

WHAT

disney

DOESN'T
UNDERSTAND

JUST ADD
COLOR

*disney, the place where
dreams come true-or is it?*

Disney is built on dreams,
but some of the company's
magical stories leave out
marginalized communities.
Let's look at where Disney
has failed and where it's
succeeded in representing
America's melting pot.

disney's
royalty
problems
and
successes

Disney's princess problem:

"The Princess of North Sudan" Highlights Need for Disney Princess Overhaul



credit: Disney

Originally posted May 19, 2015

Even though there are critiques about Lupita Nyong'o being a CG character in *Star Wars Episode VI: The Force Awakens* and people are annoyed with *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, Disney has, for the most part, been pleasing many fans with their Marvel and Lucasfilm acquisitions, along with their other Disney properties. But Disney has finally hit a wall with their upcoming film, *The Princess of North Sudan*. Why is this movie so offensive to many out there? Because the princess in question is a little white girl.

Let me set the scene: *The Princess of North Sudan* is based on the irritatingly true story of a man from Virginia who wanted to fulfill his daughter's wishes to be a princess. So, as *The Hollywood Reporter* states, he went to a part of Sudan called Bir Tawil, supposedly a "no-man's land" of 800 square miles between Sudan and Egypt, and stuck a flag in it, claiming it the Kingdom of Northern Sudan, with himself as the king and his daughter the princess.

If you are aware of the history of colonialism, you'll know exactly why this is problematic: a person rolling up into a country and claiming even just a portion of that country as their own smacks of privilege. Of course, as *Seventeen* states, no government has recognized the new kingdom, and why should they? He's just one dude and colonialism rules don't fly anymore. At least, not in terms of claiming land where people already live.

But, for some reason, Disney decided it would be a great idea to create a film around the story, which is also problematic, because it glorifies once again what history already glorifies: a white person claiming land that doesn't belong to them, usually at the expense of civilizations that are already in place before the white person got there. Of course, Bir Tawil is land caught in a dispute and is labeled a "no-man's land." But still, for a man to insert himself in Sudanese and Egyptian politics just because he feels he can (and so he can make his daughter a princess)? What kind of feel-good movie is this supposed to be?

Since it is supposed to be a feel-good movie, and knowing Disney's own problematic history of whitewashing history, would the people of Sudan and Egypt be rewritten as recognizing this piece of land as belonging to this guy and his daughter? Would the film make Sudanese and Egyptians kow-tow to these two foreigners? Let's not forget the whole "princess" element; would the film's Africans recognize a foreign white girl as their princess? There's a host of things movie fans are worried about when it comes to this film. As you would expect, they went to Twitter to address their concerns. Or, if they have a blogging outlet, they wrote articles as to why this film is a terrible idea.

However, the screenwriter for this film, Stephany Folsom, has stated that the film will be anything but a fun romp through colonialism's greatest hits. She asserted her aversion to colonialism in several tweets, but the tweets only served to confuse people more than allay their fears.

Folsom had gone on to say in a series of now-deleted tweets that the film will not engage in glorifying colonialism. "There is no planting a flag in Sudan or making a white girl the princess of an African country. That's gross," she wrote, according to *Entertainment Weekly*. She also discussed her trip to the Sudan, saying that the people were "amazing."

So the question is, if the film's not about colonialism, what exactly will it be about? I don't think Disney will completely get rid of a white man claiming a piece of African land, but just how are they going to repackage this to reconcile the message of the film in their minds? I don't know, but I do know that it's high time for another movie studio to bring some competition to Disney's stranglehold on the "princess" idea.

As mentioned above, Disney has a seriously troubled past when it comes to

princesses. Pocahontas' history was extremely whitewashed, especially in *Pocahontas 2: Journey to a New World*, in which they repackaged Pocahontas' trip to England as, according to Biography, "a symbol of the tamed New World 'savage'" as a noble trip to save her people and make further peace with the settlers, not to mention a way for Disney to create a fictional love triangle between John Smith and John Rolfe. Also eliminated was the fact that Pocahontas contracted tuberculosis or pneumonia from her visit and died on England's shores.

The Princess and the Frog's Princess Tiana, the first black princess, remains a frog for most of the movie, and despite the legitimate argument that the film presents a progressive interracial relationship stance, there's also the argument that Disney could have proven itself as committed to representing black excellence and missed an opportunity to create a black prince, especially since every other princess apart from Pocahontas have princes of their own race.

Without race, Disney's princesses have been, up until recent years, pillars of outdated feminine ideals imposed by men. The suggestion that women should wait for their prince to rescue them instead of relying on themselves can be seen in classic princesses like Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Belle (to some degree), Ariel (to some degree), and Snow White. Instead of teaching values such as depending on oneself and working hard to succeed in life (which is something Tiana teaches), these princesses are steeped in sexism. It would be one thing if these princesses only had enduring power during the times when women were completely subjugated by men, but in reality, these princesses are still popular today and celebrated for the same reasons they were when they were Disneyfied.

Proof of this is everywhere, but it can be

seen particularly in the redesign of the princesses, featured above. Before, the line-up featured the princesses as they appear in their respective films. But now, even that's not good enough. To be a princess, these characters have to be even more sparkly, adorned with even more jewels and culturally-inappropriate earrings and trinkets. Even the hair has to be longer shiner, and more flowing. These additions only reinforce the notion that a princess' worth is only in aesthetics, not in their actual characterizations. This translates directly to how a little girl might interpret herself in relation to these princesses. If they aren't pretty enough, sparkly enough, or have long enough hair, a girl might doubt if they are worthy of being called a princess, i.e. loved.

The Princess of North Sudan sounds like it could bring back tons of problems that have plagued the Disney Princess line and magnify them. Enter my call for another movie company to get in on this princess business. If Disney can create princesses that can sometimes do more harm than good, I call upon another company, a company that might not even be in existence yet, to see the consumers' yearning for a different view of the princess (and the prince for that matter) and fill that void. I want a movie studio to really give Disney a run for its money and teach it a thing or two at the same time.

There are plenty of princess stories from cultures from all over the world, yet Disney has only covered a small fraction of them, most of them not involving non-white characters. I call on a rival studio to show Disney what's what by creating a string of successful princess films that give voice to cultural difference and feminine strength. I don't think it's a lot to ask for. Hollywood might not see these types of stories as "marketable," but I believe the audience is out there, and I do believe movies about culturally and socially diverse princesses will be heralded by audiences around the world.

There are plenty of princess stories from all over the world, yet Disney has only covered a small fraction of them.

Where's the black disney prince?

What Disney's lack of a black prince says about America's view of black masculinity



credit: Loren Javier (Flickr/ Creative Commons)

Originally posted August 23, 2016

We've got Aladdin. We've got Kokoum. We've got Shang. We've got Kuzco. We've got Naveen. We've got Maui, who is technically a demigod. But where's the animated black Disney prince? Inquiring minds want to know, but inquiring minds also want to understand why the majesty of the black man has been erased from Disney's range of thought.

Disney has had some explaining to do about this issue, but the problem became glaringly apparent with the development of *The Princess and The Frog*, which included a belabored creation process for the prince character that would eventually become Prince Naveen. Originally, the prince character was going to be, from what I remember, a charismatic "Cary Grant" type. According to the old, old description from The SuperHeroHype forums:

"[PRINCE HARRY] A gregarious, fun-loving European Prince, in his early twenties. A young Cary Grant. Charming, witty but irresponsible and immature. Loves jazz. Dialect: British upper-class."

This was met with criticism, because why couldn't a black prince be created? The other princesses get princes of their own races—why not Tiana? Disney met this criticism by changing Prince Harry to a beige, non-white, but also non-black Prince from...Maldonia? Needle scratch.

Let me already say that this statement goes against the fact that this film, despite its flaws, is a representation of interracial marriage, something that is rare in entertainment. But *The Princess and the Frog* reveals how Disney failed even that narrative. 1) Why make Naveen from a made-up country? Why have the love interest for the first black Disney princess, a character set in a real place, literally be a person who couldn't exist in our world (because where is Maldonia? Nowhere.)

Wouldn't it be easier to just make a character from an actual country if Tiana's from New Orleans? 2) If Disney set out to create a film focusing on an interracial relationship, it would have been nice for them to include such a focus in their marketing plan. The creators never focused on the type of impact such a story could have on its audiences, so they never showcased it in any interviews or press information. They were only focused on marketing the film as the first black Disney princess film. This is not to say that value can't be taken from *The Princess and the Frog* having an interracial relationship, but it would have been fantastic if Disney had actually recognized the story they had on their hands (and thus, the story they could have fleshed out and made even better and more meaningful).

The questions I've always had are 1) what prevented Disney from creating a black Disney prince, and 2) why have they not created a black Disney prince before? Why are we still relying on *The Lion King* for the closest thing we have to a black Disney prince?

I thought I'd take to Twitter to ask this question. As it turns out, that while there are some men who aren't particularly moved by the lack of a black animated Disney prince, there are many others who are upset, to say the least, about the lack of a black Disney prince.

Disney's silence on not creating a black Disney prince reflects how America at large views black men, black masculinity, and the desirability of black males.

1. Black masculinity is still seen as dangerous: It is telling that the only black man that exists throughout the entirety of the film is Doctor Facilier. If you recall, Tiana's father, the black man that is a good father, good husband, and all-around upstanding guy, dies during Tiana's childhood. First, there's the question of why Disney would even hire a big name like Terrence Howard to say just a couple of lines. But the more serious question is why does Disney feel more comfortable seeing black male villainy on screen rather than a positive portrayal of black fatherhood and manhood?

Despite the fact that Doctor Facilier was designed to be scrawny (and that Disney

decided to hire their former long-time animator and Jambalaya Studios creator Bruce W. Smith to oversee his design in order to give the film representation behind the scenes), Doctor Facilier still embodies latent ideas that could be in the subconscious of the film's white creators and are definitely in the collective consciousness of America at large. On the whole, America still treats black people, uniquely black men, as inherent, born criminals. There's still a dangerousness that people expect from black men, which explains why so many black men have been stopped by police on bogus claims, thrown in jail for petty crimes (or no crime at all), or killed at the hands of police, even when they've done nothing wrong. This idea of "dangerousness" is also inherent in the amount of Latino and Native American men killed by police; there seems to be an "us against them" mentality with some police officers, and that's not how policing is supposed to be.

The idea of dangerousness goes all the way back to slavery. I wrote in my Michael Brown post that Brown, Trayvon Martin, and others like them have been killed at the ages that they would have been sold for the highest price if they existed during slavery times. That age range is also the same range that they would be (and have been) considered the most dangerous.

Even much of the language used to describe Brown, Martin, and others depict a stereotype of savagery and fear in the mind of the killer. Brown's killer, Darren Wilson, called Brown a "demon" and as someone who was basically hulking up the more he got shot. George Zimmerman described himself as being in fear for his life. That narrative goes back to the idea that black men are brutes that need to be broken like horses, otherwise, they provide a danger for "good" people.

If a black man is considered dangerous by America, then could America accept the idea of a black prince? Could a positive portrayal of a black prince exist in a culture that still fears a section of its citizens? I implore Disney to disrupt the stereotypes facing black men by creating such a character.

2. Black wealth is a buried secret in America:

Like how outsiders simply view Rio's black population as living in favelas, America itself still views its black people as living in poverty. Such an idea is clearly not true, but it's an idea that still resonates with America's racist view of black Americans. Just look at how Donald Trump is trying to win over black Americans—by telling them they're in poverty, they have no jobs, and they're surrounded by crime. "What the hell do you have to lose?" he asks. A LOT.

But if we look at American history as a whole, there has been black wealth. Take for instance Greenwood, the area of Tulsa, OK called "Black Wall Street" in the early 20th century. That area was then burned down in 1921 in what is called the Tulsa race riot, which was started by neighboring white citizens who felt Greenwood was growing in status and political clout. They felt that to secure their own hold on American wealth and politics, they had to burn down a positive representation of black success.

African-American culture is also removed from pan-African culture, which holds the history of many black princes, generals, etc. The richest man in the world of all time is 14th century African prince Mansa Musa. However, such history, including American history such as the Tulsa race riot, aren't taught in school.

With such representations of black wealth destroyed, the myth has persisted that black wealth—and therefore, rich black people—doesn't exist. Such thinking could have taken place when it came to the idea of creating Tiana's prince. Did the team behind the film not consider the fact that there have been and are, indeed, wealthy black people? Or did they think that was impossible?

3. Black men are seen as unfeeling and

emotionless: Again, to go back to slavery, black people were considered to have no feelings at all, thereby partially justifying slavery in the minds of white Americans at the time. Stereotypes like the smiling Sambo and the brutish, hypersexual creature who lives to take white women portray black men in two dynamics, both of which being untrue; either they're cartoonish buffoons without realistic cares, or they're an insatiable animal.

There's also another reason black men are seen as

emotionless: the emotional toll some black families put on their black men. Many boys are taught growing up that it's not okay to show emotion, especially cry. To "be a man," it's thought that bottling emotions is the way to go, because showing emotions is "girl stuff." However, the double whammy of society and familial pressures affects black men in a way that I feel is still unexplored in modern media.

In Disney animated films, we often see princes with a wide range of emotions. Aladdin's entire story focused on his emotions about being a "streetrat" hoping to impress Princess Jasmine. Tarzan's story is a classic coming-of-age tale. Shang, a captain in the army, has to deal with the pressures of leading a battalion to glory while processing the death of his father (a moment that probably happens too quickly in the film). Kokoum, who doesn't express much emotion (which is also a stereotype of the Native Brave), shows reverence for Pocahontas, concern over her safety, and eventual anger at what he thought was John Smith taking advantage of Pocahontas. Even Eric, who is possibly the most wooden Disney prince of all time, has a couple of moments of feeling, even if it's just confusion as to who rescued him. If Disney created a black prince, would they be able to give him the emotional beats he deserves?

Which leads me to the final point:

4. Disney's think-tank doesn't understand the black male experience (and of course they wouldn't): John Lasseter and his crew have an inclusion issue that must be addressed. Why is it that there isn't a person of color in these higher ranks? Why is it that Disney acts like Silicon Valley in how they exclude POC voices in its animation ranks? ABC, Lucasfilm, and now even Marvel seem to have a grasp on the idea of including diversity to meet audience demands. Disney, the parent company, still lags behind.

Do I think Disney would eventually make a black prince? Perhaps. But do I think they could really make a black prince that speaks to the black experience on a macro scale?

No. I recommend for Disney to hire black male animators into their ranks, and specifically hire thinkers and, as they call folks, “dreamers” who can be given carte blanche to direct films, much like how they give themselves carte blanche to create films. If a *Cars* franchise can be created, then an animated film starring a black Disney prince, a film created with sensitivity, intelligence, and a root in the black experience, can be created as well.

"...I think [Disney] did a lot in my formative years to instill that black men didn't even exist in those kinds of universes." -Ira Hobbs, Jr., Blavity

Disney Introduces Its First Latina Princess on Disney Junior



credit: Disney Junior

Originally posted January 30, 2015

Disney is making historic ground once again with their Princess line of merchandise and programming. Ground that should have been covered eons ago. But in any event, let's congratulate Disney on introducing the first Latina princess to its roster. Hooray!

Princess Elena of Avalor has been announced as Disney's newest princess. The character, which will be voiced by Aimee Carrero (ABC Family's *Young & Hungry*) will make her debut on her own Disney Junior show, *Elena of Avalor*, in 2016. The show is a spin-off of *Sophia the First*, on which the character first made her appearance.

According to *USA Today*, Elena is described by Disney as "a confident and compassionate teenager in an enchanted fairy tale kingdom inspired by diverse Latin cultures and folklore."

Elena's backstory is surprisingly dark for a Disney Junior show. Elena's parents and her kingdom were taken by Shuriki, an evil sorceress. Elena was able to save her sister and her grandparents, but now that she's the heir to the throne, she needs proper guidance to be able to take over as queen. Dark right?

In any event, Elena's got friends as she goes on her journey towards maturation— a flying mystical animal named Skylar and a wizard-in-training named Mateo.

Elena is a "confident and compassionate teenager in an enchanted fairy tale kingdom inspired by diverse Latin cultures and folklore."

disney's
representation
pros and cons

Zendaya's Mary Jane Watson could be the biracial heroine you've been looking for



Originally posted August 22, 2016

It's official: Zendaya is playing Mary Jane Watson in the upcoming Marvel film, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*. But why is everyone quick to assume that Mary Jane is black? What if it turns out that Mary Jane is biracial, like the actress playing her? And if this is true, how will this positively affect other biracial girls of African-American and Caucasian heritage that see her on-screen?

There has been plenty of talk about the lack of mono-racial people of color (for lack of a better word) for a while now. But it seems like most people don't turn that conversation to a group of people of color who have been unrepresented, sometimes twice or many times over: biracial and multiracial people of color.

Technically, most of us in the U.S. have at least one other ethnicity in our heritage. But most of us claim just one. In many respects, the "one

drop rule" still applies, even in the mouths of people who state that they don't believe it. If you look black, you're black. If you look Asian, you're Asian, etc. Halle Berry famously said that her mother, who is white, told her to accept that she's black, because that's all anyone would see. Even President Barack Obama, who is biracial, is constantly called the first black president, even though that title negates the other half of his heritage. The same is happening with Zendaya's Mary Jane; most people assume she's playing a black Mary Jane, when it could be that she's playing a biracial Mary Jane, a character that could draw on Zendaya's own experiences as a biracial woman.

I should stress that I'm putting asterisks and air-quotes around the word "could." Knowing how Marvel is at representation sometimes, there's the overwhelming possibility that Zendaya is playing a black character. However, this particular film has the most

inclusive casting of a Marvel film, and none of it seems like stunt casting. This film, as far as I'm concerned, is a watershed moment for Marvel and could signal a higher degree of focus and sensitivity towards casting. This sensitivity might also be applied to characterization. If it is, that would be a boon for biracial people, specifically those of African-American and Caucasian heritage, because biracial and multiracial people are hardly ever showcased in the media, and when they are, they are usually shown in an objectifying and dehumanizing light.

According to The Critical Media Project, the 19th and 20th centuries generally showcased biracial people as the "tragic mulatto," the byproduct of a sordid relationship between a white and black couple. These characters were usually seen in a binary light, being tragic figures because they couldn't fit into either the white or black worlds. The context in which these characters were viewed was from a white point of view; the only value these characters had were if they could pass as white, and if they couldn't then their supposed tragedy made them unfit to exist in a world that only viewed race in terms of "undesirable" blackness and "exceptional" whiteness. There are several films like this that have been shown on TCM, but the most popular one has to be *Imitation of Life*, in which the biracial woman rejects her black mother, passes as white, and remains as such until her boyfriend leaves her because of her black heritage. (Spoiler alert: Her mother dies of a broken heart after her daughter tells her she hates her; the daughter only comes to her senses after her mother has died and she flings herself onto her mother's casket during her funeral procession.)

Today though, biracial and multiracial people are now thought of as the product of an exotic, idealized future. This sounds like it should be positive, but it still puts biracial and multiracial people in terms of theory, not reality. To quote The Critical Media Project:

"...[T]he increasingly globalized nature of identity means that the conversation around

mixed race tends to move beyond an isolated focus on black/white issues to incorporate other racial and ethnic identities. Mixed race individuals are often talked about in futuristic terms, conceptualized as modern hybrid beings that signal a faster, stronger and better world ahead. They are also often sexualized and fetishized as mysterious, exotic, sexy and extraordinary looking."

Even though the tone of the conversation has shifted, biracial and multiracial people are still afflicted with stereotyping and objectification. Maybe one reason we rarely see biracial and multiracial people represented in the media is because too many people still view the idea of a multiracial society as a futuristic, sci-fi world that isn't here yet, when in fact, it is here. It's been here for centuries. In short, things have got to get out of the theoretical and into the practical when it comes to representing biracial and multiracial people as people, people who live in the now. Zendaya's Mary Jane could go a long way in beginning to right that wrong.

The biggest film featuring an interracial family in recent memory is *Infinitely Polar Bear*, starring Zoe Saldana and Mark Ruffalo. Mirren Lyell for Mixed Nation also cites Nickelodeon shows *Sanjay and Craig* and *The Haunted Hathaways* as recent TV shows depicting interracial families. But there should be more films like this. Indeed, there should be more media of all types about multiracial and biracial people. As John Paul Brammer of Blue Nation Review wrote:

"In the context of the media diversity debate, multiracial people exist in a precarious place. On the one hand, they seem to be left out for the sake of a more direct approach to criticism of media representation of minorities. "We need more black characters" or "We need more Asian characters" are strong demands with a history of mischaracterization and discrimination behind them. "We need more multiracial people of color" is seen

as a level of intersectionality that Hollywood simply can't process. On the other hand, multiracial characters are often employed as copouts in the media, used to represent ethnic minorities in a more "palatable" way for mainstream audiences. Multiracial black actors with light skin are hired over black actors with darker skin. White Latinos are hired over Latinos with ethnic features. Even films with progressive racial themes have come under fire for this. The film *Dear White People*, a film created to represent black people and discuss white racism, was criticized for casting as its protagonist a biracial, light-skinned black woman."

More representations of biracial and multiracial characters could help quell Hollywood's usage of actors and actresses of mixed heritage as social and political wedges. More representations would also help build the self-esteem of many kids who don't see characters who represent all of their heritage on screen. According to this article by Astrea Greig, MA for the American Psychological Association:

"Despite large growth, the multiracial population still comprises a very small fraction of the U.S. population (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). Moreover, multiracial people in the media are often depicted as monoracial (CNPAAEMI, 2009; Dalmage, 2000; Shih & Sanchez, 2005). As a result of the small population and lack of media representation, multiracial youth may feel that they do not have a multiracial community and lack role models to help them understand their mixed identity (Dalmage, 2000; Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Multiracial role models are thus extremely helpful for mixed children and teens (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Moreover, having a community of others with a mixed racial and/or ethnic background has shown to help improve psychological well-being (Iijima Hall, 2004; Sanchez & Garcia, 2009)."

If Marvel allowed it, Mary Jane Watson

could be one such role model for biracial children. Her story, which as many have said is independent of race, would go a long way to represent biracial and multiracial people not as an ideal or as a tragedy, but as an ordinary person who faces personal and social issues big and small. A biracial Mary Jane would be yet a further stepping stone towards true identity equality in Hollywood and in society.

More representations of biracial and multiracial characters could help quell Hollywood's usage of actors and actresses of mixed heritage as social and political wedges.

"Sanjay's Super Team" Breaks Disney/Pixar Color Barrier



credit: Disney/Pixar (screenshot)

Originally posted October 19, 2015

Disney and Pixar (or in its current configuration, Disney/Pixar) has a history of blocking other characters out and portraying a majority of their characters as white, even though their audience is much more than just white Americans. Finally, Disney/Pixar is working towards more diversity with their short film, *Sanjay's Super Team*.

Thankfully, Disney has had some diversity under their belt and are adding more with *Moana*. But Pixar proper doesn't have a great track record with diversity at all. The first black Pixar character is Frozone in *The Incredibles*. The first Asian Pixar character is *Up's* Russell (and perhaps the character rumored to be Russell's dad, if I'm remembering correctly). That's pretty much it (apart from the Dia de los Muertos-themed film coming from Pixar, *Coco*). *Sanjay's Super Team* will, hopefully, set a precedent for Pixar to embrace more

sides of their audience by showing more diverse characters, not just in race, but in religion and culture, three things *Sanjay's Super Team* combine effortlessly.

"Sanjay's Super Team" will, hopefully, set a precedent for Pixar to embrace more sides of their audience by showing more diverse characters

3 Ways the Live-Action “Mulan” Film Could Be a Hit, If Disney Listens to the Advice



Originally posted September 13, 2016

Disney is continuing its live-action bent by making the rumor of a live-action version of *Mulan* movie true. The studio officially announced that the film, based on the studio’s animated 1998 hit, is in the works. Cue the anxiety, and rightfully so; Asian characters are the least showcased group in movies and in television. The penchant for Hollywood to not only showcase Asian characters, combined with their penchant to whitewash and cast white actors as leads in movies with mostly Asian casts, such as Matt Damon’s *The Great Wall*, has many people already upset at the prospect of Disney ruining a live-action *Mulan*.

To that end, nearly 90,000 people have already signed a petition asking for proper casting when making this film.

The petition and the sheer amount of signers will hopefully get Disney’s attention. To go along with that, here’s some free advice to Disney when creating this film.

1. Actually cast Chinese and Chinese-American actors. Specifically Chinese and Chinese-American actors.

This seems like it would be common knowledge, seeing how the film’s story is one from Chinese legend. But you never know about Hollywood; they cast Scarlett Johansson as The Major in *Ghost in the Shell* after all.

It’s also heavily important that Disney specifically hire Chinese and/or Chinese-American actors. Hiring Asian actors who aren’t Chinese reinforces the idea that the pan-Asian experience is an interchangeable one, when it’s not. Korean culture isn’t the same as Japanese culture, which isn’t the same as Chinese culture. Also, interchanging one Asian actor with another is quite offensive: many Japanese were offended when 2005’s *Memoirs of a Geisha* cast its main leads with Chinese actresses—Ziyi Zhang, Michelle Yeoh, Li Gong, Tsai Chin. There’s also quite a number of other non-Japanese Asian actors in a film depicting a Japanese story.

Folks on Twitter have given tons of free casting advice to Disney. It would behoove Disney to actually look at the suggestions and cast accordingly.

2. Hire Chinese consultants (and actually listen to them)

From my cursory research, it is unclear if Disney actually used consultants adept in ancient China, particularly the Tang Dynasty (one of the dynasties it's believed the Legend of Hua Mulan comes from, as it's not exactly clear which dynasty the story originated). But if going by this portion of the film's Wikipedia page says anything:

"In its earliest stages, the story was originally conceived as a *Tootsie*-like romantic comedy film where Mulan, who was a misfit tomboy that loves her father, is betrothed to Shang whom she has not met. On her betrothal day, her father Fa Zhou carves her destiny on a stone tablet in the family temple, which she shatters in anger, and runs away to forge her own destiny...In November 1993, Chris Sanders, who had just finished storyboard work on *The Lion King*, was hopeful to work on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* until [current Disney Theatrical group Thomas Schumacher] appointed him to work on *Mulan* instead...Acting as Head of Story, Sanders grew frustrated with the romantic comedy aspect of the story, and urged producer Pam Coats to be more faithful to the original legend by having Mulan leave home because of the love for her father...This convinced the filmmakers to decide to change Mulan's character in order to make her more appealing and selfless."

It's that they either didn't have consultants or decided against learning from their counsel.

Also showing Disney's lack of trusting consultants is how dangerously close the "matchmaker" makeup looks to Japanese geisha makeup, as well as the fact that Disney had also hired consultants for their 1995 hit, *Pocahontas*. However, they didn't actively use the consultants to make a more historically-accurate film. To quote *The Los Angeles Times* back in 1995:

"This is a nice film—if it didn't carry the name 'Pocahontas,'" says Shirley Little Dove Custalow McGowan, a key consultant on the movie who teaches Native American education at schools, including the University of Virginia.

"Disney promised me historical accuracy, but there will be a lot to correct when I go into the classrooms." Sonny Skyhawk, founder of the Pasadena-based American Indians in Film, is peeved that the film's producer ignored his offer of help. "With few exceptions, the movie industry hasn't got it right," he explains. "And Hollywood has a long track record of not letting us see the product until it's too late to make a difference."

If Disney wants a live-action *Mulan* film to become a success, they should heed the word of Chinese consultants who will be able to steer them in the right direction. Just because Disney is the most powerful studio in the country, if not the world, doesn't mean it knows everything.

3. Take the Disney-isms out of this film

This sounds pretty pointed, but all of the quirks that Disney puts in its films need to be gone from *Mulan*. Disney consistently works from the viewpoint of middle-aged, straight white men "old boys club." This point of view is something that ailed *Pocahontas*, *The Princess and the Frog*, and in some ways, *Mulan* itself, even though they thankfully had the ability to see that *Tootsie* was not the right way to go with *Mulan*. To combat this, Disney needs to wake up and see the world outside of its mouse-eared tower. Disney needs to get in the trenches with this film, and make not a Disneyfied version of China, but a family-friendly tale that still adheres to its traditional Chinese roots. Basically, Disney just needs to do its best to make a faithful representation of a centuries-old story that also highlights a well-rounded representation of an often-stereotyped and underrepresented group. It isn't a lot to ask, in all honesty. The commitment to do this, though, is what's often the toughest thing for studios to adhere to.

BONUS: Address Shang's sexuality

We gotta talk about this. When did Shang fall in love with Mulan? She wasn't ever out of drag for long in the movie, so by just timing alone, it would seem that Shang fell in love with Mulan as Ping. Am I right or am I wrong? Can we ask B.D. Wong, Shang's voice actor, this question? In my headcanon, Shang is either gay or bisexual. That's the only way the love story can make sense to me.

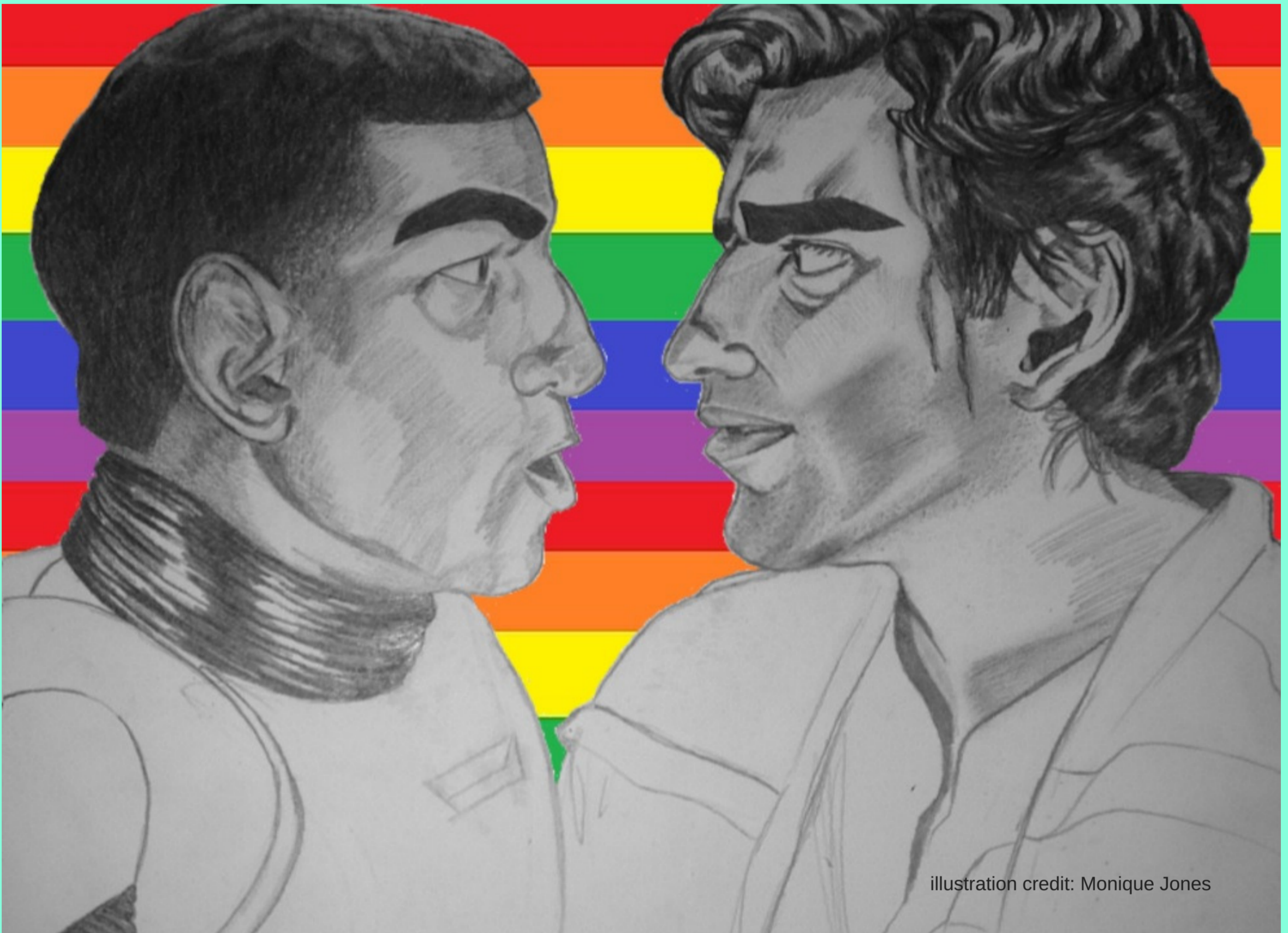
disney and

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Stormpilot:

The Breakout Fandom Couple of 2015



Originally posted January 1, 2016

Star Wars: The Force Awakens has indeed awakened the slumbering mass that is the *Star Wars* fandom, which has been waiting for the franchise's return to greatness. The film, starring and John Boyega, Daisy Ridley, and Oscar Isaac (as well as the members of the original cast), has already reached \$1.23B at the time of this article, and surely, the film will reach even greater heights the longer it stays in the theaters. (This is also not taking into account the millions or billions of dollars spent on *The Force Awakens* merchandise.)

While the film is being touted as a tour-de-force of nostalgia and a refreshed look at a "galaxy far, far away," the film has also been an achievement in diversity due to having well-rounded and powerful female characters

(with the exception of Gwendoline Christie's Captain Phasma, who—while cool—will hopefully be fleshed out in upcoming films) and two leads of color, Boyega and Isaac, who open the film. (The fact that their faces are the first faces we see in the movie immediately cemented the film as a break away from Hollywood's normal modus operandi.) Boyega and Isaac's characters, disillusioned ex-Stormtrooper Finn and Resistance fighter pilot Poe Dameron, have also acted as ambassadors to another type of diversity not usually found in films; characters who might not only be on the LGBT spectrum, but might also be in a same-sex relationship.

The fandom who propose Finn and Poe's relationship (named "Stormpilot" or "FinnPoe") to the masses provide several clues as to why they think Stormpilot is possible.

First, Poe gave Finn his name; instead of continuing to call Finn “FN-2187” during their escape from Stormkiller Base, Poe immediately decides to call him Finn, thus giving Finn a new identity and a new lease on life. Second, Finn keeps Poe’s jacket when, after the crash-land on Jakku, Finn assumes Poe’s died in the crash. Third, Finn completes Poe’s mission to get BB-8’s message to the resistance base. Fourth, Finn and Poe passionately embrace after realizing the other is alive and kicking after all.

All bets are off when Poe lets Finn keep his jacket, saying “It suits you.” Poe, biting his own lip before speaking, then says with bedroom eyes, “You’re a good man, Finn.” The playful punch to Finn’s shoulder simply looks like a feeble attempt to cover up what could be construed as obvious flirting. Finn’s focused stare back (as well as another focused stare he gives Poe after Poe slaps his shoulder again in a pseudo-camaraderie fashion before taking to the skies in his X-Wing) seems to suggest that Finn can feel something brewing between them as well.

The clues start coming together after Isaac revealed, albeit with a little dry humor thrown in, that he was, in fact, playing up a romantic angle with his character. John Boyega seems to concur.

Normally, fandom character pairings, or “ships” (short for “relationships”) don’t make headline news. But Stormpilot not only lit up fan spaces like Tumblr and Twitter, but also mainstream sites like E! Online, BuzzFeed, Hypable, *Vanity Fair*, *USA Today*, Metro, Pink News, Comic Book Resources, The Mary Sue, Bleeding Cool, MoviePilot and certainly many more.

Star Wars fan Stephanie wrote one of the many pieces on Stormpilot for The Geekiary. The post, called “Everyone is Talking About Our ‘Star Wars’ Slash Ship” (with “slash” fandom slang for same-sex pairings) focuses on Stephanie’s cautious optimism when it comes to how those outside of the fandom ship world will accept Stormpilot’s existence. “The best thing about mainstream coverage...is that it normalizes queer romances,” she wrote in her article. “...When all these outlets are reporting on our fan activities as

something worth noting, it sends a powerful message to studios that there’s an audience out there that wants these narratives.”

However, Stephanie notes in her article, the usage of some outlets using the term “bromance” when describing a ship that much more than just friendship can be problematic and awkward. “The main issue with mainstream media’s coverage of slash shipping is that, since we’re so obscure and don’t often leave our isolated communities, they don’t quite know how to talk about it,” she wrote. “Even worse, this can be an indicator that mainstream press just doesn’t know how to talk about queer romance in general, even in regard to non-fandom inspired pairings.”

Stephanie stated in an email interview about her feelings behind her article. “I wrote my article because I was feeling so heavily conflicted about the fact that this ship was getting such a large amount of mainstream coverage so quickly. On the one hand, I’m elated that a slash ship is getting generally positive coverage. It helps legitimize LGBTQ+ relationships in general, and makes it possible for more visibility going forward. On the other hand, we don’t exactly have the best track record with mainstream press understanding fandom culture. It often feels like we are being gawked at, made fun of, or just outright misrepresented,” she wrote. “I’m really grateful that, so far, we haven’t had any coverage that’s treated us poorly. With any luck, we won’t and all of my worrying will be for naught. We definitely need to lose the term ‘bromance,’ though. Please. Romance is romance and we don’t need to ‘bro’ it up to soften it. But that’s been my only issue so far and it’s relatively small compared to what’s been done to us in the past.”

Stephanie didn’t immediately latch onto Stormpilot after her first viewing of *The Force Awakens*, but now sees the developing relationship as playing on classic romantic beats. “Unlike a lot of my friends, I didn’t walk out of the theater shipping them right away. I did, however, come out of the film immediately drawn to Poe Dameron. When I got home and discussed it with friends I was introduced to the idea of shipping him with Finn within 24

hours of my first viewing and it didn't take me very long to get on board with that idea completely," she wrote. "There are a lot of romantic tropes that code them as being in the early stages of a romance such as clothing sharing, nicknames (or in Finn's case, a name that isn't a Stormtrooper number), and even that long dramatic run into each others arms when they realize the other isn't dead. I've seen the film two additional times since my first viewing with my slash goggles on and everything just falls perfectly into place."

Stephanie attributes *Star Wars* large fanbase for the reason Stormpilot became the phenomenon it is. "I think a lot of what has drawn people to Stormpilot is what draws people to slash pairings in general, but on a much larger scale since the *Star Wars* fandom is so huge. Many LGBTQ+ people like myself enjoy queer pairings because we just don't get them that often in mainstream media. It feels good to see characters that reflect our own sexuality off on adventures," she wrote. "Many heterosexual women are drawn to slash ships either because they like the idea of two men together in general, or because these specific characters in this specific story happens to speak to them regardless of gender. The interesting thing is that I've seen many straight men also shipping Stormpilot, which seems to be rare in a lot of my other slash pairings (though not unheard of). There might be more visibility here because of how huge the fandom is. Or maybe straight men are just getting comfortable enough to admit that these guys are kind of perfect for each other. I'm not sure why there's a higher visibility of heterosexual men shipping Finn and Poe, but it's definitely unique."

Geek Girl Diva, another *Star Wars* fan onboard with Stormpilot, wrote a similar response in an email interview to the fandom's love for the pairing. "I think people connect with both the characters and how they are with each other. Poe and Finn already have a friendship that's romantic in a sense," she wrote. "They fell into immediate like with one another. You get the sense that both Boyega & Isaac would be totally down with playing gay characters and Isaac has a very open faced admiration.

I think people connect to the deep liking these two have for one another, and it's not a stretch to take it to the next level."

Geek Girl Diva was immediately a part of the Stormpilot fanbase thanks to the ever-present chronicler of fandom things, Tumblr. "It was all Tumblr, bless its shipping heart," she wrote. "Once I saw the meme, I fell in love with the 'ship."

The fact that so many people, men and women alike, have latched onto Stormpilot could have implications for how Disney and the *Star Wars* movie team goes forward, right? Or could stuff stay at the status quo? With so many billions at stake, and with such a wide intersection of people in the *Star Wars* fandom (some of whom aren't as open towards LGBT representation), it's difficult to say if Disney and Lucasfilm will take the promise of diversity to the next level.

"I think [the mainstream press is] great, wrote Geek Girl Diva, adding, "As much as I love the ship (and I love it like a house on fire), I don't think Stormpilot is in the cards on the big screen. But I do think Poe could very well be gay and he'd be a perfect way to bring an LGBT character into the *Star Wars* Universe."

There has been a Change.org petition asking Lucasfilm's president Kathleen Kennedy to include LGBT characters in the new *Star Wars* films. When it comes to whether the petition could cause a rush of LGBT characters to enter the *Star Wars* film franchise is difficult to say. But both Stephanie and Geek Girl Diva point out that LGBT characters are already a part of the franchise, if just in books and games.

"Lucasfilm has already made the jump into showing LGBT characters, first in [*Star Wars: The Old Republic*] and then in a couple of the new canon books (Chuck Wendig's *Aftermath* & Claudia Gray's *Lost Stars*)," wrote Geek Girl Diva. "I don't know 100% that Poe isn't already the lead into an LGBT presence in the films. I think he might be, but it's a guess and nothing more. That said, I do think that the Stormpilot love could make it easier for [Lucasfilm] to flip that switch. But I'm not in a position to make a decision on that."

“Thanks to Chuck Wendig, there are LGBTQ+ characters in the novels, but we are still lacking big screen representation. I have a feeling that if they were planning for Poe and Finn to be in an onscreen romance, that’s already been decided and a petition wouldn’t sway that,” wrote Stephanie. “However, something like Poe’s sexuality may still be negotiable and we could have an affect on that. Poe’s sexuality hasn’t been touched on and Oscar Isaac has been incredibly supportive in interviews. He’s treated the idea of two men in a romantic relationship with respect and even said he’d go for a rainbow colored lightsaber. This could all be joking, of course, but I get a strong vibe from him that he’s supportive of our community. It’s hard to explain why, exactly, but these tidbits from his interviews don’t feel like they [Lucasfilm] are ‘making fun’ of us at all.”

“Finn’s sexuality may be more difficult to sway. Unfortunately we operate in a ‘straight until proven otherwise’ mindset with the majority of mainstream media, and the idea of bisexuality seems particularly difficult for a lot of writers to grasp,” Stephanie added. “With Finn expressing even a moderate interest in Rey, this could be the writers coding him as heterosexual. But hey, it’s possible that the people who are writing the next couple of scripts could have a good grasp on the idea that you can be attracted to more than one gender at a time and we may get bisexual Finn after all.”

Some news that’s made the social media rounds is that Captain Phasma will have an extended role in future films due to fan support. With the amount of fan support Stormpilot has, it’s in the realm of possibility that Disney and Lucasfilm could think twice about the extent of Poe and Finn’s relationship. But again, it’s tough to say since there’s so much money and investment on the line.

“It’s possible. Adding a few extra interactions without rewriting an entire script isn’t too huge, but if the characters are written, say, on completely different planets for most of the film it may be hard,” wrote Stephanie when asked if she thought there was a possibility for Disney and Lucasfilm to make fanon canon. “But if we don’t cause enough enthusiasm for Episode VIII, there’s always Episode IX. This is a trilogy and I’m sticking with Stormpilot for the long haul. Just have to keep my fingers crossed that neither of them die in the next

film. That’s pretty much the only thing that’d put a nail in the coffin for future interaction.”

Geek Girl Diva differs slightly on the issue. “On [Phasma returning to the series], I think that was a bit different. Phasma caught fire for a few reasons and it’s a lot easier to beef up her story than it is to add in a relationship between two lead characters,” she wrote. “In the end, I think that’s entirely up to [Episode VIII director and Episode IX writer/director] Rian Johnson and the [Lucasfilm] Story Group. It all depends on what the arc is for the trio in the larger story. I don’t think Disney & [Lucasfilm] will shy away from any interaction, but I don’t think they’ll play it up just for fans. I think, in the end, the filmmakers will do what they feel is the best fit for the trilogy and the story.”

“If I have a personal hope, it’s not for Stormpilot (even though I love the ship),” Geek Girl Diva added. “In a perfect world, where we get diversity of all kinds, we get a female lead, a hetero interracial couple and a gay character (maybe in a relationship with a male alien? Let’s think big!), all of whom are great friends and join together to defeat the Darkness. I can work with that just fine.”

If Poe and Finn *do* become canon, what will Disney do about LGBT representation for women? Of course, the franchise will add characters to subsequent films, but if fans want someone from the main Big Three characters, there seems to be a lot of support for Rey being asexual and/or aromantic.

Much of the support for Rey as being along the LGBT spectrum seems to stem from the fact that even though there’s ample time (and many open invitations from Finn) for Rey to take their friendship to the next level, Rey seems to be more enamored with the idea of what Finn leads her to think he is; she’s more fascinated by the idea of him being a part of the Resistance and belonging to something great rather than him being an available guy.

Also, she’s more concerned with the mission at hand, getting BB-8 back to the base, rather than hooking up. The final scenes find Rey not cementing a romance with Finn, but with her



Actors John Boyega and Oscar Isaac attend the European Premiere of the highly anticipated Star Wars: The Force Awakens in London on December 16, 2015. (Image.net/Getty Images)

kissing his forehead while he's in a comatose state, a goodbye before she heads to the island Luke Skywalker is hiding on in the hopes of being trained by him. Her new mission is to focus on her handling of the Force, not being someone's girlfriend.

The call for making Rey along the LGBT spectrum would naturally add to the film franchise' commitment to diversity, but there's also a smaller contingent of the fandom who want Rey to be lesbian, bi, or asexual/aromantic simply at the expense of removing her characterization and forcing her into the box of a spectator or as a voyeuristic avatar for the fan him/herself.

Several fans on Tumblr seem to imply that they want Rey to be asexual and aromantic not for reasons concerning diversity, but just so she won't interfere with Poe and Finn's possible relationship. Asexuality and aromantic individuals deserve to be showcased on the big and small screens, which is what happened on USA's *Sirens*, which featured asexual paramedic Valentina aka "Voodoo", who dated non-asexual fellow paramedic Brian. But asexuality and aromanticism—two orientations that don't describe a lack of a person's desire for basic human affection, but just the levels to which a person might desire affection—shouldn't be used as a way to box a character in at the expense of

two other characters' possible romantic relationship.

Such fear of Rey being a wedge between Poe and Finn should be left by the wayside, since directors are beginning to, at the very least, not write fans off for their non-canonical opinions. One example is *Captain America* co-director Joe Russo stating in an interview (via *Vanity Fair*) that while he has always personally viewed Steve Rogers and Bucky Barnes' relationship as brotherly, he doesn't begrudge or limit anyone else from their own points of view. "People can interpret the relationship however they want to interpret it...People have interpreted that relationship all kinds of ways, and it's great to see people argue about...what that relationship means to them," he said. "We will never define it as filmmakers, explicitly, but however people want to interpret it they can interpret it."

This movement towards fan inclusivity, as well as actors like Isaac suggesting he was playing at romance with another male character, means a lot when it comes to the struggle to get proper LGBT representation. But, as the *Vanity Fair* article linked above points out, the road towards true inclusiveness might be even longer than fans are prepared for. However, something can

be said for progress happening in leaps and bounds after years of stuttering steps. Take a look at marriage equality; it has taken over a decade to get marriage equality in a majority of the states, and then, one day, marriage equality was nationwide with the swift smack of the Supreme Court's gavel. So who knows as to what kind of romantic future Finn and Poe (or Rey) have. While we could be going to the theaters in 2017 with Finn in a relationship with a girl, we could find Finn and Poe in same-sex relationships (if not with each other) and Rey exploring the universe of sexual identity while she hones her Jedi skills. The ball is in Disney and Lucasfilm's court; let's see what play they make.

We could find Finn and Poe in same-sex relationships (if not with each other) and Rey exploring the universe of sexual identity while honing her Jedi skills. The ball is in Disney and Lucasfilm's court.

#GiveCaptainAmericaABoyfriend

An interview with hashtag creator
Jessica Salerno



Originally posted June 6, 2016

The voices are getting louder and stronger for Hollywood, Disney in particular, to include LGBT characters in their properties.

A few weeks ago, the hashtags #GiveCaptainAmericaABoyfriend and #GiveElsaAGirlfriend trended on Twitter, showing not only how vast the audience is for mainstream LGBT content (unlike what Hollywood studios think), but also the urgency with which this type of content is needed. Around the same time #GiveElsaAGirlfriend trended, GLAAD released its annual Studio Responsibility Index, which found that out of Disney's 11 properties released in 2015, none of them featured LGBT characters. (Paramount also featured no LGBT characters in its 2015 output.)

GLAAD stated in the report how Disney could rectify their issue, using *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (which I think must be a slightly veiled reference to the online movement for Finn and Poe to be in a relationship). To quote GLAAD:

"As sci-fi projects have the special opportunity to create unique worlds whose advanced societies can serve as a commentary on our own, the most obvious place where Disney could include LGBT characters is in the upcoming eighth *Star Wars* film. 2015's *The Force Awakens* has introduced a new and diverse central trio, which allows the creators opportunity to tell fresh stories as they develop their backstory. Recent official novels in the franchise featured lesbian and gay characters that could also be easily written in to the story."

Elsa and Captain America are two other characters that have become part of Disney fans' stable of coded characters. Many have said that Elsa's self-acceptance and "coming out" moment regarding her ice powers relates to kids wrestling with their self-identity and the courage it takes to reveal that truth to family and friends. The song "Let It Go", as the Guardian states, has been adopted as an anthem for LGBT fans. On the Marvel end of Disney, Captain America's close friendship with Bucky Barnes has been seen as having gay overtones by many fans, as well as Cap's immediately close relationship with the Falcon; in fact, Falcon and Cap's relationship in the comics inspired one fan to write Marvel, moved by how the two characters expressed emotions that, as the comic panel itself explained away, were emotions that were "left unsaid."

With the tide turning higher and heavier towards Disney finally making a move and acquiescing to marginalized fans' concerns and wants, I decided to reach out to the hashtag creators who were helping give renewed hope to fans wanting to see LGBT relationships on screen. Below is my email interview with Jessica Salerno, creator of the hashtag #GiveCaptainAmericaABoyfriend*, who gives more insight into the creation of the hashtag as well as why it's so important.

JUST ADD COLOR: Why did you create #GiveCaptainAmericaABoyfriend?

Jessica Salerno: When I created the tag #GiveCaptainAmericaABoyfriend, it was something I definitely wanted to see be translated into the movies because of what it would do for the LGBTQ+ community, and because I myself love the Captain America movies and know many others do too! I had no idea people would actually catch on and help me trend it, but I couldn't have been happier when they did.

#GiveElsaAGirlfriend has also been making the rounds. What do you think about these two hashtags and the message they represent? In other words, why have the hashtags hit a cord?

Both of these hashtags call for everyone to voice their support for two huge characters in the film industry, on a platform where they can be heard. These tags, once they get trending, show film studios everywhere that people want this representation of the LGBTQ+ community. These tags are both so important

because when this many people speak up, they're going to be heard. Having characters like Elsa and Captain America date the [same] sex would be revolutionary. People want superheroes and princesses to be able to be just like them—to show everyone that you can be a superhero and be bisexual, etc. It normalizes these sexualities and concepts that most of the world still shies away from, and these characters specifically speak out to the youth who view them—teaching them that no matter who they choose to be, they can still be a princess or a hero.

Why do you think Hollywood hasn't made a prominent, out LGBT superhero or princess?

I think Hollywood hasn't embraced the idea of a leasing LGBTQ+ character in films like these because they are worried about money. Frankly put, there is a huge amount of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, etc...worldwide that threaten the net worth of these corporations like Disney. The amount of backlash received from #GiveCaptainAmericaABoyfriend just showed how many people still wrongly deny the LGBTQ+ community. But that's why Hollywood needs to take these steps to normalize it with the platforms that they have.

How do you think the lack of LGBT characters has affected movie-going audiences?

I think the lack of LGBTQ+ characters in movies has affected the audiences, dwindling the amount of viewers who attend a movie if they know its another movie with an unnecessary heterosexual relationship forced into the mix just to make sure nobody tries shipping the male characters together. People want more representation, and they're not going to be as willing to see a movie full of heterosexual stuff because that's what we've been seeing for decades and its just not normal or realistic anymore. it hasn't been for a while, and it needs to be realized.

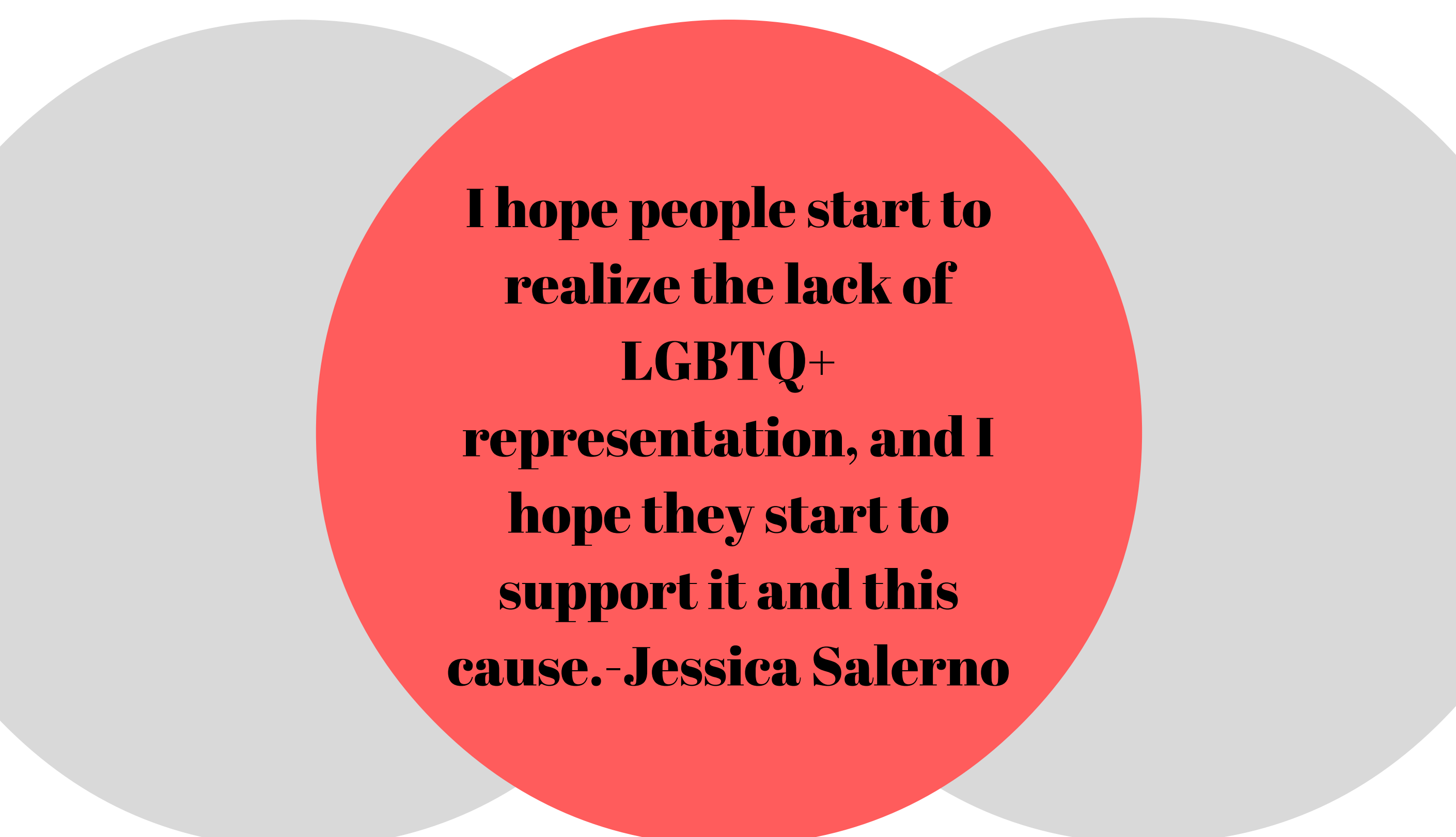
What message do you hope people take away from your hashtag?

From #GiveCaptainAmericaABoyfriend and from #GiveElsaAGirlfriend I hope people start to realize we can make a difference in the industry through just tweeting support from our phones or computers. I hope people start to realize the lack of LGBTQ+ representation, and I hope they start to support it and this cause. I hope people start to feel hopeful again that change is possible and happening for the LGBTQ+ community and that they see how many people are here to support that. It's not just those in the community that want this change, and it's empowering to those in it to see that again. from this tag I really hope people just continue to push for more representation and take a stand, because we can make this happen.

If Captain America was given a boyfriend, who would you choose?

I would love for Captain America's boyfriend to be his long time friend Bucky Barnes! ♦

**JUST ADD COLOR reached out to Alexis Isabel, the creator of #GiveElsaAGirlfriend. She couldn't be reached for comment.*



**I hope people start to
realize the lack of
LGBTQ+
representation, and I
hope they start to
support it and this
cause.-Jessica Salerno**



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