"WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE SUN" – NORTHERN MYTHOLOGY DEPICTIONS IN DISNEY'S FROZEN 2

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Abstract

Sadut ja mytologiat ovat aina olleet osa kulttuurista representaatiota. Satuja on käytetty opettamaan ja ohjaamaan yhteisön jäseniä kohti haluttua käytöstä ja arvoja. Tyypillisesti nämä kertomukset sisältävät yhteisölle tärkeitä aspekteja, kuten tietoa yhteisön historiasta, elinkeinoista ja tavoista. Sadut kuvaavat sitä maailmaa ja aikaa, joissa ne on luotu. Tästä syystä satujen analysointi voi olla vaikeaa, kun nykypäivän satuja yhdistetään ja sekoitetaan vanhempiin kertomuksiin.

Tämän tutkielman aiheena on pohjoisten mytologioiden näkyminen Disneyn elokuvassa *Frozen 2* (2019). Tavoitteena oli tarkastella miten ja mitä pohjoisen mytologian ja saamelaisen kulttuurin osia elokuvassa on käytetty. Tutkielman inspiraatio tuli Walt Disney Animation Studiosin ja saamelaisten tekemästä historiallisesta sopimuksesta, jonka mukaan elokuvayhtiö sitoutui esittämään saamelaiset ja heidän kulttuurinsa autenttisesti ja kunnioittavasti.

Analyysissa tutkielman aineistoa, Frozen 2 –eokuvaa, verrattiin pohjoisen eri mytologioihin ja saamelaiskulttuuriin multimodaalisen diskurssianalyysin ja representaation keinoin. Analyysissa selvisi, että mytologioita ja saamelaiskuttuuria representoitiin mytologisten hahmojen, heidän nimiensä, pohjoisen maiseman ja arkisten esineiden avulla. Kokonaisuudessaan, alkuperän representaatio oli autenttinen ja kunnioittava. Analyysi kuitenkin paljasti, että valta jakautuu edelleen epätasaisesti kansainvälisen elokuvayhtiön ja pienen alkuperäiskansan välillä.

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1   INTRODUCTION

The impact that the Walt Disney Company has had in the field of animation and filmmaking is undeniable. Their status in the film production is so significant that Zipes claims that any filmmaker born after 1945 is almost certain to have watched or been exposed to a Disney fairytale film (Zipes, 2010: xi). Through their films, Disney has introduced the world to traditional folklores, different cultures and various landscapes. While their films have brought joy to the viewers, Disney has faced criticism about the representation of certain groups in its films. For example, in connection to the films *Pocahontas* (Pentecost, Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995) and *Mulan* (Cook & Bancroft, 1998) Disney was accused of cultural appropriation and misrepresentation (see e.g., Jing Yin 2011; Spector, 1998). Currently, in their website Disney states that they "strive to present genuine, authentic, and respectful storytelling" (Disney's official website, retrieved 11.2.2023). I find this dichotomy interesting and therefore, in this thesis, I aim to find out if the desired values are upheld in today's Disney productions.

When it became public that *Frozen 2* would be inspired by Nordic nature and the Sámi, I was excited. Around that time, I was doing my BA thesis on how Polynesian culture was represented in the Disney film *Moana* (Aronen, 2020). I found the research interesting, so it was not difficult to decide that my MA thesis would include similar themes. I discovered that when Disney started making *Moana*, they wanted to cover their bases and created a Story Trust full of Polynesian professionals from various fields. The Trust was included in the film-making process and ensured that the Polynesian culture was represented respectfully and correctly. In my study I found that while many aspects of the culture were correct, there were still many things that the Polynesians were not happy with (Aronen, 2020). Knowing this, I could not help but wonder if the same would happen with *Frozen 2* and the Northern cultures.

As an international mega company, Disney has an enormous responsibility to make sure that its productions represent their real-life inspirations correctly and respectfully and do not take advantage of minorities. However, I have found little research done about the cultural accuracy of films, especially the films made within the last decade. With the current study, I aim to add up to the cultural recognition that I started with my BA thesis. The topic of my research is situated in the field of

multimodal discourse studies as well as touching on the fairy tale film studies, since my data includes a fairy tale film and various written fairy tales. The film is compared to the written works, which I consider to be the best-known versions of the tales in the Northern folklore. The film is studied multimodally and from the critical perspective of representation. More specifically, the topic of the current study is the representation of the Northern cultures, especially the Sámi people in the film *Frozen 2*. In my study, I will focus on verbal elements such as descriptions, songs and tales which have their origins in Northern folklore. In addition, I will analyze non-verbal elements, for example sceneries, places, and the appearance of the characters. From a wider point of view, I will study what type of perceptions the film creates about the Northern cultures and their heritage. The importance of this study lies in the representation of minority and indigenous cultures. First, Sámi people have faced discrimination and power imbalance for decades (see section 3.2). As the first internationally significant production, *Frozen 2* displays how these minority cultures are treated and represented. Secondly, Disney has received a vast amount of critique for its representation of minorities and abuse of indigenous cultures. *Frozen 2* flies with a statement that it is the first Disney film dubbed into Northern Sámi and its promise to display the Sámi culture respectfully. Thus, I find it important to critically view if it lives up to that promise.

Disney films have been studied from different perspectives and with various approaches such as stereotypes, gender roles, feminism, racism, and multiculturalism (see e.g., Streiff & Dundes, 2017; Maity, 2014; Henke, Umble & Smith, 1996 and Brode, 2005). Representation, in Disney films as well as elsewhere, has also been a rather popular research object (see e.g., Higgs, 2016, Benhamou, 2014; Pettitt, 2000 and Nwonka, 2021). The current data, the film *Frozen* has also been studied with different approaches, such as the use of indigenous voices, religion-making and the relationship to nature (see e.g., Dundes, 2020; Fonneland, 2020 and Kvidal-Røvik & Corder, 2022). The topic of cultural accuracy in Disney films, as stated before, has been studied in relation to films *Pocahontas* (Pentecost, Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995), *Mulan* (Bancroft & Cook, 1998) and *Moana* (Clements & Musker, 2016), for instance. Thus, there is similar research done about previous Disney films, but none seems to exist in connection to the film *Frozen 2*. While the first *Frozen* has been studied in connection to Norway, it has not been done with the same approach (see e.g., Lowery 2020 and Metcalf, Linnes, Agrusa & Lema (2015)). The current study differs from previous studies in that the cultural references in the film were clearly stated to originate from the Sámi people. Thus, based on this statement one can assume that the impressions and claims the film makes are seen as true by the general public. However, merely a statement does not make a representation true. Therefore, I find it appropriate to study if the representation of the Sámi is authentic.

The study begins with relevant background and discussion about the central concepts, including fairy tales, representation, cultural references as well as the legacy of the first *Frozen* film. After that, I will introduce the Sámi people and their culture. Next, I present the aim and research questions to clarify the purpose and objectives of the thesis. Then, I will describe the chosen data and methods in more detail. After that, the study carries on describing the analysis of the data, starting with characterization, and proceeding to locations, scenery and finally, the Sámi. Lastly, the study offers recommendations for additional research and improvement while summarizing the key elements and conclusions of the study and considering its wider significance and results.

2 BACKGROUND

In the background section, I will discuss the main concepts surrounding my study. I begin with introducing fairy tales and their relationship with Walt Disney. I will also discuss the commodification of fairy tales through fairy tale film studies. Next, I will move on to representation and how it is connected to cultural misuse. Finally, I will discuss the *Frozen* films and the topics surrounding them.

2.1 Fairy tales and Disney

2.1.1 About fairytales

Fairytales are fictional stories containing human and nonhuman characters, as well as elements of magic and the supernatural (Greenhill & Matrix, 2010: 1). They tell tales about regular people facing both supernatural events and common adversities (Teverson, 2013: 29). Fairytales typically use formulaic opening and closing phrases such as "once upon a time" and "happily ever after" and follow a traditional storyline (ibid: 24). Teverson (2013: 32-33) lays out the basic plot of a fairytale: the protagonist begins a journey to change their status. With the help from friends, the protagonist defeats the enemy, completes the journey, and secures themselves a comfortable life. Teverson (2013: 20-24) distinguishes different forms of folktale, legend, myth, and fairytale but notes that these categorizations vary based on the definitions. For example, religious aspects, including sacred subjects, are not restricted to religious tales only, but can also be found for instance in the Grimm Brothers' fairytales (ibid: 24). Fairytales are produced in both traditional (typically gathered from oral tellers) and literary (officially created and written) forms (Greenhill & Matrix, 2010:1). Fairytales talk to and about their tellers, audiences, performance situations, and sociocultural origins, each with their own unique meanings and applications (ibid). Hence, fairytales are not

necessarily an accurate description of given events but rather a story told from various perspectives through imaginary worlds. In the context of this study the fairytale represents the views and thoughts of today's reality.

Fairytales and storytelling were and are used for educational purposes to reflect the customs, norms and values in a given community (Zipes, 1997: 63). In their earliest forms, fairytales were aimed for adult audiences. In the nineteenth century, publishers, educators, and parents began to search "proper" literacies for children but found that fairytales did not represent the preferred Christian values and patriarchal messages that they wanted to pass to the children (Zipes, 1997: 5). For example, the Grimm brothers altered their fairytales on purpose in order to make them more instructive and moral. According to Greenhill and Matrix (2010: 6), the Grimm brothers were the main force in transforming fairytales to nursery. While the Grimms, among others, sweetened their tales to a more wholesome version, some of the writers, such as Lewis Carroll and Oscar Wilde, challenged the overly didactic tales by employing the fairy-tale-for-children format (Zipes, 1997: 5). As a result, the fairytale became divided and commercialized. The division was challenging because it created a view of "proper" and "improper" features for fairytales. In addition, these features divided fairytales into two categories: the literary fairytale for adults and the wholesome tale for children. The introduction of the radio and the film continued to reinforce the division as it was easy to commercialize the booming fairytales for children. At the turn of the twentieth century, the fairytale had established itself as a mainstay of family literature for children of the middle class, particularly preadolescent children. (Zipes, 1997: 5). Even today, fairytales continue to have an effect on both adults and children. Zipes (1997, p. 61) notes that fairytales in both their written form as well as film form have become such an integral part of our cultural knowledge that we can recognize a fairytale immediately. Fairytales exist in a variety of interpretations, which are then translated in a variety of ways to relate to certain societal issues, challenges, and hopes (Bacchilega, 2013, p. 3). Fairytales are thought to portray societal fantasies that hold us captive under their spell, or they create a feeling of justice by describing the achievement of unpromisingly little, impoverished, or otherwise exploited characters.

Thus, for some, fairytales provide a form of compensatory escapism, while for others they bring guidance and wisdom (Bacchilega, 2013: 4). This applies to all stories and fairytales whether they are a piece of our cultural ancestry or today's productions. This study focuses on today's fairytale production containing cultural ancestry. These types of productions include for example Moana (Clements & Musker 2016), with its origins in the Polynesian mythology, Brother Bear (Blaise & Walker, 2003), referring to the Native American culture and Coco (Unkrich, 2017), including the aspects of the Mexican traditions. This allows me to reflect how the understanding of the world today connects to the indigenous cultural tradition and how it treats this minority group

and its societal troubles. The captivity of fairytales lies in the notion that they make alternative futures plausible (Greenhill & Matrix, 2010: 17). Even if we know that magic and supernatural creatures do not exist, they present a scene that makes that world and the events of that world believable. Their cultural accuracy adds a layer of credibility to that world.

2.1.2 Fairy tale films of Disney

In his foreword, Zipes (2010: x) lays out the origins of the fairytale films. The beginning of fairytales in films can be traced to George Méliès and his numerous productions in the early 1900th century. However, a new chapter was turned when Walt Disney started his career in the 1920s and began adapting fairytales into motion pictures. Zipes (2010: xi) describes Disney's style as depicting absurd qualities of passionate love, fixed gender roles, and the glory of royalty. Disney's perspective is not the only one in the industry, but it is perhaps the most relevant since Disney's interpretation has been the benchmark for most well-known fairy tales in the Euro-North American public imagination (Greenhill & Matrix, 2010: 6). While I recognize that there are many other (fairytale) film production companies, such as Warner Bros, Walt Disney productions is the most relevant for the present study. Therefore, I find it meaningful to study how the perspective and power of Disney has modified our understanding about fairytales and fairytale films.

In the late 1930s, Disney became progressively more conventional in adapting the Brothers Grimm and Perrault's famous fairytales, following closely the traditional narratives and the patriarchal ideology of nineteenth-century folk and fairytales (Zipes, 2010: xi). He brought in more realistic human figures, sweetened the characters as stereotypes and added cute and amusing animals to liven the stories. Through this consistent pattern he created a model that filmmakers follow even today: 1) a girl falls in love with a young man, typically a prince, or wants to follow her dreams; 2) an evil witch, stepmother, or other wicked force wishes to dishonor or kill the girl; 3) the persecuted girl is captured or left powerless; 4) the persecuted girl is miraculously rescued by a prince or masculine allies; 5) a joyful ending in the form of marriage, prosperity, and social progress or reaffirmation of royalty (ibid).

The distinctive genre that Disney has created for itself has been both its power but also its critique. Fairy tale films' cutting-edge criticism highlights distinctions between the films that want to gratify and ensure happiness and those that seek to force us to confront all those unsettling challenges that generate existential and societal crises with open eyes (Zipes, 2010: xii). Disney's production is profoundly conservative and does not encourage challenging the status quo. The "American dream" that it sold in the booming years of its production is no longer sustainable in today's media markets. Greenhill and Matrix (2010: 10) note that most mature theatergoers have grown

up with Disney animations and are thus well-versed in the importance of talking animal companions, gags and slapstick comic relief, musical performances, double entendres, the romantic, heterosexual, happily-ever-after guarantee, and other Disney norms, but these conventions are heavily outdated in their representation. I will discuss the problems of representation in detail in the next chapter.

While the first *Frozen* was thanked for its women-saving-women perspective, the underlying story was still a very traditional Disney story with its white heterosexual romance and a damsel in distress -storyline. It is interesting to see if the second film follows the same guidelines and ignores the critique about the conservative representations. The current study looks at how or if Disney will battle the genre restrictions it has created for itself. While the current data is not a fairytale transformed in the hands of Disney but rather an original story, I find it still to consist of the same aspects as those fairytale films that are based on traditional or written works through its genre. In addition, the film does include parts from Northern folklores, which allows me to analyze how parts of original stories are transformed into a Disney film.

2.2   Representation and culture

2.2.1   Representation in films

Representation is one of the central concepts in this study because my focus is to study how the Northern cultures are transformed and displayed, thus represented in the context of Disney. Representation is a common term used in various disciplines and contexts. Webb (2009: 1) summarizes representation as something that is immersed into our everyday life. Representation is about understanding the underlying meanings behind any given text or function. Fürsich (2010: 115) defines representation as essential to our culture, the meaning and knowledge about ourselves and the world around us. Webb (2009: 1) describes representation as something that tells what views, attitudes, understandings, and beliefs about a given group of people are seen relevant and valuable. In the context of media, representation refers to the way that individuals, organizations, events, or facts are portrayed in the media; it is recognized as a notion that has to do with how problems or concerns are presented to the public and how a causal connection is formed. It includes all representational, symbolic, and rhetorical aspects as well as all direct and indirect informational aspects of media products (Çobaner, 2021: 374). In the current study, I will show how Disney represents northern cultures, their values, understandings, and enemies.

Representation in media products is especially important because of the influence these products have. Webb (2009: 116) lists two main reasons why media is so

influential. First, the visuals, storylines, and messages of media products are repeated across a wide variety of individual shows, products, and media. Second, they intentionally create meanings and ways of viewing the world. Within this power of representation lies danger. Webb notes that throughout history, Hollywood has shown "others" as the enemies of the United States (ibid). Villains have resembled people from the Soviet Union and the Middle East. When the public is shown repeatedly a specific view of certain people, the idea starts to seem true and convincing. This creates a vicious circle: when an ideology is successful, it presents itself as the sole reality. It is not necessary to persuade or coerce individuals; rather, it is sufficient to present a single reality so frequently, in so many contexts, and in so many forms, that it becomes difficult to consider any other perspective (Webb, 2009: 117). Webb notes that the cultural industries have been used to reproduce the societal power structures and to promote the ideologies that suit the interests of those in power (ibid). Hence, it can be argued that the lifestyle and ideas that Walt Disney films represented were approved by the ruling class. If the representation of a group is built through the eyes of a non-member of the group, such as an American creating an image of a person from the Middle East, the representation is flawed by the subjective views that they have of the group. In the context of Disney, their representation of non-Americans was flawed by their views of those living a life different to the American dream. For example, in films created before 2000s, the characters who represent non-dominant cultures are often depicted as poor, villainous, and unintelligent while whiteness and Christianity are shown as desirable and respectable (Towbin, et al., 2004).

In addition to villainizing the people from the Middle East and the former Soviet Union, Disney has been criticized for its representation based on gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and culture. For example, Maity (2014) argues that Disney portrays women as helpless, passive, submissive, and beautiful objects, who need a man to give them a life. Similar criticism has been raised by Shawcroft, Coyne, Zurcher, and Brubaker (2022), Balint (2013) and Rowe (1979). Many scholars, such as Griffin (2000) and Brown, (2021) have criticized Disney for its homophobic approaches. The critique towards Disney for its cultural misrepresentation is discussed in the next chapter.

Many of these groups represented in Disney's products are minorities, at least in America. Thus, these groups have fewer chances of representing themselves at the same scope that Disney and the American way can. Therefore, reflecting the past problems of Disney concerning representation, it is important to study how the representation of Northern cultures is built.

2.2.2   Always cultural appropriation?

One cannot discuss Disney and representation without touching the topic of cultural appropriation and misrepresentation. When Disney published their film *Mulan* (Cook

& Bancroft, 1998), it was a big hit in the western world. However, the people in China, from where the original story of Mulan was, did not approve of it. They felt that the film misrepresented the historical ballad of Mulan and that it did not tell the story truthfully. In her article (2013) Jing Yin shows that while making the story a universal classic, Disney projects Western individualism as universal and Chinese culture as Oriental despotism. As Yin states "the altruistic, dedicated, filial, and loyal heroine Mulan was reduced to the individualistic girl who is crying to get out of the Chinese system". Similar criticism was raised in connection to films such as *Pocahontas* (Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995) and *Aladdin* (Musker & Clements, 1992). Various scholars have criticized Disney for cultural Otherness, cultural appropriation, and misrepresentation (for example: Spector, 1998; Giroux & Pollock, 2010 and Di Giovanni, 2014). Since the current data is a cultural product, I find it important to define cultural appropriation and discuss its connection to the current study.

Public discussion often turns to the term cultural appropriation when criticizing Disney and their culture practices. However, as Lenard and Balint (2020) point out, not all use of cultural practices is cultural appropriation. According to Cambridge Dictionary, cultural appropriation is "the act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture" (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/cultural-appropriation). However, according to Lenard and Balint (2020: 338), in order for something to be cultural appropriation "it must meet four conditions: (1) a taking condition, (2) a value condition, (3) a knowledge, or culpable ignorance condition, and (4) a contested context condition". The first three conditions are rather straightforward. The used cultural aspect must be taken from its original users, the aspect must have value to those it is taken from, and the appropriator must have knowledge of its cultural importance to its original users (ibid: 338-342). The significance of this definition lies within the fourth condition. The cultural symbol or practice that is being used must be claimed and its usage opposed by the people from whom it is being taken (ibid: 340). Contestation is relevant if it is sustained over time, by several members of the culture from which the symbol or practice is being taken, and if the core of the argument centers on culturally specific reasons or explanations (ibid).

When I was writing my BA thesis about the representation of the Polynesian cultures in Disney's film *Moana*, I found that Disney included a group of Polynesian experts in the film-making process (Aronen, 2020). As Fonoti explains, the group, called Oceanic Story Trust, was brought in to help make the cultural references accurate and to portray the Pacific peoples respectfully (Ketekiri Tamaira & Fonoti, 2018: 311-312). Thus, it seems that there was an attempt to display Pacific cultures respectfully and avoid backlash from the Pacific people. While the film went on to become a success in the industry, it received both positive and negative responses among the

Polynesians (ibid: 298-300). This raises a question of the aspects of cultural appropriation. While there were members of the culture included in the process of creating the film, it does tick all the boxes from Lenard and Balint's four conditions.

In addition to cultural appropriation, Lenard and Balint (2020) bring up two other forms of cultural wrongs that can and are often misinterpreted as cultural appropriation: cultural offence and cultural misrepresentation. A cultural offense is one that upsets or offends others by showing disrespect or insulting the cultural practices, beliefs or the individuals that represent the culture and its beliefs (ibid: 336). Cultural misrepresentation is the practice of portraying customs or beliefs in a false or deceptive manner through actions or statements, such as stereotyping. Other manifestations of cultural misrepresentation include demeaning or derogatory depictions of cultural customs or individuals who are of a specific culture (ibid).

Therefore, I do not find it accurate to claim that all cultural representation in Disney products is cultural appropriation or even cultural misrepresentation. In this study, I will be using the term cultural misuse when referring to untrue and/or unfair use of cultural products. I find the term inclusive to various forms of unlawful cultural representations, including all beforementioned forms.

2.3   Frozen films and the Northern cultures

Since the current data is a sequel, I consider it important to discuss the first film and what kind of legacy it left, especially in the context of Northern cultures. The first *Frozen* film (Buck & Lee) was published in 2013 and it was a success from the start. The story was inspired by the fairytale Snow Queen written by Hans Christian Andersen (Snedronningen, 1844). Producer Peter Del Vecho notes that while there are similar elements connecting the film to the fairytale, the plot of the film is mainly an original story (Disney Insider, 30.7.2013). After the story line was built, the production team started to find inspiration for the looks of the film. Del Vecho explained that they were aware that the plot required ice, mountains, water, and other components, which made Norway the perfect source of inspiration. While the nature was the main source of inspiration, the film ended up including similarities to Norwegian architecture and, what was then displayed as, Norwegian style of clothing (ibid). Thus, the connection to Scandinavia was not built within the story but rather because of the story. There is little to no mentions about the Sámi being part of the inspiration for the film, as the inspiration is said to be derived from the Norwegian culture and traditions (for example, Disney Insider, 30.7.2013; Tingen, 04.2022). In Kucharski's interview (Tyranny of Style, 2014) designer Jean Gillmore speaks about designing the costumes and mentions the Sámi only in passing.

After the premiere in 2013, various Scandinavian and Sámi people raised the problems that the film had regarding representation in numerous blog posts. While the inclusion of the Sámi musician Frode Fjellheim was celebrated, the characters' clothing and the representation of Sven the reindeer was criticized (Artificial Swedeners, 9.2.2014; Selchieproductions, 14.12.2013). In an interview with Radio New Zealand (RNZ), the head of the Sámi Film Institute Ánne Laila Utsi explained that for the Sámi, Kristoff's clothes were clearly Sámi inspired, "but not in a way we would have done it" (21.12.2019). The Sámi also criticized the misrepresentation of the Sámi through Kristoff as being "some kind of mystical mountain man (who) has a one-antlered pet reindeer Sven" (Selchieproductions, 14.12.2013). The reindeer are not just pets for the Sámi, they are part of the cultural heritage, tradition, and livelihoods (see section 3.2.).

When it was discovered that the *Frozen* film would have a sequel, the Sámi took a very active role and offered their expertise for the production team who accepted the offer (Simonpillai, 19.11.2019). The Walt Disney Animation Studios and the Sámi people signed an agreement which states the Studio's "desire to collaborate with the Sámi in an effort to ensure that the content of *Frozen 2* is culturally sensitive, appropriate and respectful of the Sámi and their culture" (ibid). The advisory group Verddet was formed, and it included Sámi experts from various fields. The group worked together with the filmmakers to ensure that the Sámi-inspired elements were represented correctly and respectfully. In my interview with a Verddet member Veli-Pekka Lehtola, he told that Verddet came along in the middle of the creation of *Frozen 2*. The group was shown scenes with the Northuldra, and they gave their expert opinion on those scenes. I will discuss the specific changes the group suggested in detail in chapter 5.

Thus, based on the actions taken by Disney to transform their ways of creating fairytales, it seems that their cultural representation should be rather accurate. However, as my thesis on Polynesian cultures and mythologies revealed, the final product does not necessarily end up as accurate as it perhaps should be. Therefore, because the cultural co-operation between Disney and the Sámi is widely recognized I see the importance of studying how this has affected the end result. Based on previous films, I can expect to find some troubles in paradise.

3 NORTHERN CULTURES

In the press kit provided by Walt Disney Studios (2019) the company presents the project *Frozen 2* and its background. The press kit explains that the filmmakers referenced "old Norse myths and folklore found across the Nordic lands" (Disney, 2019: 12). However, the filmmakers travelled to Iceland, Norway, and Finland and therefore their definition of Norse and Nordic is rather hazy. I find it important to discuss what is meant by Norse and Nordic and define them in the context of the current study. In this chapter, I will also display the most prominent aspect that guided the creation of *Frozen 2*, the Sámi people and culture.

3.1 Nordic, Scandinavian or Norse?

When Disney's *Frozen* was released in 2013, the filmmakers explained that the film takes place in a fictional land based on Norway (Daws, 2013). The audience saw picturesque Norwegian fjords as well as buildings and rosemaling. As the film went on to become the highest-grossing films of 2013 and received two Academy Awards (Box Office Mojo, Ziemba; 2014), it was no surprise that the sequel would follow the same path. However, the press kit for the film states that the references for the sequel were inspired by a wider area, Norse myths and Nordic lands and folklore (Disney, 2019). In addition to the press kit referring to Norse and Nordic, various articles about the film refer to Scandinavia when discussing the film and its origins (for example, Low, 2021 and Kvidal-Røvik & Cordes, 2020). Thus, it seems that these terms are used rather interchangeably even though they mean different things. For the purpose of this study, I believe it is important to define these terms and explain how they will be used in this study.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, Nordic refers to the natives of northern Europe and/or Scandinavia. Scandinavia, on the other hand, refers to the

peninsula in northern Europe occupied by Norway, Sweden and Denmark (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Scandinavia). The definition of Norse relates to ancient Scandinavia or the language of its inhabitants (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Norse). However, these terms and definitions differ when considering the context. Geographically, Nordic refers to the area consisting of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and Finland (Hall, Müller & Saarinen, 2008). Politically, the definition includes the previous five countries as well as Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2016). Culturally, the area includes Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland (Aronsson and Gradén, 2013). However, in the context of literature, Nordic refers to Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland, but also Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland (Sondrup, DuBois, Ringgaard and Sandberg, 2017). Mythologically, Scandinavia and Finland are quite separate concepts. For example, Simek (1993: ix-xi) does not mention Finland along with Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland when discussing Scandinavian mythology. However, due to the proximity of each other it is only natural that the mythologies of these areas contain similar aspects. In addition, the boundaries between northern countries have varied throughout history and thus mix the historical understanding about the origins of folktales. Their common history stems from Germanic mythologies.

In the context of the film *Frozen 2*, Nordic, Scandinavia and Norse seem to refer to the countries where the filmmakers visited during the production process, Norway, Finland, and Iceland. Because of the variety of the terms and their meanings, I will be using the term Northern to refer to the relevant countries of Norway, Finland, and Iceland. I find that the terms Nordic or Norse would include or exclude countries that are not meaningful to this study. The term Northern does not have a specific areal reference, but rather it relates to regions conventionally designated North (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/northern). Therefore, I find it to be the most suitable term for my work.

3.2   The Sámi

In this chapter, I introduce the Sámi people and their culture. It is largely recognized, as discussed in the previous sections, that the Northuldra people in the film *Frozen 2* are based on the northern indigenous group the Sámi. I will discuss who the Sámi are, and how they live and create their culture in day-to-day life.

3.2.1 Who and where

The Sámi are a community of people living currently in the northern parts of Fennoscandia. The number of Sámi differs from source to source because there are no commonly shared guidelines by which one could be identified as Sámi (Pentikäinen, 1995: 79). Seurujärvi-Kari (2011: 13) notes that legally, the definition of Saminess is based on subjective and objective criteria. The subjective criteria refer to one's own experience as being Sámi. The objective criteria include Sami as a first language and the right to vote at the election of Sámi Parliament (ibid). According to samediggi.fi (retrieved 6.10.2022), the official website of the Sámi Parliament, there are roughly 75000-10000 Sámi living in Fennoscandia, most of them in Norway. They are also the only indigenous group in the European Union area (ibid). The area the Sámi inhabit, the Sápmi, can also be defined by different criteria, namely based on administration, language, or livelihood (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2011: 15-18). Traditionally, the area starts from central Norway and Sweden, over Finnish Lapland, ending in the Kola Peninsula in northwestern Russia (ibid: 14). However, because of the changes in environment, economy and society, many Sámi have moved from their traditional areas to the metropolitan areas Oslo, Stockholm, and Helsinki (Pentikäinen, 1995: 73). Therefore, the definition of Sápmi is not all-encompassing.

The livelihood of Sámi is greatly affected by their living area. Ecologically, the Sámi live in an area where snow covers the ground more than half of the year (Pentikäinen 1995: 82). Lower lands and mountains grow pine and birch forests whereas higher mountains and part of the Kola Peninsula belong to arctic tundra area. Additional arctic tundra characteristics are permanent or semi-permanent ice on lakes and rivers, as well as high rainfall. The area also has special light conditions: two-month-long polar night and same length midnight sun (ibid). The traditional Sámi livelihoods, hunting, fishing, reindeer herding and agriculture, are all formed by nature. Coastal Sámi live from agriculture and fishing whereas mountain-based Sámi live from reindeer herding (Pentikäinen, 1995: 84-85). Characteristic to the Sámi way of living is the seasonal variation of nature, for example reindeer nomadism, population dynamics of both bigger and smaller mammals, and variation in vegetation (Heikkilä & Järvinen; 2011: 59-63). While reindeer herding has changed over the decades, it is still a significant part of the Sámi cultural identity. The traditional livelihoods are also still present in today's Sámi lifestyle as they are considered to uphold the Sami language and culture. Some Sámi still get their income from traditional livelihoods but most, especially those living outside the Sápmi area, work in modern occupations (samediggi.fi).

Language is another aspect that connects and divides the Sámi. On a general level, the Sámi speak Sami, but this is just the umbrella term for different Sami languages. Linguistically, there are ten different Sami languages that can be distinguished from each other (Saarikivi, 2011: 78). It is not always clear which Sami

language forms should be seen as a separate language and which are just dialectical forms (ibid). In addition, many Sami languages that were recorded earlier have died, and are therefore not included in the list. Most of the Sami languages are small, only spoken by few hundred people (ibid: 81). They are all also minority languages. However, there is one Sami language that is not significantly endangered, Northern Sami, which is spoken by the majority of the Sámi (ibid). The Sami languages are protected by law in Norway, Sweden and Finland and recovery measures have been made in all three countries (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2011: 45).

3.2.2 Culture

While the Sámi culture is partly upheld by their traditional livelihoods and language, their culture consists of many more aspects, such as folklore, handcrafts, and different art forms. Characteristic to Sámi folklore are animals. This is no surprise considering the meaning of nature to their livelihoods. Central animals are the bear and reindeer, but other animals found in the north, such as the Norwegian lemming, wolf, and fox, are present in folklore as well (Pentikäinen, 1995: 89). Animals are also used to predict the future. For example, if the reindeer herd gathers into a rock cranny, a snowstorm is coming and if a woodpecker flies around the house, it is a sign of death or other misfortune (ibid:113-114). The Sámi belief system is also very much affected by nature and hunting culture. A legendary joik tells how the son of the Day (the Sun) marries the daughter of a giant and their children are the ancestors of the Sámi. The mythology continues that the Sun was happy for the marriage of his son and gave the mastery deer and reindeer herding as a gift for the newlyweds, thus creating the understanding that the deer and reindeer are from the Sun (Pulkkinen, 2011: 213). The Sámi sacrificed to the god of the Sun, for example to ensure success in reindeer herding, in the case of sickness and just for the Sun to arrive after the polar time (Pentikäinen, 1995: 120). The Sun is also present in the Sámi flag (samediggi.fi, retrieved 17.10.2022).

Sacredness is also connected to nature and its peculiarities. The biggest separate sacred concepts for Sámi are the Sáiva and the Seita. In addition to these, there is a large collection of sacred aspects connected to, for example, the Sámi home, goahti (Pulkkinen, 2011: 219-226). The Sáiva is understood differently based on the area and language (Pentikäinen, 1995: 146). For some, it refers to cardinal directions and for others it is either a sacred place or a spirit (ibid). Often, the Sáiva is used to describe freshwater lakes, where the fish are believed to be bigger and better and are therefore a sacred place. The Sáiva spirits, in turn, are guardian spirits. The Sámi witches, noaida, can use these spirits as assistants (ibid). The Seita (also known as sieidi, seida or seitse) is a sacred place, located mainly in the areas inhabited by the Sámi (Pentikäinen, 1995: 149). The Seita can be divided into two categories: rock and wood seita. Seita (the name refers to both the rock and wood, as well as the location where it is at) is a natural rock

whose shape and size is somehow unconventional and stands out in the landscape. These rocks are naturally formed, as Pentikäinen notes that only few seitas are manmade (1995: 152). Because of this, these rocks are seen to hold great power and magic (ibid).

The most visible parts of the Sámi culture are their clothes and performative arts.

Joik is the traditional music of the Sámi, but it can be divided into its own traditions based on the origin (Järvinen, 2011:328-331). It is called vuoelie by the Western and Southern Sámi and luohti by the Northern Sámi. Joiku or juoiggus is the general term for the tradition (ibid). Generally, joik has a few common features: Joik is vocal and is rarely accompanied with instruments, one or two melody lines are repeated and varied throughout the joik. The joik is owned by the person, place, or animal for whom the joik was made (ibid). It is different from singing through its use of vocals. Joik is about creating an original sound that resonates through the rib cage freely. The "lyrics" comprise of different syllables, pronouns, and particles.

The Sámi suit, gákti, is recognized as one of the most visible national symbols for Sámi culture (samediggi.fi, retrieved 17.10.2022). Ruotsala (2011: 362) explains that the Sámi suit is not just any clothing, because it tells where the suit and its wearer are from. It can be altered based on the need, occasion, cultural contacts, trends, skills, and personal taste. Ruotsala (2011: 363) even compares the suit to a social security number, as it is created for a specific person and no one else can wear the suit. The creation of the suit is affected by the available materials, for example reindeer leather (ibid). Encyclopedia of the Sámi culture explains that while every group has their own signifying pieces in the Sámi suit, there are some common features. The Sámi suit consists of a beaska (or peski), a frock-like outer garment with the fur side out, a decorated breast piece sliehppá, a hat suitable for one's origin, a decorated belt, leather pants and shoes and a hooded garment Luhkka, worn on top of the coat. The suit is decorated and customized with ribbons, buttons, beads, broadcloth, and pewter (https://saamelaisensyklopedia.fi/wiki/Saamenpuku#tab=English). Not all pieces are mandatory for every group. For example, the wearing of the belt, shawl or breast piece is still essential even if one does not wear a hat (ibid). While historically the Sámi suit has been an everyday clothing, today it is used mostly as a formalwear (samediggi.fi, retrieved 17.10.2022).

3.2.3   In the society

Today, the Sámi are recognized as an indigenous group in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2011: 21). The Sámi and their status as an indigenous group was written into the constitution in Norway in 1988, in Finland in 1995, in Sweden in 1977 and in Russia 1993 (ibid). This is fairly recent, since the Sámi were recognized as a minority group in 1800s. Throughout the history, the Sámi have been

colonialized, segregated and assimilated by the majority cultures. For example, the Sami languages were not allowed in schools, Sámi children were given incomplete education and taken away for boarding schools, factories were built on the Sápmi areas, causing a negative effect to reindeer herding and nomadism (ibid: 28-29, Nuorgam, 2016). One of the most well-known cases of power struggles with the Sámi community is the Alta dam case in Norway, which I will discuss at length later in the analysis section. Seurujärvi-Kari (2011: 23) notes that colonialism can continue even today if there continues to be a power imbalance between the indigenous people and the majority. In these cases, the colonizer continues to make decisions regarding the colonized and what is considered important to them.

The Sámi joined the international indigenous people's movement in the 1970s and began voicing their rights both internationally and nationally (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2011: 10-11). After being included into the constitution, the Sámi gained cultural autonomy, which is executed though the Sámi Parliament. While the Parliament does not have legislative rights, they can make initiatives and proposals for the National Parliament, and they must be heard when passing laws concerning them (ibid, 22). At the time of writing this thesis the Finnish Parliament is under pressure to reform the law for the Sámi Parliament, for it has received reproach from the United Nations Racial Discrimination Committee (Fofonoff, 7.10.2022).

Even though the respect towards indigenous cultures has improved, Seurujärvi-Kari (2011: 30) notes that these cultures are still considered as exotic Others. Indigenous people are used as a tourist attraction to lure visitors, their cultural items are commercialized, and their way of life is displayed as entertainment. For example, in 2013 a Swedish designer created a Christmas collection that was said to be derived from Sámi suit (Kramvig & Flemmen, 2019). The designer Gudrun Sjöden displayed her Sámi heritage to justify the use of cultural aspects. The Sámi criticized the design for not respecting the tradition of Sámi handcraft. In addition to mixing aspects that are meant for specific pieces of clothing, the Sámi reminded that these clothes are handmade and hold a great deal of information about the person wearing the suit. This generation's long tradition is overlooked when deciding to manufacture a culturally significant artifact (ibid). In addition, when marketing Sjöden's collection, the pictures displayed a rather stereotypical view of the Sámi culture by having a frame of reindeer skin, plastic snow, and a non-realistic traditional Sámi home (ibid). Thus, the Sámi did not seem to criticize Sjöden for her heritage but rather for her lack of interest in learning central parts of the culture and its artifacts. Other examples of cultural appropriation of the Sámi products are creating a theme park named Sápmi in Kárášjohka, a hotel chain using the Sámi symbol for sun as their logo, making a tourist marketing video with non-Sámi wearing fake Sámi suits as representing the Sámi and the usage of Sámi drums, runebom, as signposts, to name a few (Viken, 2022; Aikio,

Länsman, Alajärvi & Aikio, 2015). Nuorgam (2016) notes that cultural appropriation is often justified through borrowing and inspiring within immaterial rights. Being inspired is allowed but it becomes problematic when it is not done in mutual understanding, or it does not acknowledge the origin and its significance. Cultural appropriation is about power structures since often indigenous groups, such as the Sámi, are a minority and have experienced colonialization in their history. A Sámi poet and activist Niillas Holmberg noted in an interview that for centuries, the Sámi have been taught to be ashamed of their culture and now Sámi culture is seen so interesting that a non-Sámi can make a business out of it (Mikkonen, 19.9.2016, translation mine). Reflecting this background, it is relevant to consider how an international mega company displays the Sámi people in their films.

4   DATA AND METHODS

In this chapter, I present my aims and research questions, introduce the current data, and discuss the chosen analysis methods. First, I present the aim of my study and how the chosen research questions help me to fulfill the aim of the study. Next, I present the data and briefly discuss the first *Frozen* film and its relevance to the current study. Lastly, I discuss the analysis methods used in the study.

4.1 Aims and research questions

My aim for this study is to find out how Northern mythology and Sámi culture are represented multimodally in the Disney film *Frozen 2*. Thus, my main research questions are: How is the film *Frozen 2* inspired by the Northern mythology and how is the mythology depicted multimodally in the narrative, characterization, and scenery in the film? Through these questions I study how different cultural references are imbedded into the film and if they are true to their origin. My analysis is inspired by the contract made between the Walt Disney Animation Studios and the Sámi people, in which the Studios agrees to represent the Sámi culture sensitively, authentically, and respectfully. Therefore, my main research questions are complemented with an additional research question: what type of Sámi references are included and how do they represent the Sámi and their culture? I will identify what Sámi aspects are represented in the film and if they are displayed correctly and respectfully.

4.2 Data

My data is the film *Frozen 2*, directed by Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck in 2019. To make a justified comparison between the film and its inspiration, I read the books Saamelaiset - Pohjoisen Kansan mytologia by Juha Pentikäinen, Scandinavian folk belief and legend by Reimund Kvideland and Henning K. Sehmsdorf along with other works in Scandinavian and Finnish mythology. I will also be referring to Dictionary of Northern mythology by Rudolf Simek. All books are aimed for both academic and general audiences and therefore I believe that they have provided me a comprehensive overview of the Northern folklore and Sámi culture. I will also be referring to my interview with Veli-Pekka Lehtola, with whom I discussed the significance of the Verddet group in making the film. In order to get an understanding of the production team's views about the film, I have read a press kit made about the film. The press kit is made by Disney, and it explains the process of making the film.

The film is a sequel to the film *Frozen*. The first film tells the story of two sisters, Elsa and Anna living in an imaginary town called Arendelle, located somewhere in the Northern hemisphere. After an unfortunate accident, Elsa is forced to hide her magical powers from the world. However, early in the film, Elsa's powers are revealed as she accidentally casts an eternal winter over the area and flees to the snowy mountains. The story follows Anna trying to find her sister and bring her home while Elsa is empowered by her powers, for the first time ever. After dramatic events, Elsa learns to control her powers, saves her sister's life with "an act of true love" and brings back the desired summer. According to the director Jennifer Lee, "if *Frozen* was the happily ever after, then *Frozen 2* is the day after happily ever after" (Disney, 2019: 2). Lee goes on to explain, that the sequel is more about adulthood and maturity, how life becomes "grittier" for the characters (ibid). It is important to note that while the first *Frozen* film was loosely based on the fairy tale Snow Queen, the second one follows the story of *Frozen* and has no further connection to the fairy tale. In the sequel, the characters are older and now must face things that adults face, such as finding one's place in the world, who you are meant to be. Since the first film was set in summer, the sequel matures to autumn. In *Frozen 2*, Anna and Elsa are building their life in Arendelle. Even though life seems balanced, Elsa feels some sort of unsettlement because she does not know where her powers came from and why. After unfortunate events Elsa, Anna and their companions start their journey to find out the truth about Elsa's powers. Through the journey they find out parts of their family history, battle the spirits of the elements and finally find the truth and bring peace to the kingdom.

4.3 Methods

As a research method, I use multimodal discourse analysis. Multimodal Discourse analysis (MDA) is a form of discourse studies that analyses the connection between language and other elements including visuals, scientific symbols, gestures, motion, music, and sound (O'Halloran, 2011: 1). I find MDA to be best for the current study because it allows me to analyze the film through all its aspects. Social interaction is always multimodal, because we do not only analyze what someone is saying to us but also their gaze, movement, and tone of voice (Norris, 2004: 103). Van Leeuwen gives an example of how multimodality is present in written interactions, through the famous Kitchener poster which includes text in different colors and sizes as well as a person with a uniform and a finger pointing at the viewer. All the aspects in the poster hold a specific meaning and together they create a cohesive message that the viewer elaborates (2004:7). O'Halloran (2011: 118) lists many different aspects through which a scene from a film can be analyzed. Visual imagery, speech, music, and sound effects can all be divided into more specific aspects, such as interpersonal, representational, and compositional meaning (ibid). As opposed to a still picture, visual aspects of the film can be analyzed temporally, for example through the duration of the image or the speed of motion (ibid). Additionally, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2005: 4) note that visual language is culture-specific and cannot be defined by national boundaries. All these aspects of multimodality are relevant for the current study because the data, a film, is very much a multimodal piece, but also a culture-specific one as it draws on Northern mythology and depicts the North.

As O'Halloran points in her example (2011: 118-126), the analysis of a dynamic visual image is interpretative. Analyzing the meanings of gazes, sounds, point of views and backgrounds is done through interpretation. Norris (2004: 4) reminds that any action can have many different meanings, whether intentional or unintentional. Therefore, interpretation is also a subjective method of analysis. While I base my analysis on broad background data, my interpretations of a given aspect are not all-inclusive nor do they aim to be.

In addition to MDA, I use narrative analysis as a supportive theory. De Fina and Georgakopoulou describe narrative analysis as being determined by the focus and methodology of the study (2012: 23). Narrative studies can for example focus on temporal ordering and reference, coherence and structural makeup or narrative functions in social contexts. Thus, narrative analysis can be made using narrative as a method or as a content. In the current study, I use narrative analysis to study how the Northern cultures are incorporated into the film.

De Fina and Georgakopoulou define story as 1) representing a series of temporally and causally related events, 2) introducing form of complication, 3) presenting

goal-directed actions and 4) having an animate protagonist (2012: 6). Fludernik (2009: 21) distinguishes two layers of narrative: the level of the universe portrayed in the narrative and the level at which it takes place. Thus, the story has its surroundings, time and a place, the world where the story happens as well as the characters and events that travel through the time of the story. The passing of time can be shown through discourse or visual aids. For example, past time or memories can be displayed in black and white when present-day action is in color (ibid: 24). Characters move between locations or congregate in a single spot to achieve key story moments (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012: 44). Whether in written narrative or in film, the events are always presented through a specific perspective, the focalizer. In film form, focalization is built through camera angles (Fludernik, 2009: 114-115). A subjective view is created by filming what the character is seeing, from eye level in addition to close-ups. Low-angle setting can, for example, be used to create a sense of threat. Film frequently uses a protagonist's outside perspective as a cue for a later focalization utilizing that person's point of view or establishes a point of view by using unusual camera angles (ibid). These images, point of views are used to display what aspects are relevant to the story, same as when an author uses words to describe the surroundings that the characters are in.

In addition, stories cannot be defined or understood in abstraction from their users and the audience. Fludernik (2009: 6) adds to the definition an aspect of relatability. Narratives concentrate on the characters' experience, allowing the audience to lose themselves in a new world and into the lives of the characters. Stories have sociocultural variability in the sense that they vary in form and substance among cultures, reflecting the diversity of the human experience (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012: 52). Narrative activity and narrative genres are arranged and imagined in very diverse ways among various peoples. The value of narrative mode is not in its capacity to describe reality but rather in the ability to give significance to human experience (ibid: 16).

5   ANALYSIS

In this section, I present my analysis on the northern mythology depictions in *Frozen* 2. I start my analysis with discussion about the characterization in the film. The analyzed characters are divided into two categories: mythological characters and characters that have their name derived from mythology. Next, I analyze the places and landscapes presented in the film and how the scenery is used to build a northern atmosphere. Finally, I study what type of Sámi references are included in the film and how they are represented.

5.1   Characterization

In this chapter, I will discuss the characters of the film and if and how they have their origins in the Northern mythology. I will first address the mythological creatures. Then, I will discuss the characters that have their names drawn from the mythology.

5.1.1   Mythological characters

In the film, the character Nokk is a water spirit taking the form of a horse. Elsa meets it when she is trying to get to Ahtohallan (Buck & Lee, 2019; 01.00.21). According to the press kit (Disney, 2019: 9), Nokk guards the secrets of the forest and only reveals them to a person who can prove their worthiness. As a character Nokk is aggressive at first as it is said to have "the power of the ocean in the charge of a stallion" (ibid). However, Elsa is able to earn its respect and harness it to her needs. Both the name and the character itself can be found in the Northern mythology. Kvideland and Sehmsdorf (1991: 252) explain that the spirit of waterfalls, lakes and rivers is often called nøkk in Northern mythology (Finnish, näkki; Swedish, näck; Icelandic, nikur). In Norway, the spirit can also be referred as grim, a name related to the guardian spirit

of the church and graveyard. The spirit takes a form of a human or a horse and is often considered dangerous or even devil being. Mythology tells that nøkk often takes the form of a horse to lure people, especially children, to the water and drown. However, it is also said that once nøkk hears its name, it will lose its power (ibid: 257). This could be an explanation for why Elsa, or anyone else, does not refer to the spirit by its name. However, Haavio (2020: 96) explains that because nøkk could take a form so similar to a real horse, one should use the sound n- to see if the horse was nøkk or a horse. Thus, if the horse disappears into the water without its rider, it was nøkk and the person has just saved themselves from drowning. The spirit in the film does not seem malicious and it seems that this part of the mythology has been left out. The magical nature of the character is built through visual aspects. Nokk is made of water, it is almost see-through. It can run on the surface of water, but it can also swim under water. The behavior of the character does not differ compared to a regular horse.

The earth spirits take the form of earth giants in the film. They are made of massive rocks and when they sleep, they form the rocky riverbends (Disney, 2019: 11). The earth giants can be seen uprooting trees and throwing enormous rocks at anyone who disturbs them. Surprisingly, they don't leave a path of devastation in their wake since they are nature spirits (Disney, 2019: 11). As Kvideland and Sehmsdorf (1991: 299) note, giants can be found in the oldest literature of Scandinavia, especially connected to the origin and creation of the world. Giants are a rather common mythological creature and therefore it is no surprise that the earth giants have an equivalent in the Northern mythology. Giants play a significant role in describing how natural phenomena like large rock formations, lakes and so-called giant potholes came to be (ibid). Mythological giants are called jätte in Swedish, jotunn in Norwegian and jætte in Danish. Especially in the Scandinavian mythology, giants are one of the main characters in the mythology alongside gods. The mythology shows giants as strong but rather dumb creatures (ibid: 303-306). In Finnish mythology, Kalevanpojat are told to be ancient giants who are used to explain the perpetrator of large rock formations (Pulkkinen, 2014: 97). In comparison, the earth giants from the film and the giants in the mythology seem rather similar. They are both large, strong and are used to create rock formations in the landscape. The role of the giants in the film was connected to their size and strength and these attributes can be seen in the mythology. Thus, it seems that there was no need to change the characters of the giants for the film.

The trolls seen in the film were already present in the first film. The trolls are made of rocks, but they are smaller than the earth giants. They are friendly and harmless. Their leader is Grand Pabbie, an elderly troll who has the abilities of healing and seeing into the future. In the first film, king Agnarr takes his family to see Grand Pabbie when Elsa strikes Anna with her powers (Buck & Lee, 2013: 00:06:45). Grand Pabbie cannot completely heal Anna, but he helps the family to cope with Elsa's powers.

In the sequel, Grand Pabbie is the one to tell Elsa and Anna that they need to right what has been wronged to save Arendelle. In the mythology, trolls can be found almost anywhere. In Scandinavian mythology trolls and giants are not always separated from each other, possibly because in old Norse the word troll can be translated to fiend, monster and giant (Simek, 1993: 335) Their common features include old age, slow to react, enormous appetite and strength (Kvideland & Sehmsdorf, 1991: 302-306). The trolls are described as living in the mountain caves and causing harm to people. Therefore, it is clear that the trolls in the film do not have much connection to the mythological trolls. Unlike the mythological ones, the trolls in the film are wise, helpful towards people and are even called "love experts" in the first film (Buck & Lee, 2013). It can only be guessed as to why trolls are made opposite to what they are in the mythology. Perhaps the story needed more friendly characters living in the woods, as the earth giants are rather hostile towards people. However, it should also be remembered that since the trolls were present in the first film, they were made to fit the first story and thus their role in the second one needs to be in line with the first one. In addition, as Kvideland and Sehmsdorf (1991: 299) note, giants and trolls are central to many different mythologies, and it can be assumed that the definitions of these characters were mixed through decades of travelling, storytelling, and rewriting. Thus, the characters might have aspects of mythologies that would not even be considered under the scope of the current study.

5.1.2 Characters with their name from mythology

While some characters have their base in the mythology, others have simply gotten their name from mythological characters or words.

Anna is one of the main characters of the film. The name stems from the Old Norse word Annar, meaning the other one, the second (Simek, 1993:17). The name is rather appropriate since the character is the second born child, little sister to Elsa. In addition, Anna is a very popular name in both Scandinavia and the world (Statistics Norway, Digital and population Data Service Agency, Statistics Denmark, Statistics Sweden & Forebears, retrieved 23.9.2022).

Olaf is the endearing snowman built by Elsa. Olaf was created in the first film and is now a close friend to Anna and Elsa. Olaf as a character does not have an equivalent in the Northern mythology, but his name has a lot of history. Olaf itself was a popular name as early as late 1800s and it was the name of many known kings in Scandinavia (Statistics Norway). Thus, the character of Olaf does not have a mythological history, but rather it is a historically significant and popular name.

Iduna is the name of the mother of Elsa and Anna. In Northern mythology Idun means the rejuvenating one (Simek, 1993: 171). Idun is a goddess who is in possession

of apples that make the gods young again. The name does not seem to have a clear connection to the character besides the connection between fertility and motherhood.

In the film, Agnar is the name of Elsa and Anna's father, the king of Arendell. In Northern mythology Agnarr is known as the son of the King in the mythical poem *Grímnismál* found in the poetic Edda. Agnarr helps the god Odin escape the torture that a giant has put him under (Simek, 1993: 4, 18). It is interesting to note that in the film Agnar is the son of the king, his father King Runeard, thus fulfilling the meaning of his name.

Arendell is the kingdom where the film is based. The word Arendell seems to be stemming from the Old English word earendel, meaning sunrise or a morning star (Simek, 1993:69). To the Northern mythology the name connects through the story of Aurvandill and his toe becoming a star in the sky (ibid: 24).

Bruni is the name of the salamander in the film, although its name is not told in the film. According to Simek (1993:46) Brúni is an Old Norse word meaning "the brown one" or "the one with bushy eyebrows". Since the character is neither brown nor has any eyebrows, it seems that the name has not come from mythology but rather Old Norse vocabulary where bruni means fire (Arthur, 2002: 55).

While the names Elsa, Kristoff or Sven cannot be found in the mythology, their usage in the film can perhaps be connected to the popularity of the names in Scandinavia (Statistics Norway, Digital and population Data Service Agency, Statistics Denmark, Statistics Sweden). Bailey brings up that at a press day the producers revealed that the character names were inspired by an internet search about Norwegian baby names (Bailey, 27.11.2013). However, it should be noted that the naming of Disney characters is not solely a matter of historical accuracy or popularity among the public. Here it seems that the names have been chosen to emphasize the localization as Northern.

5.2   Locations

The building of the scenery in *Frozen 2* started from travelling to Iceland, Norway, and Finland (Disney, 2019: 12). For *Frozen 1*, the trip took place in Norway, where the film production team studied for example the fjords and architecture (ibid). In the press kit (ibid: 2), director Chris Buck explains that the autumn, and its colors, are meant to reflect the maturing that happens in the characters compared to the first film. Therefore, the fjords of Norway did not provide enough material for the production team. The fall colors of Norway and Finland can be seen in the enchanted forest whereas the starkness of Iceland inspired the black beach and the dark sea (ibid: 12).

5.2.1 Scenery

The production team visited Finnish forests, and even hiked to the Pielpajärvi Wilderness Church to gather inspiration for the Enchanted Forest (Disney, 2019: 13). Figure 1. shows how the enchanted forest is colored in different shades of red, orange and brown that take place in deciduous forests in the fall. Some of the leaves have fallen and there is reddish fern on the ground level. The wood is mostly birch which is a common species in Scandinavian taiga, in which Norway and Finland belong to (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiga). The vegetation in taiga comprises of different conifers, some birch, heathers, as well as mosses and mushrooms (https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/taiga/). While the enchanted forest does not seem to have many conifers, the landscape can be identified as taiga based on other vegetation and the connection to the Sámi. The warm colors and variability of vegetation create a feeling of warm and friendly environment. While none of these aspects would mean much separately, when put together they create a cohesive landscape that the viewer interprets. The enchanted aspect of the forest is not necessarily built around the representation of the accurate northern forests but rather the occurrences that happen within the forest. The wind, which later is revealed to be named Gale, swirls around single characters and lifts only certain parts of their hair or clothes as opposed to the natural wind that does not behave in such manner. The "real" wind would affect everything in its surroundings, including the people, the trees, and the plants.

The scenery is then used to create a complete opposite to the starkness of the Dark Sea. The landscape changes as Anna and Elsa travel further from the Enchanted Forest. When they encounter their parents ship close to the Dark Sea, the vegetation has changed into a more tundra-like landscape. There are hardly any woods and even they are small and stunted. The ground level has less plants and more rocks. When Elsa arrives at the Dark Sea, alone, the landscape is stark and dark, highlighting the loneliness and darkness of the situation. Figure 2. shows how the sand on the beach is black and there seems to be no vegetation, only rocks. The production team visited the black-sand beach in Iceland and based the scene to that place (Disney, 2019: 14). For the team, the nature in Iceland was powerful and unpredictable, matching the atmosphere when Elsa enters the Dark Sea (ibid). The volcanoes and glaciers in Iceland host little vegetation as they belong to the arctic tundra. The vegetation is the arctic tundra is composed of shrubs, mosses, and other ground level flora (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tundra). The press kit tells that the production team visited the black sand beach Reynisfjara in Iceland, and it became the black beach, Elsa's connection point to the Dark Sea (Disney, 2019: 14). Figure 3. Shows the Reynisfjara black beach.

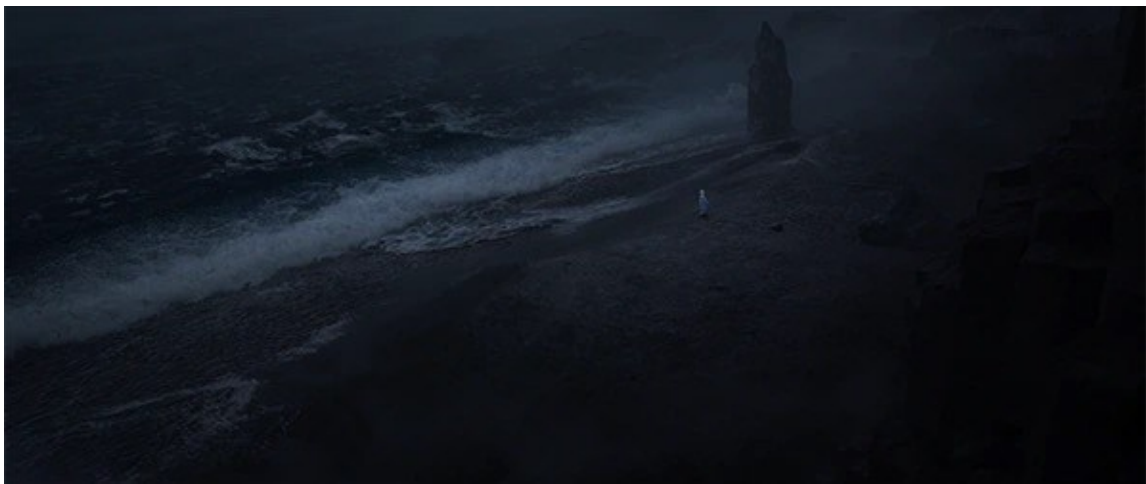FIGURE 1. Picture of the Enchanted Forest

FIGURE 2. The Dark Sea

FIGURE 3   Reynisfjara black sand beach in Iceland

5.2.2   Ahtohallan

Ahtohallan is one of most significant places in the film. Early on Ahtohallan is referred as "the special river… that was said to hold all the answers about the past" (Buck & Lee, 2019: 00.05.49). In the lullaby All is found, Queen Iduna sings

> "Where the North wind meets the sea / There's a river full of memories / Sleep, my darling, safe and sound / For in this river, all is found / In her waters, deep and true / Lie the answers and a path for you / Dive down deep into her sound / But not too far or you'll be drowned / Yes, she will sing to those who'll hear / And in her song, all magic flows / But can you brave what you most fear? / Can you face what the river knows? / Where the North wind meets the sea / There's a mother full of memory / Come, my darling, homeward bound / When all is lost, then all is found (ibid: 00.06.07).

Later, Anna and Elsa find a map where Ahtohallan is drawn as an island with a river flowing through it (00.52.32). It is also suggested that Ahtohallan is the source of Elsa's magical powers (00.55:09). The geographical location of Ahtohallan is not discussed in the film. However, in her encounter with the salamander (00.40.22), Elsa decides that she should "keep going North" to reach Ahtohallan, and in the map Ahtohallan is placed behind the Dark Sea. When Elsa approaches Ahtohallan through the Dark Sea, she sees an icy island and realizes that Ahtohallan is a glacier; "Glaciers are rivers of ice" (01.02.40). In fact, glaciers are known as large ice masses that travel slowly across land (https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/glacier-moving-rivers-ice, retrieved 12.9.2022). When entering the glacier, Elsa learns that Ahtohallan truly is the source of her powers and her true "home". In the song Show Yourself,

Queen Iduna repeats a part of the lullaby "Come, my darling, homeward bound" and Elsa answers "I am found", signaling her realization of her heritage (1.06.20). After this musical dialog, Elsa is shown the memories of the past through characters made of snow, thus displaying Ahtohallan as the river "full of memories". The magical aspect of Ahtohallan is built through different visual aspects and the events that happen inside. Colorful lights and memories are shown on the walls and Elsa witnesses a scene where the characters from the past display the memories. To separate the memories from Elsa, the characters are somewhat see-through.

Ahtohallan has its roots in the mythology. Etymologically Ahtohallan seems to stem from a place in Scandinavian mythology called Valhall/a, meaning "hall of the slain" in Old Norse (Simek, 1993: 346). In the mythology Valhall/a is the hall, hosted by Odin, where the warriors slain in the war go after death. It is important to note that it is not the same place as Hel, which is often referred as the place of the dead. Hel is the realm of the dead in Germanic mythology but is hosts people died of illness or of old age; in Scandinavian mythology Hel is the realm of shadows, a cold and damp place (Simek, 1993: 137). Among the Sámi people, the equivalent to Hel is called the realm of the dead souls (Pentikäinen, 1995: 214). Neither Valhall/a nor Hel are seen as a punishment in the mythology, but rather a place for the dead to go after their life on earth (Simek, 1993: 232, 347). In fact, Simek considers if Valhall/a was the imagined paradise for Viking Age warriors (ibid: 347). The punishment aspect of Hel comes from a place called "the dark Hel" in Old Norse, Nilfhel, also affected by the Christian hell. It is a part of Nilfheim, "the dark world" in Old Norse, although sometimes they are used equivalents. Nilfhel is the deepest and darkest hell where the dead go after Hel (ibid: 232). Another etymological aspect to the name Ahtohallan, comes from the Finnish word ahtojää (Eng. pack ice). According to Wiktionary, ahtojää means large masses of ice, packed together (https://fi.wiktionary.org/wiki/ahtojää, retrieved 12.9.2022). This would be supported by the fact that glaciers are tightly packed snow and ice.

Valhall/a does not seem to have geographical location in the mythology, as it is located in Asgard, the fortress of the Scandinavian gods (Simek, 1993: 20, 347). Hel, on the other hand, is said to be somewhere in the north and downwards (ibid: 137). Hel can be entered through and over various rivers, depending on the source (ibid). The Finnish mythology equivalent Tuonela (also known as Manala and vainajala) is horizontally seen to be located behind a stream and "in the north", but vertically it is "down below", under the earth (Pulkkinen, 2014: 37). Pulkkinen (2014: 48) displays how the dualism of north and south affected Proto-Uralic cultures and mythologies. The dualism is especially seen in relation to life and death. North is connected to darkness, coldness, otherness, death, upside down and counterclockwise. South, in turn, is connected to light, warmth, life and clockwise. In the case of Ahtohallan, it is clearly built around north, coldness and darkness.

Even though Ahtohallan includes many parts of the different mythologies, the biggest discrepancy seems to be in who inhabits this mythical north. Perhaps the biggest motivation for disregarding the role of the dead was the audience. The film is a children's film and thus should not include too much complex information about the dead, dying and death itself. It seems that for the purpose of the film, Ahtohallan was created for a place for memories, both good and bad. The characters shown in Ahtohallan were merely from the past, not the same as in the present, for example kings Runeard and Agnarr and Queen Iduna are dead and thus not present, whereas Anna and Elsa are adults in the present, but their child versions are in the past. In addition, the mythological variants of Ahtohallan do not seem to have magical connections to them. Thus, it seems that the concept of Ahtohallan was a mix of the different northern mythology understandings about the dark and mythical place in the north, turned into a child friendly version. While the Ahtohallan does have connections to the Northern mythology, I find that enough aspects are changed, so that it does not misrepresent any mythological places.

5.2.3 Runestones

One concept that raises questions are the runestones-like objects found in both *Frozen* films. In the first film, Anna can be seen standing beside two runestones after the death of her parents (Buck & Lee, 2013: 00:10:27). In the second film, there are four large runestone-like stones standing close to the Enchanted Forest (Buck & Lee, 2019: 00:02:25). In the first film, it is rather clear that the stones are runestones, or at least tomb stones since they are presented in relation to funerals. The signs and symbols, such as the fjords, northern lights and joik, shown in the film up to that point have already built an understanding that the events take place in Scandinavia, furthermore enforces the idea that the stones shown are indeed runestones, which are mostly found in Scandinavia. However, in the second film the stones have symbols of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, and they are told to protect the forest.

Runestones are large monuments made to commemorate the deceased (Sawyer, 2001: 10). Runestones are often considered "late Viking-Age" since the majority of them were made in the tenth and eleventh centuries in Scandinavia (ibid: 7). Most runestones were positioned upright and their inscriptions, written in Old Scandinavian, followed a similar formula: who raised the stone and for whom, some including additional information about the relationship, family, or title (ibid: 10). While this seems to match the runestones seen in the first film, the stones in the second film are not that straightforward. Sawyer (2001: 1) explains that stones with runic inscriptions are collectively called runestones and that their function is to act as memorials or grave markers. These monuments were erected to commemorate mostly men who have died abroad or at home (ibid). However, I have not found any information about creating

runestones for spirits or mythological creatures. Sawyer notes that figures of masks in runestones can be seen as depictions of either Odin or Christ (ibid: 129). This, however, does not support the view that these stones would have been erected for these characters. Thus, it seems that the large stones in the second *Frozen* film do not have background in historically accurate runestones.

On the other hand, these stones might have another meaning within the Sámi. Seita (also known as sieidi, seida or seitse) is a sacred place, located mainly in the areas inhabited by the Sámi (Pentikäinen, 1995: 149). As discussed in section 3.2.2., seita can be divided into two categories: rock and wood seita. For the current study, rock seitas are more relevant. While no one is seen to give sacrifices to the stones with the element symbols in the film, it cannot be disregarded that these stones might get their inspiration from seitas. As mentioned previously, in the film the spirits, which symbols are engraved to the stones, protect the Enchanted Forest, and give the forest its magic. It is told that in the past, the forest had provided for the people of Northuldra, but the spirits withdrew their magic when the fight between the Northuldra and the people of Arendelle broke out. Pentikäinen (1995: 153-155) explains that in the Sámi mythology the seita could either reward or punish people based on their sacrifices and actions. Following that belief, the spirits could have removed their magic as a punishment for people for their, what is later learnt, dishonesty. Thus, these element stones have features of both runestones and seita: similarity to the runestones shown in the first film and the natural power they hold and represent.

5.3 The Sámi

As it has been noted previously, the Northuldra people are based on the Sámi people. My interview with Veli-Pekka Lehtola shed light into how the Verddet group changed some aspects of the Northuldra. However, it seems that many characteristics were already imbedded into the manuscript and animation and could not be changed. According to Lehtola, many of the changes they made were quite small in the end, but their significance to the credibility of the film was substantial.

5.3.1 Northuldra

The name Northuldra has its roots in Northern mythology. The first part of the name, north, is a rather clear reference to the area the people are living in. Since the film is located in the northern part of the globe, with snow and ice being at the center, reference to the north seems rather logical. However, the second part of the name has a deeper meaning. In Scandinavian mythology there is a group of people living in the underworld. They are not dead but are rather considered as people who live upside

down under the world. Sámi people call these gufihtar or ulda. The relevant term here is the name ulda, which stems from an old Norse word huldre, referring to the invisible people in Scandinavian mythology (Pentikäinen, 1995: 251). In the Finnish tradition, these beings are called imps. The ulda people are described as smaller than humans but look the same and behave in a similar manner, for example by herding reindeer (ibid). The Sámi and the ulda can live in peace but sometimes the ulda are hostile towards people. The ulda are also connected to the changeling tradition where the ulda take an unguarded human child and change it to an ulda elder. The tradition is rather similar in the Scandinavian mythology with the addition that the Huldre folk can also live in the mountains (Kvideland & Sehmsdorf, 1991: 206-212). The Northuldra do not live under the world, but they can be considered invisible since they live within the mist where no one can enter or leave. However, it is clear that the name was invented solely for the film and does not add up to a deeper consideration. In the film, the Northuldra leader Yelena introduces the tribe as "we are the people of the sun" (Buck & Lee, 2019: 00:42:30). As discussed in section 3, the sun is a strong part of Sámi culture and rituals. It seems rather ironic that the name for "the people of the sun" is derived from the word meaning hidden and covered as well as the people called the invisible folk. When in the forest, the Northuldra did not have any access to the sun, yet they are inspired by the people for whom the sun is a critical part of their culture.

Additionally, in my interview with Veli-Pekka Lehtola, he brought up an aspect that was changed in relation to the nature of the Northuldra people. In the first version of the film the Northuldra were represented as rather aggressive and violent, for example by portraying the leader Yelena with a weapon. Lehtola told that the Verddet explained to the production team that the Sámi were not aggressive in nature and have not even been in a war. This viewpoint resulted in a change from a weapon to a stick for Yelena. In addition, in the film, Yelena can be heard pointing out "We would've never attacked first" when discussing about what sparked the battle between the Northuldra and the people of Arendelle (Buck & Lee, 2019: 01.36.44). While these changes soften the impression about the Northuldra, they are still not shown as peaceful and close to nature. The Northuldra are quick to turn to their sticks and take aggressive positions when they see the king Runeards soldiers (00.34:30). It would be naïve to think that the Northuldra would not defend themselves if the situation demanded it, but it seems rather precipitate to act aggressively for mere sight of the "enemy". While the violent nature of the Northuldra was decreased, it was still implicated that the Northuldra were not afraid to take up arms, thus giving a misrepresentation about the nature of the Sámi. It can only be guessed, but perhaps the hostility was left to emphasize the dichotomy between the Northuldra and the people of Arendelle, and the history they share.

5.3.2 The Northuldra village

One of the most visible Sámi features in the film can be found in the Northuldra village where the people lead Anna, Elsa, and their companions (Buck & Lee, 2019: 00:43.14). The village comprises of large tents, which refer to the tents used by Sámi, called lavvu (Northern Sámi), koavas (Kildin Sámi), kota (Finnish) or kåta (Swedish), among others. The lavvu is created from standing wood poles paired up and tied together from the top (Ruotsala, 2011: 359). In addition, there are multiple straight poles that are tied horizontally on the structural poles thus giving the lavvu its shape and structure. Traditionally, reindeer hides were used to cover the poles, but later the fabric was changed into a lighter one. In a traditional lavvu, there is a fireplace in the middle to provide warmth and keep out the mosquitoes. However, in the film, there seems to be no fireplaces inside the tents. There seems to be holes on the top of the tents, signaling that it would be possible to have fireplaces inside, since the top holes are used as smoke holes to let the smoke escape. The benefits of lavvu were stability in the high winds and movability as the Sámi followed their reindeer herds (Ruotsala, 2011: 358). The tents do not play a significant role in the film but rather help to create a credible background for the Northuldra people, thus giving an authentic scenery for the Sámi references. In the same scene, Anna is seen holding a wooden cup, also known as guksi or kuksa (Finnish). Guksi is a cup traditionally handcrafted from carved birch burl (Ruotsala, 2011: 361). The appearance of the cup seems to serve similar purposes as the lavvu, to authenticate the surroundings of the Northuldra.

5.3.3 Joik

Another clear connection to the Sámi culture is joik. As discussed previously, joik is a rather well-known aspect of Sámi culture. In the first *Frozen* film joik is present even when the filmmakers did not have cooperation and expertise of the Sámi. Joik is the traditional music of the Sámi, but it can be divided into its own traditions based on the origin (Järvinen, 2011:328-331). The purpose is to paint the joik into reality though the performance of joik. In the film, joik is present for example when Anna and Elsa are recognized as part of the Northuldra (Buck & Lee, 2019: 00:41:50). In the scene, Anna and Elsa, along with the Northuldra, realize that their mother was Northuldra and thus makes them also part of the group. The Northuldra form a spiral around Anna and Elsa, while singing a joik. The joik ends with the leader Yelena introducing the Northuldra and therefore inviting Anna and Elsa as part of them. The joik seems to be used here as a way to authenticate the Northuldra and to signify the importance of the realization.

5.3.4   Reindeer herding

Reindeer herding is only one of the Sámi livelihoods, but it seems to be the most known of them. This can be seen for example in the first *Frozen* film where Kristoff is accompanied by his reindeer Sven, even when, as noted before, no Sámi cooperation was included. Thus, it is no surprise that the Northuldra is shown to live with a herd of reindeer. However, based on the perception made in the film, reindeer herding means living with the reindeer and using them for one's plan for proposing to their partner. In reality, reindeer herding is part of the Sámi way of life, living in harmony with the nature (Pentikäinen, 1995:85). Reindeer herding Sámi live a nomad way of life, travelling along with the reindeer migration (ibid). The film does not show any travelling of the Northuldra, but instead states that after the mist set no one could leave or enter the forest (Buck & Lee, 2019). This would suggest that neither the Northuldra, nor the reindeer did any migration for decades. While reindeer herding is still an important part of the Sámi culture, the majority of the Sámi work in modern occupations. Perhaps because of the nature of the film, no modern occupations of any kind are shown in the film. It can be assumed that showing the Northuldra as only reindeer herding people emphasizes their relationship with nature.

In the film, most of the scenes with the reindeer show them talking and singing, for example along with Kristoff singing "Lost in the Woods" (Buck & Lee, 2019). For more characteristic behavior, the reindeer can be seen running around in a circle (ibid). Lehtola explained that the production team was excited to see a reindeer separation when they visited Norway and Finland, and thus wanted to include that to the film. The problematic aspect with that was the circumstances of the event in the film. In the first scene, two reindeer can be seen running in a circle surrounded by people, while in the second one, the reindeer herd is freed from the enchanted forest, and they start to run in a one large circle (Buck & Lee, 2019). Lehtola explained that while the running in a circle is correct in reindeer separation, the circular motion is only created by the manmade fence surrounding the reindeer. Thus, in nature the reindeer would not run in a circle but would run in what direction they please. Lehtola explained that the Verdett raised their concerns about the misrepresentation of the reindeer, but due to visual reasons the scene was decided to keep in the film.

5.3.5   The clothing

While the clothes of the Northuldra could be seen as a rather obvious reference to the Sámi, Veli-Pekka Lehtola gave an explanation as to why this is a complicated matter. Dressing the Northuldra in clothes that match the Sámi is impossible simply because there is no singular piece clothing, fabric or a symbol that would be present or symbolize the same thing in all Sámi clothing. Lehtola reveals that before the Verddet's

opinion, the Northuldra clothes were created based on various arctic styles of clothing, reasoning being that this would reduce the possibility of cultural appropriation. The Verddet argued that because the landscape was easily identifiable as northern Scandinavia and therefore Sámi areas, it would be questionable to include clothing that were relevant for example for the Samoyed. Based on the Verddet's views, the Northuldra clothes were added Sámi aspects. As was discussed in section 3.2.2., the Sámi suit is a very personal form of the Sámi culture, as it is made directly for its wearer. Thus, if some specific features were chosen for the film, it would indicate that the Northuldra were based on this specific group and its culture. This would then, in turn, result in displaying aspects that were present only in that one group and, thus disregarding the diversity and dynamism of the Sámi culture as a whole. Therefore, the base for the clothes of the Northuldra was to be appropriate for their purpose, make sense to the Sámi. That is why the Northuldra clothes seem to be made, at least partially from (reindeer) leather, especially the shoes, have a belt from which tools can be hung and have embroidery and ribbons. The Northuldra are not mimicking a specific Sámi group, but rather can be considered as one Sámi tribe among others.

5.3.6   The dam

The dam built by king Runeard, Elsa and Anna's grandfather is one of the key aspects of the film. In the film, Elsa and Anna are told that king Runeard had the dam built as a gift of peace, to honor the friendship promised by the Northuldra people to the kingdom of Arendelle and its people (Buck & Lee, 2019: 00.02.53). The dam was built to strengthen the Northuldra waters. Early in the film, it is told that the Northuldra took advantage of the friendship and attacked the people of Arendelle, thus enraging the spirits that guarded the forest (ibid: 00.03.52). This guides the audience to see the Northuldra as thankless and aggressive people, someone one does not want to cooperate with. However, later Grand Pabbie, the wise and elderly troll, tells that "The past is not what it seems, a wrong demands to be rightened" (ibid: 00.22.40). This casts a shadow on what has been learnt before about the forest and its people. When Elsa enters Ahtohallan, she learns the truth about the past. The figure of king Runeard explains that because the Northuldra believe in magic, they also believe that they do not have to follow the king (ibid: 01.08.10). He wanted to build the dam to weaken the Northuldra lands so that the Northuldra would be forced to turn to king Runeard. Finally, Elsa learns that the fight was instigated by king Runeard killing the unarmed leader of the Northuldra (ibid: 01.09.30). It seems that king Runeard killed the leader because they realized that the dam was not helping the Northuldra but rather harming the forest. Elsa and Anna understand that this is the wrong that needs to be rightened, the dam must be broken.

The dam symbolizes the troubles the Sámi faced in the 1970s, the Alta case. The Alta case refers to the decision-making and building of hydroelectric dams in the Sámi areas in Finnmark county in northern Norway. The plan was to build two dams in the Alta River, flooding an area of 75km2, including two Sámi villages Masi and Mieron without consulting the people living in the area (Briggs, 2007). At the time, the area was one of the last remaining places of reindeer pastoralism in Norway. There are tens of thousands of Sámi living in Fennoscandia, and Finnmark is where most of them still have strong links to reindeer herding. Briggs (2007: 151) argues that because the upper Alta River valley was not used for agriculture, central authorities did not perceive it to be associated with any certain way of life or to possess any special value. In the 1970s the Sámi were a rather unacknowledged indigenous group, but their existence was not unfamiliar to the authorities (ibid: 152-153). Sámi people were one of the first ones to oppose the project as they were afraid of the damages the project could bring to their culture and Sámi identity. The Sámi, as well as various experts, argued that the dam would force the reindeer to move to a new, possibly unsustainable land, destroy or at least obstruct the migratory paths and interfere with both flora and fauna of the area (Briggs, 2007: 156). Because of the international pressure, the project was rearranged to include only one dam and not to flood the village of Masi. This, however, did not decrease the amount of damage to the reindeer, salmon, and farming as well as the local climate, as was predicted by the Sámi and various experts, some of which were even brought in by the officials themselves (ibid: 155). Briggs notes that the issue was not a lack of knowledge; rather, it was a decision made by the government officials to ignore it. The authorities rejected science as a source of knowledge for better decision-making. Instead, it utilized science to defend the choices it had already made (ibid: 157). The project was delayed on several occasions because of strikes and court cases until it was finished in 1987. Briggs states that the dam's biggest effect was symbolic. In the Alta dam case, a formerly underrepresented ethnic group (the Sámi) found its voice, mostly in response to political objectives of a state that did not recognize the group's traditions and collective identity. The political procedures surrounding the Alta case played a crucial part in outlining the Sámi's position in politics (ibid: 158).

As the events around the Alta case are slightly different from the film, their connections should be viewed on a higher level. In both cases, the majority did not consider the minority having any significance as such. King Runeard feared the Northuldra because he could not understand their way of life. The Norwegian government did not see an issue with the Alta project because they considered the area "a narrow valley where no one ever goes" (Borring et al. cited in Briggs, 2007: 151). In my discussion with Veli-Pekka Lehtola, he explained that the production team did not have knowledge about the Alta dam case. According to him, the dam connection was

a coincidence but once the Verddet informed the team about the case, it was concluded that connection was rather accurate and did not need to be changed.

6   CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have analyzed various multimodal ways of representing Northern cultures and the Sámi people in the Disney film *Frozen 2* (Buck & Lee, 2013). The aim of the research was to study the Northern mythology depictions that are included in the film and how they create a perception of the Northern cultures and the Sámi. My research questions considered the Northern mythology inspiration behind the film *Frozen 2* and how the mythology is depicted in the narration, characterization, and landscaping. The relevance of the research lies in the representation of a minority culture and its treatment in the hands of a media conglomerate. The interest for the study was sparked by the treaty made between the Walt Disney Animation Studios and the Sámi people. Based on the critique raised towards Disney about its cultural representation and accuracy, I was interested to study how the cultural representation would be handled when a formal agreement was involved. In my analysis, I have provided illustrations of the elements I am referring to, to support my analysis and explain my interpretations. In some cases, I have provided pictures to illustrate the points I have made and to give a more multimodal view to my analysis. The focus of the analysis has been on the verbal and visual as well as the narrative elements that are used to create representations of the Northern cultures.

When reflecting on my research questions, I have discovered multiple things. Firstly, many characters and elements have their origin in the Northern cultures. Some characters, while original to the film, have their name from ancient Northern vocabulary while for other characters, the nature of their being has originated from the Northern mythology. Since the film is an original, i.e., not a film adaptation of an existing tale, the characters themselves are not representing true beings. They are rather used as supportive characters to create a believable surrounding to a Northern tale. Secondly, a significant aspect of the film is its background, the landscape in which the events happen. Through their inspiration trip to Iceland, Norway and Finland, the production team was able to create a scenery that illustrates the warmth of the taiga,

the simplicity of the tundra and the starkness of the black sand beach. Using mainly the relevant vegetation, the film depicts a believable picture of the Northern nature and thus supports the perception of a Northern location. Thirdly, the references the Northuldra have to the Sámi people can be seen as subtle, but as stated by Veli-Pekka Lehtola, their significance to the credibility of the film, especially in the eyes of the Sámi, was considerable. The everyday items used by the Northuldra, for example the lavvu and the Sámi suit, have believable references to the Sámi culture while not being a direct copy. At the same time, the behavior of both the Northuldra and the reindeer was depicted somewhat problematically. I consider these findings especially problematic because their inaccuracy was brought up by the Verdett. However, one interesting but not necessarily problematic aspect is the Ahtohallan. It mixes various different mythologies and creates a whole new entity without misrepresentation.

Especially when comparing the Northuldra to the Sámi people, the study has touched on the power dynamics the indigenous group has faced throughout the history. Even if done unknowingly, the symbolism related to the dam in the film is telling. The building and destruction of the dam in the film was a matter of understanding between an indigenous group and the one in power. Much like in the Alta dam case, the indigenous group and their culture was not seen valuable as such. The same point of view can be seen in *Frozen 2*. To summarize, the film depicts Northern mythologies and the Sámi rather correctly and respectfully. However, the aspects that are not correct, were not changed even when the Verdett, those representing the Sámi, raised their concerns. I find that those scenes do not honor the contract made between the Sámi and the Walt Disney Animation Studios where the Studio's agreed "that the content of *Frozen 2* is culturally sensitive, appropriate and respectful of the Sámi and their culture" (Simonpillai, 19.11.2019).

In this thesis, I aimed to answer my research questions as correctly and thoroughly as possible. However, in the scope of this study, I was only able to study a certain amount of works written about the Northern mythology and the Sámi culture. Thus, the background information collected is not all-encompassing, or does it claim to be. While I aimed to include the main aspects there might be some relevant events or tales that have not been included in this study. My interpretations about the depictions and connections are subjective and are made from the point of view of multimodal discourse analysis ja representation. I have included the most significant aspects, regarding the comparison between the mythology and the film. If made by someone else, the study might include different points and references. Further research could focus on different aspects of representation in the film or use a different method of analysis. On the other hand, the same methods and backgrounds could be used to study different fairy tale films or media products. In this sense, options are almost endless.

In conclusion, this study has contributed to the studies related to Disney and cultural representation (see e.g., Yin, 2011 and Aronen, 2020). In conclusion, the film *Frozen 2* represents the Northern mythology and the Sámi authentically and mostly correctly. Creative liberties have been taken in some scenes, but as a whole, the film does not misrepresent the Northern mythology or the Sámi people and their way of life.

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