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Cerny: 'Frozen' heroines break traditional women's roles

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By Tasha Cerny

I-recently had a mid-senior-year crisis, and not for the reasons you might think.- See, I spent the fall semester of this past year researching a thesis concerning the social gender



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issues of Disney fairytales, and then, to my surprise, Disney one-ups me and presents the film “Frozen.”

For those of you who don't know, “Frozen” is the newest Disney animation film, based on Hans Christian Andersen's “The Snow Queen.” The film focuses on the love between two sisters, who ultimately come together to accept each other and save their kingdom from the calamity of an eternal winter.

Perhaps only the 5-year-old inside of me actually cares about anything Disney-related, but “Frozen” is an incredibly refreshing addition to Disney's long line of fairy tales. Consider this: “Frozen” is the first Disney princess film that has not ended in marriage or the somewhat-verbal prospect thereof, and the first where the female leads have the only hand in the outcome of the film (yes, I am even including “Mulan” in that analysis).

Now, I know what you're thinking, “I totally care about Disney films targeted for children under 5. This is completely applicable to my life!” But in all honesty, this is a really important milestone in Disney history. In a world where articles with titles like “23 Trends Guys Hate (That Women Love)” are running rampant and stomping on any notions of feminism, strong, independent, female role models are hard to come by, particularly in children's film and television. What does that imply for the future society we are raising?

Take our generation, for example. Most of us were born into the '90s comeback-era of Disney films. A good portion of us were raised on “The Lion King,” “Beauty and the Beast,” “Aladdin,” “Mulan,” and so forth. And I would bet that many of us - myself included - still love those stories and characters.- We've also had certain social standards drilled into us; social standards that are reflected and reiterated in those very movies.- Whether we want to admit it or not, these ideas about marriage, love, appearance and the relationship between men and women have made our society what it is today. We idolize the characters we meet in stories and we learn from them, and for many of us, Disney was a large part of that aspect of our education.

My point is simple: we live in a society where we still struggle to understand feminism and what it means for women to be equal with men. We live in a society where men's privilege often goes unrecognized and we praise overtly-sexualized, digitally-perfected



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celebrity women for being role models for the rest of us. But we also live in a society that is learning. A society that can come up with a film like "Frozen," a film that, while still having a way to go, demonstrates that love does not have to come from romance, and that women can save the day too.

Do you think Disney's "Frozen" is a good example of strong female characters?

Yes

No

Maybe


I don't know

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