

# Black On White TV

Tuesday, 30 May 2023

## Disney's The Little Mermaid, Caribbean Slavery, and Telling the Truth to Children



Children's films should not ignore the more difficult parts of our history, just because adults feel uncomfortable addressing them.

The question is: How do we make films for children of all races that acknowledge the horrors of historical events such as slavery, while making sure they are free to imagine a wonderful world unencumbered by racism and are not defined by it?

On Sunday I watched the new live action version of Disney's The Little Mermaid with my six-year-old son.

The visual effects are stunning and the casting is brilliant. If you are not aware, and at this point you would literally have to be living under a rock in the middle of the ocean not to be aware, Halle Bailey plays the eponymous heroine in a celebration of normalising Black beauty standards for children.

For my young son to see the most beautiful character in a film as a Black woman (with non-straightened hair) is important to me as a parent and goes against literally centuries of White beauty standards and societal norms. It is anti-racism at work on a deep level.

While the importance of casting the Little Mermaid as a Black woman has been commented on in numerous articles the casting of the other roles is also worth a mention. The casting is beautifully "colour blind" with the prince being White and his mother being Black (he is adopted). At the same time the Little Mermaid's father is White while her Mermaid sisters are of various different races and ethnicities. Race as a social construct, as we know it, clearly does not exist underwater.

A world in which the very idea of race for the main characters seems to be subverted, consciously ignored, and at the same time Black beauty is celebrated, needs to be applauded.

However there is one jarring massive problem with the film and it is less about its treatment of contemporary racial issues and more about its treatment of historical transatlantic slavery.

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### About Me

#### BlackOnWhiteTV

The Black On White TV blog examines issues of race and diversity in British TV and across the media. It is interested in issues of representation and equality both in front of the camera and behind it. The blog was set up by Marcus Ryder who was a founding member of the Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity and has over 25 years experience working in television, radio and online. He left the BBC after 24 years as

The film is set in the Caribbean in the 18th century. It does not specify exactly when, but judging from the ships, clothes and other references it is during a time of African chattel slavery. And yet there is not a single direct reference to slavery and the islanders live in racial harmony.

In this setting, I do not think we do our children any favours by pretending that slavery didn't exist. For me Disney's preference to try and wish the inconvenient truth away says more about the adult creatives than it does about children's ability to work through it.

The enslavement of Africans in the Americas (across the southern states of the US, Caribbean and South America) in the 18th century was a brutal time and has been described by some historians and commentators as a "[holocaust](#)", a crime against humanity that is so heinous that there are calls to this day for reparations to compensate the descendants of the victims.

Setting the fantastical story in this time and place is literally the equivalent of setting a love story between Jew and Gentile in 1940 Germany and ignoring the Jewish holocaust. Or possibly more accurately setting it in a slave plantation in America's antebellum south and pretending the enslaved Africans were happy.

The 18th century Caribbean is a problematic time to set any children's story, but that should make it full of creative possibilities as opposed to encouraging historical amnesia.

First of all, I do not need every story and movie that my 6-year-old consumes to be historically accurate. The appearance of steel pans in the film, [an instrument invented in the late 1930s](#), raised a wry smile in the pedant in me, but I found it easy enough to overlook. But the total erasure and rewriting of one of the most painful and important parts of African diasporic history, is borderline dangerous, especially when it is consumed unquestioningly by children. I do not want my child to think that the Caribbean in the 18th century was a time of racial harmony, any more than I suspect a Jewish father wants his child to think 1940 Germany was a time of religious tolerance, however much we might both wish they were.

So does this mean Black children cannot have escapist fantasies of the past, or all our historical stories have to overtly address racism and slavery?

Definitely not.

I want my Black son to be as free, joyful and unencumbered by horrors of history just as much as any of his White and Asian friends at school, but I also do not want him, (or any children) to be given a false view of history on key issues - slavery being one of them.

There are several ways in which Disney could have easily set The Little Mermaid story in the Caribbean in the 18th century and not whitewashed (excuse the pun) the importance of history.

For example they could have set the story in Haiti post-1804. Haiti was the first Caribbean country to throw off the shackles of slavery and most importantly in its constitution of 1805 explicitly denounces the idea of different "races" proclaiming true equality. [According to Julia Gaffield](#), a professor of history at Georgia State University, the constitution even "explicitly acknowledged that some 'white women,' Germans, and Poles had been naturalized as Haitian citizens highlighting the radical reconceptualization of race that underpinned Haiti's entry on the world stage."

In this scenario the Little Mermaid could have easily found her prince, while race and slavery could have been gently touched upon without being overbearing or having to show the horrors. A post revolutionary Haiti would have been the perfect setting for an island of racial harmony, and in doing so it would have gently educated children about an important period in world history.

the Editor of BBC Scotland Current Affairs. He is currently Head of External Consultancies at the Sir Lenny Henry Centre of Media Diversity. He is also a Visiting Professor at Birmingham City University for Media Diversity and an Honorary Senior Lecturer in Journalism at The University of Sussex.

[View my complete profile](#)

When we think creatively and know our Caribbean history there are numerous solutions to setting the story in the Caribbean during the time of slavery while neither wanting to erase our history or expose children to the full horrors of chattel slavery. As someone of Jamaican heritage I would have loved the Little Mermaid to fall in love with a Maroon (a runaway slave), although that would have required her to swim a little upstream towards the island's interior.

We owe it to our children to give them the most amazing fantastical stories possible to help their imaginations grow. We do not do this by "whitewashing" out the difficult parts of our history. We do it by embracing our rich history and empowering them with the truth.

Next time I hope Disney can be as adventurous with its story telling as it was with its casting.

Posted by [BlackOnWhiteTV](#) at 07:11

## 96 comments:

**Virginia Crompton** 31 May 2023 at 01:23

Thoughtful and interesting perspective which I whole heartedly share. But putting that aside, thank you for opening this discussion for a range of views to be explored

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Marcus Ryder** 31 May 2023 at 08:06

First of all, thank you for reading the piece. Really glad you thought it was helpful in opening up discussion.

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 03:55

You're a fucking retard with a worthless degree

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 10:00

Ignore any rude, hateful trolls who have nothing better to do than to attempt to spread their misery simply because they lack the success, elegance and intelligence of decent human beings

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:46

You know What??

Now that he MENTIONS It, Disney's "Alladin" didn't address the Rape, Torture, Murder, and SLAVERY of "WHITE" people by Arab & Black people in the Middle East & Africa in that film.

It's a CRUEL World afterall.

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:49

Since it's the Caribbean, would This include Jamaica, where KAMALA HARRIS'S Ancestors were one of the BIGGEST Slave holders there?

How do you square "reparations" with & for her? How about for

Obama? Does he pay himself & break even since he's half African-American & half White? Unless his Ancestors captured & sold Africans into Slavery when living there? Isn't Africa where Slavery began? It STILL Exists There to this very day.

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### Reply

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 06:36

The movie was not set in our universe. According to the official tie in materials from Disney, the movie was set in a world where the ocean names are Piton, Carinea, Chaine, Saithe, Brinedive, Fracus, Apneic. Those names are not found in our world. Please do not spread misinformation as if the movie was set in our world, when in fact it was set in different world with their own history. You can read more on The Little Mermaid: Guide to Merfolk by Eric Geron. It's official material from Disney

### Reply

#### Replies

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 10:00

Learn to read. He made it clear that it's fictitious

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:51

You know What??

Now that he MENTIONS It, Disney's "Alladin" didn't address the Rape, Torture, Murder, and SLAVERY of "WHITE" people by Arab & Black people in the Middle East & Africa in that film.

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### Reply

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 08:00

It's a Disney movie set in an imaginary world and universe. It's has talking crabs, mermaids, king Triton... it's not real. Yes, it had mentioned Brazil, but obviously they're not talking about the Brazil we know; They're talking about a Brazil in their world. There's no need to mention chattel slavery. And then according to your logic of historical awareness, The Queen (Prince Eric's mom) shouldn't be black, Ariel shouldn't be black because Prince Eric, who is white falls in love with her, none of the commoners should be black because they should be slaves?? It's literally a Disney movie for kids to bring joy. Why do you want to subject black children to trauma when all they wanted to see was a mermaid falling in love with a human?

### Reply

#### Replies

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 14:14

Thank you!!! I AGREE 1000%.. Just can't make these ppl happy. Sad...

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 23:37

And some children are made to believe in Santa Claus and flying reindeers.

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 09:56

Why do y'all keep harping that it's fictional as though he didn't mention that he fully understands that? Comprehension is key here.

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:45

You know What??

Now that he MENTIONS It, Disney's "Alladin" didn't address the Rape, Torture, Murder, and SLAVERY of "WHITE" people by Arab & Black people in the Middle East & Africa in that film.

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### Reply

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 09:13

Interesting article and it's annoying that people are so reactionary to the thesis and refuse to actually read your input. Casting black people in white roles does not mean we get to ignore important historical context in our films, yet their are tasteful ways to go about it as you clearly demonstrated here. Thank you! -Black lesbian

Reply

### Replies

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 19:32

Mama this is literally a fiction movie.....

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 08:29

THIS!!!! All of THIS!!!

The little mermaid is not real, neither is atlantica...

You want the truth, pen a documentary or a book. Not a Disney film.

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 09:49

Your So wrong < I remember the day in school when Learned of Slavery and I never looked at a Black Person the same again. So YOUR NUTS that you think this .

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 09:58

Exactly. Like he stated if some people could read is that this would've been a non-issue if they had simply set the movie in Haiti. Or imo, if they had simply not race swapped the thing at all

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:52

You know What??

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## Reply

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 09:38

The setting of the film is never named, nor is the time period. The film features an octopus that takes a fish's voice and gives her legs to walk around on Earth. A crab is her chaperone. I feel like this film is not meant in any way to depict anything in our reality.

## Reply

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 10:29

I appreciate the writing but there are two core points I think you're overlooking. Granted I am watching the film this evening so maybe my stance will change, but 1- you've said that the Prince is white with a black adopted mum, to me, that instantly signals that we're not in a world that has been overshadowed by slavery, rather a racial utopia with truly integrated families. Personally, whilst I appreciate your suggestion, as a black person too, I would find an over-glamorisation of the transition Caribbean countries experienced post-abolition more harmful. The reality is, these countries continue to suffer today from slavery- in my opinion better to have an alternative reality, than misrepresent our current one. 2- the realities of our society at present- Halle is already getting sooo much backlash for just being in the role, despite clearly being over-qualified from a talent perspective. I think we have to be very careful for the changes we ask for, when we will not be the target of the vitriol. Particularly when we're asking this of black women, who are frequently the target. There is only so much we can ask Halle as a human being to take on, for the sake of a "more accurate" storyline

## Reply

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 10:57

It's disappointing to see people being reactionary and not reading a different perspective on favor of glamorizing and valorizing Disney/Disney-owned imaginations of us, refusing to dive into its limitations.

If anything, the concept of taking a Dutch-inspired prince and pairing him with a Caribbean-inspired mermaid without much thought of what the actual Dutch did to our people is... very indicative of the narrow scope of stories allowed under the Walt Disney umbrella. Folks are fine with buying into a fantasy of marrying into European monarchies and taking seats next to people who very much reflect those who looted Africa, but stories of Afro-descendant-inspired characters falling in love and experiencing human joys and turmoils and accomplishments similar to our own real-life counterparts is simply not even out for discussion on the silver screens of these white-owned corporations named after dead fascist white supremacists. Even when we do get a little taste of such stories based off of real Afro-descendant stories, our own people would rather turn their nose up and look towards Walt Disney to "represent" them via their white perspectives and propagandistic portrayals.

I still haven't forgotten how people treated "The Woman King" versus the new installment of "Black Panther" (a white-created character & country that steals the name from real-life Black revolutionaries, in favor of selling a fictional status quo politically-limited royalty fantasy). This treatment of TLM just seems to follow the same patterns, folks would rather give white Disney money to reward defanged Euro-centric fantasy than reward stories and/or fantasies inspired by real-life Black history. Many people simply want a seat at the master's table instead of helping build up their own people's table that's being left to break down outside.

## Reply

### Replies

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 04:59

Respectfully, we don't need to read this reactionary fit to understand why he's wrong. The source material speaks for itself

as a country set in a fictional universe and world where the oceans are named differently, sentient animals talk and creatures that are mythical to us are actually commonplace and part of their animal kingdom. This is also a fictional universe where a Black woman is queen and can adopt a white son. This essay and the promoting Tweet were both a waste of valuable mind capital, time and bandwidth.

**Anonymous 1 June 2023 at 06:36**

I remember watching the fictional adventure movie Congo and feeling that what that movie really lacked was an important educational lesson about how Congo is the rape capital of the planet. I mean, sure, it would have been a bit weird and depressing to have that in something that's supposed to be lighthearted fun but since we're bashing a kids movie for not having a sober and serious history lesson in the middle of a story about a mermaid, then we should go after all popcorn movies on the same basis. Aladdin failed to tackle the problem of child marriage, honor killings and female genital mutilation in the middle east for example.

**Anonymous 1 June 2023 at 08:05**

Actually, I agree. I will never watch Congo again and I'm burning my copy and Blu-ray in protest.

#CongoIsFake

**Anonymous 2 June 2023 at 09:54**

Exactly what I and many others have been saying. Blackwashing an originally established white character is as irritating as whitewashing has been and still is. We have our own characters and stories, we don't need the white man to throw us a bone by giving us theirs. Halle Bailey could've and should've been her own princess with her own story for little black and brown girls to look up to and admire for years to come, but nope. The sheeple just clap their hands and bow their heads when massa tosses them scraps and openly attacks anyone bold enough to point out the truth. I'm not happy or in support of them blackwashing Ariel because I know they didn't at all do it for inclusion or diversity. They did it so that the money would stay in their pockets while keeping the weak minded of us appeased with a sad attempt at a handout

**Anonymous 2 June 2023 at 15:26**

The reason people are being reactionary is that we can't seem to make them happy no matter what anyone does. Make it inclusionary and change the main character to Afro-American, even though logic dictates that the character lives deep in the ocean where sun rays so not penetrate therefore would be fair skin as in nature, and now are complaining they want to erase slavery because that wasn't included also. However, if they did include it, it would have gotten cancel FOR depicting slavery like Song of the South. That is what is making everyone brain explode.

I am sure the writer of this article was also on team, change splash mountain because it from a movie that was in the time of slavery (when it actually wasn't, it was after and they were sharecroppers, but that is a different conversation).

If they had added a slavery scene in this to match her new race at the time, for accuracy, she would have wanted the movie canceled like Song of the South.

But again, we are talking about a fictional character who changes from a mermaid to a human and she wants it historically accurate? Can you tell me specifically when in history mermaids lived in the ocean, you know, for accuracy.

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:54

You know What??

Now that he MENTIONS It, Disney's "Alladin" didn't address the Rape, Torture, Murder, and SLAVERY of "WHITE" people by Arab & Black people in the Middle East & Africa in that film.

It's a CRUEL World afterall.

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**Reply**

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 11:56

Nigga this a fictional flim that came out in 1989- if the original story didn't have slavery why tf would a live action have it- you acting like the damn skin color gonna change the whole plot of a boring ass story.

**Reply**

**Replies**

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 09:46

The original didn't have black people in it and really? When are we going to get rid of the commonplace use of the N-word? You're extremely ignorant for using it in any context

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**Reply**

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 14:40

Are you stupid? What the fuck is this bullshit?

**Reply**

**Anonymous** 31 May 2023 at 22:14

So, I'm going to link you to this Tiktok that underlines your point better:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@zappithustra/video/7142865443638758662?lang=en>

**Reply**

**Replies**

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:55

You know What??

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**Reply**

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 05:23

"In this scenario the Little Mermaid could have easily found her prince, while race and slavery could have been gently touched upon without being overbearing or having to show the horrors."

I'm glad you've acknowledged that this universe is a fictional one. But let's pretend that chattel slavery did exist in this world where the island sits. This island appears to be uninvolved in the slave trade because none of the cargo on the two shipwrecks mentioned were human. Also, Prince Eric is overheard telling the senior butler or advisor or whoever that the island needs to expand and make contact with other cultures. This suggests that maybe they are isolated because of an anti-slavery stance? Last, be careful what you ask for in terms of showing kids historical context in films made for them. Remember that Ursula took Ariel's voice, added a secret clause to the contract to impose amnesia of purpose, and thwarted Ariel in her efforts. The price of her inevitable failure is that she would "belong" to Ursula. After all this, Ariel was dragged away in bondage. There is your allusion to Caribbean slavery. And here is the problem with your essay: you got what you wanted, but a Black woman paid the price for it. That's what always happens whenever men set an agenda.

In future, please use you platform and clout for better things and let children dream for a couple of hours on a weekend.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 06:27

So what you're saying is you deliberately ignored that this is a piece of feel good escapist entertainment for kids and not intended as a serious history lesson but you couldn't pass up the opportunity to get some attention for yourself with cheap race baiting attacks.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 07:32

Please stop. I am not sure why everyone is over-thinking and over-analyzing the movie. There is already enough criticism in the U.S. and world because Ariel is not a white woman AND now the make believe movie isn't black enough. Can we accept the small win and give Halle and team the recognition they deserve and stop with all the "this is missing." What a joke. Go somewhere with all that and YES - I am 100% black. Go see the movie - enjoy it, and leave it alone. That's all.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 08:03

I'm a non-binary queer and I want to say that this piece is absurd. If anything we should be angry that they didn't include more QUEER CHARACTERS.

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 09:43

No

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[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 08:17

Lol. It's a children's movie.

How freaking miserable and pathetic do u have to be to be cry about this subject in a freaking children's movie remake of a cartoon? My gosh. Ur

poor family must just be filled with anger and hate if all u see at a kids movie is things to bitch about.

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 09:44

Seems like you're the one crying over one opinion you disagree with

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[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 08:36

The woke Left saw the religious Right try to destroy all fun and enjoyment in life and decided they needed to get in on that too.

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 09:01

This x trillion. Both sides are as bad as each other. The right are homophobic misogynist racists. The left want everything to be ultra diverse, inclusive and politically correct or they bash it. They've just gone after the makeup artist on The Little Mermaid for not being gay! They lack any self awareness about how they've become just as fascistic as the right. He's a professional award winning makeup artist. What on earth does his sexuality have to do with anything?

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 17:11

Thank you....this is the most accurate statement ever. They are competing with each other over who can own what is allowed in our culture. Both crazy zealots

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[Reply](#)

**The Emperor** 1 June 2023 at 08:59

Yawn. There is a reason why these modern audience films suck, and it is because of people like you that just have to always find offense in everything. It is never enough.

Disney is children's entertainment so they are not gonna touch the tired old subject of slavery.

Tell me, what would have happened if they touched this subject?

You would have whined on your blog about how this movie should not have done so or how inaccurate the slaves were depicted or something.

Again, this is Disney. Are you expecting Game of Thrones type of depiction of slavery?

Will say this, thanks to this movie my son learned to ignore women and you can play Fortnite in the theater while little sis watches this movie.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 09:45

This really was an excellent opportunity missed - slavery, wars, cannibalism - all practiced by various Caribbean people pre-Columbus. I think a song describing the tasty Arawak peoples (literally) would be illuminating - non straitened hair and all

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 10:17

If you're expecting a history lesson from a \*disney\* movie about mermaids and singing crabs, then it's really you who has the problem. This is the dumbest blog post ive ever read.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 10:28

How much do you know about the history of Haiti? It wasn't quite racial harmony like you describe. The Haitian Declaration of Independence written in 1804 calls for nothing less but the extermination of the white French, and then it's president, Jean Jacques Dessalines carried out such genocide in his first years as president. After which, it's hard to describe Haiti as racial harmony, but a country of freed black African slaves and a very small minority of white foreigners. Are you really suggesting that this would be a solid history to place into a children's movie? That somehow this is the compromise to excluding slavery? I get it, a movie set in the Caribbean during the 18th century could easily make references to slavery, but can't we just watch a kid's movie with our kids without needing to prepare a deep conversation about the constant horror of humanity? Can't we just use a Disney movie as a fun escape from the real world which gets more ridiculous day by day?

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 10:32

Marcus, why do you think children need the woes of the ways of mankind Included in a FICTIONAL FANTASY. If we must include real atrocities in children's fantasy entertainment than we must also include that EVERY SINGLE CULTURE IN HUMAN HISTORY HAS HAD SLAVES. Including black cultures. So Marcus. If you want to tell a story about history tell the complete story, not just the part that fits your policy agenda. If you want the truth tell the entire truth.

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:44

You know What??

Now that he MENTIONS It, Disney's "Alladin" didn't address the Rape, Torture, Murder, and SLAVERY of "WHITE" people by Arab & Black people in the Middle East & Africa in that film.

It's a CRUEL World afterall.

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[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 10:40

Taking your child to a frolicking fantasy movie with no basis in reality except for geographic location and then being upset that during your child's good time she wasn't exposed to mankind's atrocities. Your sick and wanting to ruin something fun for your child with brutality is mental abuse.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 10:47

Top 500 entertainment Influencers in 2022 by Variety. That explains why corporate entertainment sucks if you're one of entertainments best. I'm surprised my Scottish kin put up with you.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 12:22

No. A children's fantasy feel good film with mermaids and singing crabs is not the place to have a moment about slavery.

If you have a fetish for the suffering of black people, just say that. This whole piece feels terrible disingenuous, and I'm sorry for your kid.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 12:24

Go ahead and write your "black suffering" fanfi of the little mermaid, don't pretend you are doing it for education.

[Reply](#)



**smoka206** 1 June 2023 at 12:45

Do you work for the MSM? I mean wtf, you have to be some kind of special idiot to write this long blog post about nothing. Movies don't need to be historically accurate because you think so, they need to be entertaining. I am so sick of the race card being played. And trying to play it off as historical accuracy for a children's movie is the definition of pathetic, just so you know.

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:43

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[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 13:44

Accept it as a social commentary saying that if mermaids and talking crabs had existed, there would have been no slavery.

Prove them wrong, if you can.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 14:26

Absolutely brain dead take. No reason to change the contents of a fantasy story (about a fictional mermaid who does not exist) just because a black woman happens to be the lead actress. I don't understand why kids can't have their moment of joy instead of constantly being reminded of slavery. This is a Disney film.

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:42

You know What??

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Arab & Black people in the Middle East & Africa in that film.

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### Reply

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 14:39

When I saw the film, my instinct was similar to yours. I saw the Caribbean context to be a way for Disney to safely (and passively) explain away their intent of casting Bailey to be Ariel. She was wonderful and endearing for every second of that film, as well as a great role model for all young girls. But the celebration of black Caribbean culture reminded me of Song of the South. That film is also endearing, fun, fantastical, with great casting that was also groundbreaking for its time (James Baskett), but to see plantation workers joyfully singing and dancing painted a picture that distorts the painful history that's there.

Reply

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 15:26

I guess some people have nothing better to do than to look for something to be offended at.

Reply

### Replies

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:42

You know What??

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### Reply

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 15:29

So, because they casted a black actor in the role of Ariel, we must now fetishize the suffering of both african and indigenous Carribeans brought down upon us by imperialists? Children should only know themselves of what came after the pain their ancestors endured?

Get a history book, dude, let folk of color have escapism once and a while. No one was saying this when Ariel was white.

Reply

### Replies

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 21:23

Exactly

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### Reply

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 19:05

It's a Disney movie you absolute clown. Actually there is white an easy solution for the imaginary problem you're so determined to find everywhere

you look, and that would be to stop race swapping red headed characters out of existence. An actual problem in Hollywood.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 21:22

You've got to be absolutely joking. I can't believe you thought it was a good idea to write this and then go a step further and press publish. Since when does slavery need to be interwoven into a PRINCESS movie? And if Ariel was white I'm guessing you'd want to see slaves in chains in the background then according to your logic? Is Disney the correct avenue to correctly talk about slavery? when is too young to learn about the brutalities of slavery? As a black person, there is a time and place for everything and why you believe that slavery should be brought to Disney channel of all places is beyond me. I don't even want to hear your thoughts on Princess Tiana. No we don't want to turn on a literal FANTASY movie and be reminded of those brutalities. Let's not downplay the role of Black JOY.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 23:05

It's not too late to delete this garbage.

Also I laughed out loud at you trying to say that this movie is not realistic because they didn't put Ariel in chains - but it would have been more realistic if it portrayed post-revolutionary Haiti as a utopia of racial unity.

Post-revolutionary Haiti where white colonizers were slaughtered wholesale, black people were fighting among themselves, the economy was in freefall because plantations were in shambles, like nothing was organized. Nothing! And you really seriously want us to believe that a black mermaid-human and a white prince would have been just like...super cool in that environment. Hunky dory, part of your world, no problems. Please. Okay.

Please!

Just say that you don't like to see black people enjoying things, and we were having too much fun.

Just say that. Don't insult our intelligence in the bargain.

The clownery, the buffoonery.

Someone needs to take your internet away, you're not using it properly LOL!

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:37

Ariel in CHAINS!??

DON'T Be RIDICULOUS!

ANYONE Who Knows HISTORY and FACTS KNOWS Ariel was a "HOUSE Negro"!!

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 22:05




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[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 1 June 2023 at 23:19

I'm just here to watch people drag you in the comments for this ridiculous article 🤔

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 11:26

Totally agree - reading the responses is entertaining, but more importantly, it gives me hope that most people are capable of living their lives in proper context.

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**Reply**

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 00:37

The problem with your article is you are stuck in the algorithm just like reactionaries on the right. It wasn't enough for Disney to cast a black person. They must feed your twisted sense of diversity truth on children? Who in their right mind would suggest discussing the horrors of slavery with a movie that has a target audience of 6 year olds? Maybe you did this with your kids, but no most people don't want that, and Disney knows that. Honestly you need to step out of the world you inhabit and start talking to people who don't inhabit the space you do, because frankly this is bizarre. No we didn't misunderstand you, it's you who misunderstand the proper use of diversity, because you have made it into a career. Profit can blind us all to reality. I suggest you use this moment for self-reflection. Learn how to use diversity as a feather, not a hammer.

**Reply**

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 03:54

You're nothing but a race grifter.

**Reply**

**Replies**

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:39

You know What??

Now that he MENTIONS It, Disney's "Alladin" didn't address the Rape, Torture, Murder, and SLAVERY of "WHITE" people by Arab & Black people in the Middle East & Africa in that film.

It's a CRUEL World afterall.

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:40

You know What??

Now that he MENTIONS It, Disney's "Alladin" didn't address the Rape, Torture, Murder, and SLAVERY of "WHITE" people by Arab & Black people in the Middle East & Africa in that film.

It's a CRUEL World afterall.

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**Reply**



**Aryan** 2 June 2023 at 05:00

It was nice to read your blog. If someone searching for **MBA in Germany** services then contact our website. We are available round-the-clock to assist you with the best.

**Reply**

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 05:35

Dude you're an idiot....this isn't the little mermaid is black learning the history of planet earth and growing up in reality. It's a fantasy film with a fantasy kingdom with a fantasy "world" retreat from your woke state

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 07:18

Absolutely moronic take.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 07:33

If you want to tell your child the truth, you should start with the fact that both animated film and original fairy tale this movie is based on have little to nothing to do with black people

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 07:40

Last time I checked this is a movie filled with mythical sea creatures. It doesn't erase any history nor does it claim to tell a story with historical accuracy. The only thing erasing the history of slavery would be our current educational system or lack of.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 07:57

So there isn't an accurate depiction of real life politics but you don't have an issue with a woman with a fish tail.

Dude. You're insane. Liberalism truly is a mental disorder.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 09:04

Oh my God, it's a make believe world you idiot. What, a world in which there is magical talking fish also must depict non-fiction atrocities? For what? So that YOU can remind your child that even in a fantasy they must think of themselves as the product of slavery. Can't you let them escape reality for a bit, to be a kid. It is sad that you want to push this burden of knowledge on your child through every facet of their lives. Do you also remind them of the sweatshops that made their clothes and electronics? Or the conditions of illegal immigrants getting food from fields? Or the 1% squirming out of paying taxes and pushing the burden on the low and middle class to shoulder it all. There is a time and place to learn such things, but stop trying to share your burden with a child.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 09:52

The thought that society needs to address slavery in every single area of social life needs to be addressed. Yes, slavery happened, but slavery has appeared in virtually all ethnicities & cultures. Perhaps we should focus more on making our kids feel a moment of joy without the weight of social Justice? Let's face it, if your not already rich, your childhood is the only taste of freedom you will ever have. Children do not naturally make a distinction between race. The idea that their should be a distinction between races is an idea that has to be introduced to them & if stop for a moment and take a look around, you'll notice that most of the violence we see in society (mass shootings, police brutality, cancel culture) isn't about acceptance, it's about personal grievance & revenge.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 10:38

When I read articles like this it makes me wonder whether we have run out of things to complain about...

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 11:12

Now be as adamant about your point to your British Government!

[Reply](#)



**Hair Skin and Nails Supplements** 2 June 2023 at 11:55

Unlock your natural beauty with **Blysmo** exquisite range of beauty products, carefully crafted to elevate your skincare routine to new heights. Experience the perfect blend of science and nature, empowering you to embrace your unique beauty with confidence.

[Reply](#)

**Jahmik McKoy** 2 June 2023 at 13:44

i heard the outrage and had to come read it myself, the quotes are definitely out there but from reading your blog I feel like you were hoping for more of a completely original retelling of the classic "little mermaid" which is cool - but it seems like a bit of an unnecessary criticism for a movie that has already done strides to update a fresh Caribbean Mermaid princess into their ensemble. Personally I believe we would better off pushing this movie to as wide an audience as possible so as to force Disney into making cartoon and toy adaptations of that lovely Caribbean Mermaid rather than pointing out how it could've pushed the envelope just a bit more.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 14:55

You were close when you referenced, "the pedant in me." In truth, the pedant is indistinguishably you.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 15:10

Curious, does this mean you think they should NOT have changed the theme of Splash Mountain? It's the same thing...

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:03

You're Kidding me, RIGHT?

Would This include Jamaica, where KAMALA HARRIS'S Ancestors were one of the BIGGEST Slave holders there?

How do you square "reparations" with & for her? How about for Obama? Does he pay himself & break even since he's half African-American & half White? Unless his Ancestors captured & sold Africans into Slavery when living there? Isn't Africa where Slavery began? It STILL Exists There today.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:16

You know What??

Now that you MENTION It, Disney's "Alladin" didn't address the Rape, Torture, Murder, and SLAVERY of "WHITE" people by Arab & Black people

in the Middle East & Africa.  
It's a CRUEL World afterall.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 16:22

The first synagogue in the US was built in the slave trading port of Newport, RI . Although not official holidays , Jewish High Days and Holy Days caused the slave market to close due to lack of attending traders..

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 20:56

The question is: How do we make films for children of all races that acknowledge the horrors of historical events such as slavery, while making sure they are free to imagine a wonderful world unencumbered by racism and are not defined by it?

The answer is: You don't, man. Disney films and their stories are not forums to educate children on the horrors and the crimes of the world of men. They're a respite from them. You missed the opportunity to educate because that's what you were doing, taking respite. Good on you for taking the time afterward to resolve the inequities you feel were brought on by the films.

The world's a terrible place, believe me, I'm as color blind, as color blind gets. We all bleed red. But, actively living with bias on your mind all the time, no matter what color your skin is, is completely unhealthy; whether it be a white skinhead police officer mad at the world because the black man was the first to get picked on the schoolyard basketball court, or a dude mad at a Disney film for not educating children about racial horrors that happened hundreds of years ago.

But hey, at least you made the news.

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 21:01

What an Idiotic point of view... thats all i am going to say as everyone else has shared exactly why this is so idiotic. And the funny thing is, all these news articles giving this blog the time of day. Smh

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** 2 June 2023 at 21:37

This is a fictional film, set in a fictional world where slavery probably didn't exist. you should probably man up and teach your own child about these things rather than rely on childrens media Todo it for you.

[Reply](#)

**Mrs.Parker** 2 June 2023 at 22:03

You have got to be fucking kidding me!? After seeing all the triggered white guys mad that she's black you just had to go give them a valid reason to be butthurt. God damn this is the most retarded take on a fucking kids movie I've ever seen in my goddamned life. Jesus Christ, you diversity goal people are insufferable! ITS NOT A HISTORICAL FICTION YOU FUCKING IDIOT. You should shove your obviously worthless degree and diversity programs up your ass where they belong.

-a black lady who is sick of being assigned victimhood

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