
Political Representation of Disability in Eternals Movie: Between Providing Space or Reinforcing Subjugation

Nabila Ikrima

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

nabilaikrима@uny.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to reveal the meaning behind the representation of disability in the film Eternals using Stuart Hall's representation theory approach and Roland Barthes' semiotic method. Eternals first presented the figure of Makkari who is also a nuisance in the real world. The research results show that the representation of Makkari as a person with a disability is still shown as a marginal, incompetent figure, and only a supporting character in the film.

Keywords: *Political Representation; Disability; Eternals.*

INTRODUCTION

The literature on the representation of disabilities in mass media such as newspapers and television can influence the public's attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. This statement is supported by Haller (1999:1) and Morris (2001:1) who agree that media constructs have the potential to impact perceptions and shape audiences' attitudes towards disabled communities. Films and literature also form part of mass media that serves as a primary focus in examining the representation of disabilities. Some films also portray the personalities of individuals with disabilities in healthy interpersonal relationships

Nevertheless, the ongoing intimate relationships of individuals with disabilities are rarely depicted. On one hand, many films portray the lives of integrated disabled groups, but on the other hand, the depiction of integrated education and employment opportunities is greatly lacking. Furthermore, the most common stereotype depicted in disability-related films is that of the worst enemy, portraying individuals with disabilities as pitiful, menacing, or having evil and criminal tendencies (Black & Pretes, 2007:66).

However, filmmakers in certain regions have made progress in dispelling myths and stereotypes as described above. While in other areas, filmmakers continue to perpetuate damaging images, portraying disabilities as asexual beings, incapable of competing in jobs or pursuing education beyond high school. Black & Pretes (2007:83) explain that this incapacity is depicted as a result of the disability condition, rendering them incapable of doing what able-

bodied individuals can, even potentially harming themselves. Despite the prevailing negative portrayal of disabilities in the media, there is a rising trend of Superhero characters addressing disabilities, such as those depicted in Marvel superhero films."

Characteristics of disabled superheroes in Marvel films as cited in kincir.com are exemplified by individuals like Matt Murdock, known as Daredevil, who became blind due to an accident in his childhood, rendering him unable to see for the rest of his life. Despite this, he endeavors to enhance his other senses, particularly his hearing. Consequently, his sense of hearing becomes a superpower and serves as his 'sight' when fighting crime. He can perceive the presence of enemies by hearing their heartbeat, which proves advantageous in combat situations, especially in darkness.

Another disabled superhero character in Marvel's X-Men is Charles Xavier, also known as Professor X. He suffers from paralysis in his legs, which necessitates the use of an advanced wheelchair. His disability isn't congenital but rather caused by a gunshot that damaged his spine. However, his paralysis doesn't diminish his strength. Moreover, his telepathic abilities do not require extensive physical movement as they can be performed from a distance.

If the disabled characters in Daredevil and X-Men are portrayed by actors with normal bodies in the real world, it is different in Eternals, a Marvel film that introduces a disabled character played by Lauren Ridloff, who has been mute since birth. In brief, Eternals tells the story of cosmic heroes who have protected Earth since the early days of human civilization by fighting Deviants, evil beings from space. Initially, it is told that the Deviants had long been extinct, so the Eternals parted ways and lived lives without war. However, mysteriously, the Deviants reappear with even greater power, compelling the Eternals to reunite in order to save humanity."

Furthermore, the emergence of Lauren Ridloff in the film Eternals has received a positive response from audiences, resulting in a significant increase in individuals interested in learning sign language. According to independent.co.uk, there has been a growing interest in the community to learn sign language since the announcement of Lauren's character. Preply claims a 250 percent increase in online searches for 'Learning Sign Language for Beginners'. Preply is an online platform connecting students with independent tutors through video chat. Additionally, searches for the word 'Ridloff' have surged by 550 percent since November 1st, as the 'first deaf superhero'."

Despite the positive impact of the appearance of a disabled actress, the researcher observe that there is objectification of disabled characters in the film Eternals, creating an illusion of well-represented disabled characters, while certain parts of the film actually discredit

the disabled figure. Therefore, the problem statement arising in this research is, "What are the politics of representation of disabilities in the Eternals movie?"

Conceptual Framework

Stuart Hall, as mentioned in Jhally (2005:3), asserts that communication is inseparable from power and that what is presented in the media is influenced by groups holding power in society. Furthermore, Hall conveys that messages operate in a complex manner, always intertwined with the ways in which power functions in society. In other words, common knowledge intersects with power, leading Hall to suggest the interrogation of images to examine how power influences societal knowledge.

The way to interrogate an image can be done by examining it and asking challenging questions about the image, much like interrogating a suspect. Just as a good interrogator should seek to uncover what lies behind a suspect's story or alibi, similarly, when interrogating an image, we must investigate deeply into its background and underlying details."

Therefore, the analysis of representation is necessary as an effort to discern the meaning behind an image. Hall, as cited in Jhally (2005:6), states that representation is the way in which meaning is given to things depicted through images or other mediums on a screen, as well as through words on a page, representing what is being discussed."

Furthermore, when discussing representations, it is inseparable from culture, which is a fundamental force and element in its analysis (Hall in Jhally, 2005:9). Culture is the way we understand or attribute meaning to something, where each person has their own conceptual world. It can be said that everyone has their own viewpoint of the conceptual world because individuals cannot be forced to understand everything in the same way."

Nevertheless, if we do not share a common concept with others, we will struggle to understand the current world, thus failing to create a shared social world unless we can comprehend the world in a generally similar manner. Further discussing culture, a map of meanings becomes part of culture, which serves as a framework in understanding culture. Meaning emerges due to a shared conceptual map held collectively by a group or members of a culture or society. Therefore, the idea of representation in cultural studies is crucial in providing meaning where culture plays a central role, not just as values and incidental elements. It can literally be said that without culture, we cannot comprehend the world."

Furthermore, to become a human subject is to learn and internalize the map of meanings collectively with others within a culture. The conceptual map existing within our minds to comprehend what is happening in the world constitutes a system of representation. In other

words, our concepts within our minds represent the way we interpret the world (Hall in Jhally, 2005:10)."

To be deeper, the concept finds its way through language communication. There exists a shared conceptual map or culture that is closely tied to language. The language, as referred by Hall in Jhally (2005:11), has a broad meaning associated with the language we speak and write, including electronic language, digital language, communication through music, language communicated through facial movements, language communicated through facial expressions, as well as the use of the body and clothing to convey meaning. The language referred to by Stuart Hall signifies the meanings we possess in a form that can be communicated to others, as language can externalize the meanings we create. At this stage, representation truly begins to unfold, closing the circle of representation.

The focus of media studies is on the practice of meaning production, signifying that there is a kind of symbolic work or an activity taking place when attributing meaning to something and when communicating that meaning to others. This practice of meaning production is what Hall in Jhally (2005:14) refers to as 'Encoding Practices,' or practices involved in producing meaning."

On the other hand, concerning power, those in authority aim for an image to have only one definition, aligned with their intentions, as if that were the sole meaning, leading to efforts of naturalization. Therefore, power is said to influence a representation. For instance, every time we see certain people, we tend to assume that they naturally possess those characteristics. Each time we witness specific events, we may perceive that everything indeed has political consequences (Hall in Jhally, 2005:19)."

Furthermore, Stuart Hall in Jhally (2005:20) also discusses stereotypes as an effort to correct naturalized perceptions because an image can generate identification and knowledge related to what we understand about the world and how we perceive its representation. Thus, it can be said that efforts to introduce a new stereotype are a struggle to enhance diversity regarding a certain aspect, such as an identity never previously seen, which Hall refers to as 'Image Politics.' One of the most common strategies involves presenting 'Positive Representation,' where there were previously negative stereotypes about a particular group, and then attempting to portray that group in a more positive light. In other words, an attempt to overturn previous stereotype

Stuart Hall concludes the discussion on representation with the idea of open representation as a solution to power and closedness within representation, related to how symbolic power operates in representation, including efforts to naturalize meaning so that we

have no other option in understanding something. As for maintaining open representation, Hall explained in Jhally (2005:22) that it involves continuously striving to generate new subjectivities or knowledge to be produced and explored. This results in emerging new dimensions of meaning that have not been overtaken by the operating power system."

Considering Stuart Hall's elaboration on representation and its urgency, the researcher has decided to research the politics of disability representation in the movie 'Eternals,' drawing on Hall's framework. The literature review I am using involves referencing a previous study conducted by Rhonda S. Black and Lori Pretes in 2007 titled 'Victims and Victors: Representation of Physical Disability on the Silver Screen,' which used feature films as the subject of research regarding the representation of disabilities in media

In the research by Black and Pretes (2007:83), it is stated that the portrayal of individuals with physical disabilities in feature films contributes to the overall societal perception of disabilities. The study analyzed 18 films produced between 1975 and 2004 that featured main characters with physical disabilities. My analysis encompassed specific themes and stereotypes identified in the research literature. The examined themes were (a) overall personality, (b) community integration, and (c) interpersonal relationships. The studied stereotypes included (a) pitiful, (b) supercrip, (c) evil and criminal, (d) better off dead, (e) unable to adapt, (f) burden, and (g) unable to lead a successful life. Up to the time of their research, popular films had not portrayed individuals with disabilities leading happy lives or actively participating as members of society. Additionally, popular films did not depict individuals with disabilities as workers, family members, romantic partners, or in any roles typically assigned in movies to actors without disabilities."

Furthermore, concerning the Superhero aspect examined in this study, I quote Winterbach's review (2006), which states that 'Superhero' originates from the word 'super,' meaning strength or abilities far greater than most individuals possess. The term 'Hero' refers to a talented individual who performs heroic acts not just occasionally but regularly. Thus, a Superhero is defined as an individual with heroic, selfless, and universal characteristics, undertaking pro-social missions, possessing super/extremely developed abilities, advanced technology, or physical and/or mental skills, including supernatural powers, and having a superhero identity. Moreover, Superheroes possess unique skills like supra-natural abilities not solely acquired through magic but also through the marvels of modern science. Superheroes always have a mission and aim to do good/righteous deeds. They have aliases and costumes that become iconic representations of themselves (Coogan & Rosenberg, 2013:198)."

RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, I employ Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to analyze multimodal representations encompassing audiovisual elements, moving images, and sound. This choice is because Barthes doesn't focus on the meaning of a sign but rather on how signs convey or produce meaning. Additionally, Barthes was among the first to adapt semiotics into cultural studies through his critiques since the 1960s. The denotative meaning can be found in a dictionary, while connotation refers to the socio-cultural significance and carries personal implications such as ideology and emotions. These personal implications can be analyzed through films, which combine audiovisual elements, moving images, and sound (Fiske, 1989).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Marvel Cinematic Universe is a media franchise created by Marvel Studios. Starting with Iron Man, this franchise mostly consists of films independently produced by Marvel Studios, predominantly set within the same universe, akin to what Marvel has done with their comics (marvelcinematicuniverse.fandom.com). Referring to Hall in Jhally (2005:3), it can be said that Marvel is a dominant force that can naturalize meanings about disabilities in accordance with what Marvel desires. This is because Marvel is the dominant party in today's superhero film production, where the image of 'Superheroes' in Marvel films is also a contributing factor to Marvel amassing such a vast fanbase (firstpost.com).

As for the Eternals, it is the first Marvel Superhero film that introduces a character with disabilities, specifically a character who is a real-life mute. As an introduction to the discussion, I will outline the overall plot of Eternals to provide an initial understanding of the film. The story begins by introducing ten gods from the skies around 5000 years before Christ, wherein Deviants, ferocious monsters, attack humans on Earth. At that time, the gods from the sky, known as The Eternals, arrive and defeat these monsters. The arrival of The Eternals leads a group of people to consider them as gods, including Ikaris, Kingo, Gilgamesh, and Thena. They, along with other Eternals - Sersi, Sprite, Druig, Phastos, Makkari, and Ajak, who are Prime Eternals or the leaders of the Eternals - ultimately choose to stay on Earth to fulfill their mission of protecting it by eliminating Deviants.

As for Arishem, he is a celestial being who serves as the superior of the Eternals. He commands Ajak and their group to protect the people of Earth from Deviants. Despite their arrival to safeguard humankind, Arishem prohibits the Eternals from interfering in human conflicts on Earth. The Eternals are depicted as continuing their mission for centuries. During their time on Earth, Ikaris and Sersi develop a romantic relationship that progresses to marriage.

Upon entering the year 1521 AD, the Eternals are depicted as having eradicated the last group of Deviants. However, they begin to undergo a shift in their thoughts regarding the continuation of their relationship with humanity, leading to conflict among themselves. As the leader of the Eternals, Ajak decides that each member of the Eternals should live their own lives separately. This decision is followed by the Eternals, and they part ways to live their individual lives while awaiting further instructions from Arishem.

Furthermore, the film "Eternals" unfolds in a non-linear narrative. In the present day, it is depicted that Sersi lives with Sprite in London. Sersi chooses to work as a teacher while Sprite often feels oppressed as she cannot physically grow into an adult, leading Sprite to alter her appearance to appear more mature. Besides her teaching profession, Sersi also shares a close relationship with Dane Whitman. One night, Sersi, Sprite, and Dane are attacked by Deviants, leaving them overwhelmed. They are rescued when Ikaris arrives to assist them. This attack forces Sersi to reveal her true identity to Dane and ask him to keep it a secret..

Sersi sensed something suspicious about the Deviant attack, prompting her to quickly head towards Ajak's location with Ikaris and Sprite. Unfortunately, upon arriving at Ajak's residence, they discover that Ajak has passed away due to the Deviant attack. Beside Ajak's body, Sersi inherits Ajak's leadership legacy, allowing her to communicate with Arishem. It is at this moment that Sersi learns the actual truth about their mission. They also discover indications that one of the Eternals has betrayed them.

When Sersi communicates with Arishem, she recounts that millions of years ago, Celestials planted seeds on Earth. These seeds required energy derived from the intellectual development of the population on that planet, which, in the Earth's context, referred to the human population. Subsequently, Arishem created Deviants to eliminate the planet's apex predators so that humans, with their intellect, could thrive. However, these Deviants unexpectedly evolved and instead became the subsequent apex predators. Therefore, Arishem created the Eternals to eradicate these Deviants.

Furthermore, the presence of The Eternals ultimately ensures the development of human life, allowing the Celestial seeds to acquire sufficient energy. Arishem also adds that the end of the Eternals' task will occur when the time comes for Tiamut, the name of that Celestial entity, to rise. However, Tiamut's awakening would lead to Earth's destruction, resulting in the annihilation of human life. Learning this fact deeply unsettles Sersi. Consequently, she decides to gather the other Eternals to seek a solution.

Sersi begins to seek and gather their other companions along with Ikaris and Sprite. Starting with Kingo, who has become a famous celebrity in Bollywood, Gilgamesh and Thena,

who live together in Australia, and Druig, who has his own community and society in the Amazon forest. Upon arriving at Druig's location, they start discussing and debating what they should do after learning about Arishem's plan - whether they should continue their mission or prevent Tiamut's emergence to save humankind on Earth.

On the other hand, the film also narrates that Ikaris met Ajak before visiting Sersi and Sprite. Arishem had also explained to Ajak the truth behind the mission they were carrying out. However, Ajak was deeply moved when humans struggled hard to restore half of the universe's population lost due to Thanos. Therefore, Ajak had actually expressed to Ikaris that her stance had changed, and she wanted to continue protecting humankind. Unfortunately, Ikaris concealed the fact that Ajak had a change of heart from the other Eternals.

Furthermore, while The Eternals were still at Druig's location, Deviants suddenly attacked Druig's community led by their leader named Kro. Kro possesses the ability to evolve faster than other Deviants. Additionally, Kro can enhance the abilities of other Deviants, making them significantly stronger than before. As a result of the Deviants' attack, Kro manages to kill Gilgamesh, while Thena experiences a memory disturbance that previously caused her to be possessed by an evil entity, rendering her powerless.

Sersi and the other Eternals are shaken by Gilgamesh's death. They eventually hurry to find the two remaining Eternals. In the end, they manage to persuade Phastos and meet Makkari aboard their ship called the Domo. While Phastos prepares a device to stop Tiamut's emergence, the other Eternals debate over who should lead them. It is then that Ikaris reveals the fact that he killed Ajak by using her as bait for the Deviants.

Ikaris' proposition deeply affects The Eternals. Subsequently, Ikaris states his desire to solely continue Arishem's mission and promptly leave Earth. This immediately divides the Eternals. Sprite chooses to follow Ikaris due to harboring long-hidden feelings of love for him. Meanwhile, Kingo decides to leave them all. On the other hand, Druig, who has always cared for humankind, strongly opposes Ikaris. Eventually, the other Eternals choose to stand by Druig and acknowledge Sersi's leadership.

After the split, the Eternals siding with Sersi begin their actions. When Makkari discovers the point of Tiamut's emergence, they use Phastos' invention to channel power so that Druig can put Tiamut back to sleep by controlling his mind. Unfortunately, Ikaris arrives and attacks them to halt their efforts. While Makkari, Thena, and Phastos fight against Ikaris, Sersi seeks a way to stop Tiamut's emergence. Sersi faces obstruction from Sprite, but Druig rises and manages to overcome Sprite.

During the fight, Kro arrives and intensifies the three-on-one battle between Ikaris against Thena, Phastos, and Makkari. Ikaris, being the strongest Eternal, manages to take advantage of the situation by incapacitating Makkari. Then he frees himself from Phastos' hold and heads straight to where Sersi is. On the other side, Thena decides to engage in a fight against Kro. Memories of Gilgamesh enable her to overcome her memory disturbance and defeat the Deviant.

After these events, everything relies on Sersi. Ikaris, still in love with Sersi, realizes his mistake and decides to sacrifice himself by flying into the sun to atone for his guilt. Meanwhile, Sersi finally acquires the power to thwart Tiamut's emergence by petrifying him, and the Eternals succeed in saving humanity from Earth's destruction.

Based on the entire storyline, it is evident that Makkari, a character with a disability, is not part of the main characters. Although Makkari is a superhero within the Eternals, she remains a supporting character. This can be observed from the beginning of *The Eternals* when the Deviants attack Mesopotamia, 5000 years before Christ. In the initial narrative setting, Makkari is briefly introduced second after Ikaris while attempting to save a Mesopotamian boy, later praised by Kingo. With this early scene in the film, it seems to showcase that the movie *Eternals* includes a character who is mute as a representation for the disabled community. However, Makkari's appearance at the start of the story might be mere objectification, emphasizing the differentiation in superhero films by using a character with a disability, as Makkari is not a part of the main characters, implying that Makkari still remains part of the marginalized group..



Figure 1. First appearance of Eternals on Earth

The conclusion is supported by how Makkari is introduced after that scene, as seen in Figure 1, when all the superheroes, The Eternals, appear one by one before the Mesopotamian community. Makkari is the eighth out of the ten superheroes, indicating that Makkari is merely a supplementary character.



Figure 2. When The Eternals come to Makkari on present-day

Not only that, during the present-day appearances in the Eternals story, Makkari is the last one to be approached when many events have occurred, where even Kingo's assistant, who is not part of The Eternals, appears more frequently in scenes than Makkari. This is because Kingo is the first person encountered after Ikaris meets Sersi and Sprite. This fact further strengthens my belief that Makkari experiences objectification.

In addition to Makkari being only a supporting character, I also got the impression that Makkari is an incompetent superhero. This impression arises when the film is set in Babylon, 575 years before Christ. It is because Makkari is a superhero with the power of speed, yet she is the last one to appear when they regroup, giving the impression that she is incompetent. Despite having super speed abilities, she tends to always be the last to appear, even ending up as the very last one, as seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Makkari's last appearance in Babylon

Not only in Babylon, but this impression of incompetence also arises when the story shifts to Tenochtitlan, in 1521 AD, where Thena is shown casually walking, while Makkari has to use her super speed to catch up, as seen in Figure 4. Based on that scene, there's an impression that disabilities won't be able to compete with able-bodied individuals, even if they have exceptional abilities because, ultimately, the advantages possessed by disabilities cannot overshadow the fact that they have physical limitations.



Figure 4. Makkari follows Thena in Tenochtitlan

The next finding is that disabilities are looked down upon by people around them. This impression arises in Babylon when Makkari approaches a group of men where Druig, an Eternal with the power of mind control, is also present. When Makkari arrives, most of the men leave, and those remaining intend to deceive Makkari, as seen in Figure 5.



Figure 5. People Babilon intended to deceive Makkari

In that scene, it gives the impression that Makkari might be deceived because she seems unable to see or is visually impaired, not mute, not visually impaired. This creates an impression that once someone has a limitation, it will generate stigma that they might have other limitations as well. Furthermore, the scene also seems to indicate that when Makkari attempts to blend in and interact with people around her, those individuals, on the contrary, will underestimate her and take advantage of her disability.



Figure 6. Druig teases Makkari

.On the other hand, Druig as one of The Eternals also seems to be toying with Makkari. There are two scenes where Druig and Makkari meet, and Druig always says, "The beautiful Makkari," as seen in Figure 6. I perceive that the scene is not meant as a compliment but rather

as teasing in a negative sense. In each scene involving Druig and Makkari, although it is narrated in *The Eternals* that they are mutually interested, Druig tends to tease Makkari, making her blush, which further reinforces the impression that Druig is just playing with her. In my opinion, if Druig is genuinely interested and pays more attention to Makkari, why, during the scene where Makkari is about to be attacked by Ikaris, is she rescued by Kingo and not by Druig?



Figure 7. Kingo talks all the events happened to Makkari

Not only that, when *The Eternals* first approach Makkari in the present day, as seen in Figure 7, it is Kingo who narrates what Makkari missed, not Druig. On the other hand, Thena also quotes Gilgamesh, saying that if we love someone, we want to protect them, which is evident when Gilgamesh decides to stay with Thena and protect her, ultimately resulting in Gilgamesh's death while protecting Thena. Referring to that quote, I don't get the impression that Druig loves Makkari because Druig didn't act as a rescuer when Makkari was in a difficult situation.

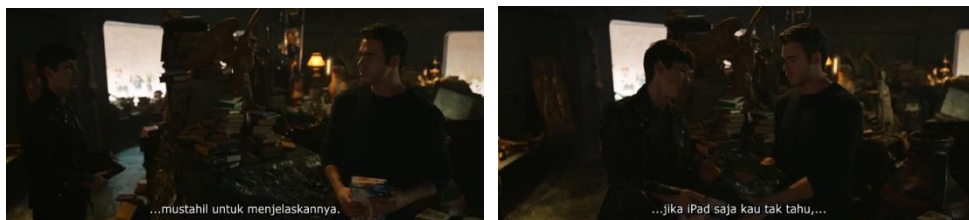


Figure 8. Another scene when Kingo talks Makkari

Furthermore, upon closer examination, not only does Druig seem to belittle Makkari, but I also get the impression of discrediting practices carried out by *The Eternals* towards Makkari, seen in how they narrate the story chronology unknown to Makkari, being the last one approached. When they visit Kingo, Gilgamesh, Thena, Druig, and the others, they recount the events together. However, when narrating to Makkari, only Kingo tells her about the missed events while the others are preoccupied with their own matters. Based on this phenomenon, I get the impression that even *The Eternals*, considered a family in the film, practice marginalization against individuals with disabilities. Additionally, as depicted in Figure 8, during the scene where Kingo is recounting various events missed by Makkari, the camera shifts

from Kingo and Makkari to Druig and Ikaris, leaving only Kingo's voice explaining, making Makkari seemingly disappear because she is not presented visually or audibly due to her disability condition.



Figure 9. First appearance of Makkari and The Eternals on present-day.

Not only that, the impression of discrimination is even evident in scenes such as Figure 9, where all the Eternals approach Makkari as the last person approached in the present time. The Eternals are depicted lining up facing Makkari, who is alone, further indicating that Makkari is different from the others.



Figure 10. Makkari expresses opinion

Discrediting is also evident when Makkari expresses her view regarding Thena seemingly being possessed by something evil. She is immediately contradicted by Kingo, depicted alongside Sersi and Sprite, as seen in Figure 11. The three of their gazes seem uncomfortable and displeased when a person with a disability voices their opinion.



Figure 11. Kingo opposes Makkari's opinion.

Furthermore, the character of Makkari as a person with a disability in the movie "Eternals" is also depicted as someone who doesn't enjoy socializing. There's a scene where Makkari is shown to be comfortable sitting alone in a place resembling a throne. This portrayal could ironically imply that Makkari feels comfortable being alone and not mingling with others, thereby suggesting a sense of freedom within Makkari.



Figure 12. Makkari is reading when The Eternals come

As seen in Figure 12, where she confines herself inside the Domo, The Eternals' vehicle hidden in the sand, while others mingle with people on Earth. Not only does it give the impression of not enjoying socializing, but it also creates the perception that a person with a disability is a disgrace and thus needs to be concealed. Kingo's reference to "Miss Havisham" regarding Makkari, even if it is meant as a joke in the film, also leans towards something negative. This is because Miss Havisham is an antagonistic character portrayed as an old, sorrowful figure from Charles Dickens' novel "Great Expectations," repeatedly depicted as a vengeful woman, resembling a ghost in a decaying wedding dress (lithub.com).

Furthermore, concerning Makkari's speed powers, it ironically makes her unseen and isolated. While the other Eternals are clearly visible figures when they are in action, with Makkari's actions, only a streak is visible, creating the impression of a human figure that exists but seems nonexistent, as depicted in Figure 13.



Figure 13. A figure when Makkari runs

Moreover, when Phastos asks Makkari to locate Tiamut due to her super speed ability, it is this very power that isolates her, forcing her to be alone in finding Tiamut's location, as depicted in Figure 14 where Makkari has to go to various places. After Makkari returns to her companions with information about Tiamut's location, she is asked to leave the place to avoid Ikaris' attack.

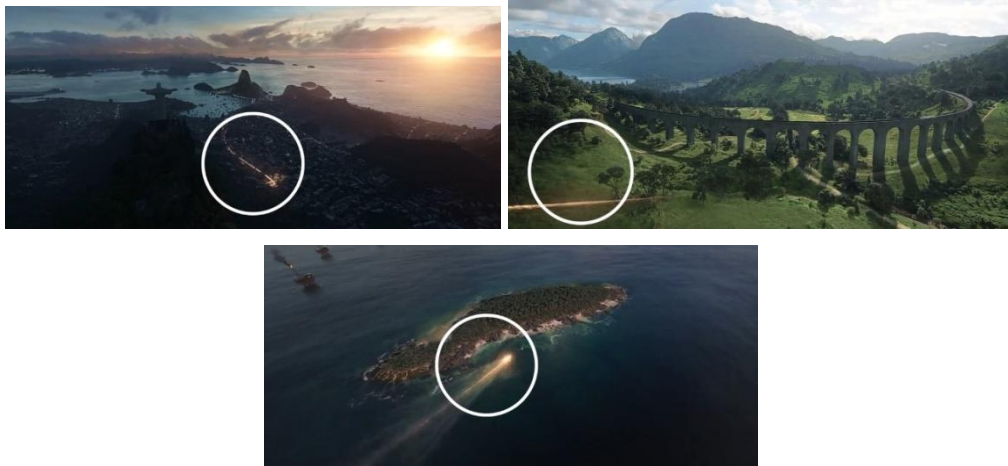


Figure 14. Makkari is looking for Tiamut's resurrection

As a conclusion to the discussion, when addressing positive stereotypes as highlighted by Hall in Jhally (2005:20), I perceive that the inclusion of a disabled Superhero could potentially aim to counter previous stereotypes about Superheroes typically depicted as physically strong and perfect. Hence, the introduction of Lauren Ridloff in this film. However, unfortunately, upon deeper analysis, I see that this effort could backfire on the filmmakers because the impression that emerges isn't a positive image. Instead, it tends to further marginalize individuals with disabilities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Representation analysis is essential to decipher the meaning behind an image. In this research, the images are excerpts from the film "Eternals," representing a disabled character as a Superhero. Initially, there's a positive impression due to the usual portrayal of Superheroes as physically strong figures without any physical shortcomings. However, upon thorough examination and analysis, I discovered that the depiction of disability in the film still portrays them as incompetent, antisocial, and marginalized individuals, where disabled characters only appear as supporting players with the least screen time among other Superheroes.

REFERENCES

- Black, R.S & Pretes, L. (2007). Victims and Victors: Representation of Physical Disability on the Silver Screen. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, (32)1, 66-83
- Coogan, Peter & Rosenberg, Robin. S. (2013). *What Is a Superhero?*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Fiske, J. (1989). *Understanding Popular Culture (Volume 4)*. London: Routledge
- Haller, B. A. (1999). News coverage of disability issues: Final report for the center for an accessible society. *Journal of Magazine and New Media Research*, 2(1)
- Jhally, Sut. 2005. *Representation and The Media*. Northhampton: Media Education Foundation
- Morris, J. (2001). Impairment and disability: Constructing an ethics on care that promotes human rights. *Hypatia*, 16(4), 1–6
- Rutigliano, Olivia. (19 Februari 2020). *I regret to inform you that Miss Havisham, Dickens' embittered crone, is actually only . . . 40*. accessed from <https://lithub.com/>
- Sharma, A.D. & Verma, A. K. (14 April 2019). *What makes Marvel films so popular? Understanding the relationship between MCU and the real world*. accessed from <https://www.firstpost.com/>
- Stolworthy, Jacob. (9 November 2021). *Eternals: Lauren Ridloff's role leads to rise in people wanting to learn sign language, study finds*. accessed from <https://www.independent.co.uk/>
- Universe, Marvel Cinematic (30 Maret 2022). *Marvel Cinematic Universe*. accessed from <https://marvelcinematicuniverse.fandom.com/>
- Winterbach, Hougaard. (2006). *Heroes And Superheroes: From Myth To The American Comic Book*. accessed from <http://repository.up.ac.za/>