

The Push to Give Elsa a Girlfriend

From its launch in late 2013, the Disney box office sensation Frozen has been widely read as an allegory of LGBT experience. Heroine Elsa is a princess like no other. The special power that has to be hidden is her suppressed lesbian nature and its potential to provoke a social revolution. Her passionate song, “Let It Go”, is about her coming out. And so on.

Debate raged about whether this was intentional, and how much it mattered – positively from the queer point of view, or negatively from a conservative-Christian point of view.

Now, with Frozen 2 in the pipeline, some fans may be forced to make a decision one way or the other: a Twitter campaign is calling on Disney to come out of the closet and [#GiveElsaAGirlfriend](#). The European movement [CitizenGo](#) has countered with [#CharmingPrinceForElsa](#).

[Writing](#) in The Guardian, Chitra Ramaswamy says:

Imagine it ... a Disney princess who is gay and happy at the same time. It would be radical indeed to watch Elsa and her lady love (I picture her as a mash-up of Mulan and Merida from Brave) making ice castles in the air in their glittery dresses. It would be a bit like Carol 2, but in CG. The sad fact is we've barely seen such a thing, even outside the ultra-heteronormative land of Disney. We have now had an Indian Disney princess (Jasmine), an African-American Disney princess (Tiana), and a red-haired Disney princess who is more into archery than marriage (Merida). Yet nothing for the LGBT community. It's time that Disney took a look at the latest GLAAD index which found that not a single one of the studio's films (not just the cartoons) released in 2015 featured a gay character. Not explicitly, anyway.

The question now seems to be whether Disney would dare *not* to stage Elsa's coming out. Gay marriage has been established in America. Six-year-olds are deciding on their gender identity and school bathrooms are being rejigged to accommodate their preferences. Indeed, the US government is virtually commanding schools to do so. All people who are not heteronormative and homophobic bigots will be awaiting this cinematic great leap forward.

Little girls, I am told, are talking about the Twitter campaign in the playground and anticipating the outcome.

The reception of Frozen 1 – with all its ambiguity, but also with its captivating effects, mesmerizing songs and even, according to sympathetic conservative reviewers, modelling of many virtues – has certainly prepared the ground for the next step. And if the packaging of a brazenly lesbian, rather than frozen Elsa is equally thrilling, it could melt all but the permafrost of moral objection amongst parents.

And yet... there is some risk. First time around, cautious parents and pastors did not know what was coming; the first wave of audiences came to the movie expecting another Disney triumph, and that is what they got – plus a bit more to think about. This time the film is being politicized in advance, and the effect of a building controversy cannot be certain.

And there's this to consider: Disney films are first and foremost for children, and it is not fair if their entertainment is spoiled by an adult agenda about sexuality. It's true that this agenda is already intruding upon their social and imaginative experiences, but surely something is sacred. Fairy tales, for instance.

So, Disney, forget about giving Elsa a girlfriend. Give her a prince charming – and give the kids a break.

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