

Gay Representation and 'Onward'

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The author argues that “the limits of our imagination is at least partly determined by pop culture, and when we see something treated as acceptable within the bounds of fiction, that thing starts to feel more possible in real life.” In what ways does pop culture affect imagination? In what ways do the limits of our imagination have real-world effects? Can you give an example of how art has affected your own view of what is possible?

The author claims that Disney’s gestures at representation “will always feel false.” Do you agree? What is it about the situation that might make this seem true? If Disney’s gestures really will always be read as disingenuous, is there any reason for Disney to continue to make them? Can these steps toward inclusiveness still do good even if we always doubt Disney’s motives?

When challenging heteronormativity in art, how can the treatment of gay characters find a suitable balance between stereotyping or normalizing to the point of erasing difference entirely? How do we ensure authentic representation rather than mere tokenism?