as wealth and as a mosaic that beautifies life (Lubis, 2016:169). Departing from this understanding, the movement carried out by the Wokists is a form of political multiculturalism or the politics of recognition. In its concept, the politics of recognition meant here is not only to agree with diversity, but also to appreciate, respect and celebrate the existing diversity. In addition, the politics of multiculturalism can be interpreted into several forms. First, the politics of multiculturalism can be expressed through efforts to provide space for others (different identities/the others/minority groups).

The development of LGBTQ in Indonesia which is accelerating is not spared from the contribution of the international LGBTQ movement which helps in the development of propaganda movements so that it is not only a national issue but also an international issue with an increasingly growing issue that is expected to reap a lot of sympathy and empathy from the community and the government so that the public can easily accept their existence. This is what is done as a politics of recognition. Through providing a space that allows different entities or identities to be able to grow, develop and articulate themselves without fear and pressure.

Furthermore, the politics of multiculturalism can be manifested through efforts to call for and fight for the rights of minority groups, both minorities in terms of religion/belief, culture, ethnicity, social, language, and others (Lubis, 2016:169). The struggle and call for the rights of minorities can be carried out, for example, through changes in legislation or subtle cultivation through positive communication media. The issues raised by the researcher are, homosexuals, transgenders, and heterosexuals in this theoretical concept have the same rights

as citizens. Therefore, for some countries in America and Europe accept and legalize the freedom of sexual orientation to same-sex marriage.

CONCLUSION

This study, using Christian Metz's semiotic analysis of *Strange World* and *Lightyear*, revealed that Disney is undergoing a significant ideological shift by explicitly embracing diversity and *woke culture*, particularly through the narrative and visual representation of LGBTQ characters—groups traditionally marginalized in mainstream children's animation. By employing Metz's Large Syntagmatic Category, the films strategically use cinematic structures such as scenes and episodic sequences to convey messages of acceptance, diversity, and gender equality, illustrating Disney's role as a cultural actor shaping social norms beyond mere entertainment. This involvement reflects the broader evolution of the woke movement into a multicultural political project, where LGBTQ representation functions as recognition politics aimed at legitimizing marginalized identities. However, Disney's progressive stance has sparked socio-political debates worldwide, highlighting tensions between freedom of expression and cultural sensitivity within the politics of multiculturalism. Ultimately, these films serve as ideological tools that promote inclusivity and tolerance while participating in global social transformation through media. Future research could explore audience reception across diverse sociocultural contexts to better understand the impact and contestation of such representations in different political and cultural environments.

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