

INS 101 & 102: Media Makeover Project Proposal

Title: Someone's Got a Girlfriend, Reimagining Valkyrie in Thor: Ragnarok

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## Someone's Got a Girlfriend; Reimagining Valkyrie in Thor: Ragnarok

With a running total of twenty-three movies, it is difficult to find someone who has never heard of the Marvel Avengers Universe. From the entertaining group dynamics of the *Guardians of the Galaxy*, to the individual styling of characters like *Doctor Strange* and *Ant Man*, there is a storyline for everyone. As a favourite among movies goers, the Universe is often championed for its diversity of characters spanning different ages, races, genders, histories, backgrounds and subjecthoods. That is, unless you're looking for representations of the LGBTQ+ community, you won't find that in this Universe.

Of all the stories told, and characters present (over 7, 000) there is very little representation the LGBTQ+ community. This is problematic for many reasons; most notably because there is an openly bi-sexual character already in the Universe - Valkyrie. Valkyrie is a female warrior based on Norse mythology who first appeared in the Avengers series in late 1970. From the beginning, Valkyrie as a character has been written as bi-sexual. Despite this consistency in the source material, the most recent iteration of her in the Thor movies, makes no mention of it. This is akin to erasure of one of the more dominant elements of her subjecthood. To make matters worse, this is not an accidental omission. The one scene that alluded to her sexuality in *Thor: Ragnarok* was deleted in final editing.

For my Media Makeover Project, I will reimagine elements of the *Thor: Ragnarok* movie to properly present Valkyrie. First, I will look at the original source material and compare/contrast it to the movie to gauge the movies accuracy. Then, I

will make recommendations on how the movie should make adjustments to more accurately reflect and represent Valkyrie's character. It is important to note that very recently, Marvel announced that the new movie *Thor: Love and Thunder* will better represent the LGBTQ+ element of Valkyrie's character. This is an excellent step forward, but it comes as the result of pressure from Marvel fans. My project will address this criticism and consider the reactions of fans and the actors portraying the characters. I will pay attention to storyline, scene construction, and dialogue. Additionally, I will use theories of subjecthood, convergence and hegemony in my argumentation.

#### Bibliography:

Dry, J. (2019, July 21). *Valkyrie Will Officially be Marvel's First LGBTQ Superhero.*

IndieWire. <https://www.indiewire.com/2019/07/marvel-gay-superhero-valkyrie-tessa-thompson-thor-lgbt-1202159737/>

This online article discusses the changes that Marvel will make to Valkyrie's character in the upcoming Thor movie. In addition, there is an interview with Tessa Thompson, the actress who plays Valkyrie. This interview is important because she identifies as bi-sexual and she discusses the importance of representation of the LGBTQ+ community in mainstream media. She brings a unique voice and argument to the discussion of representation and erasure.

*Keywords:* representation, LGBTQ+, erasure

Ioannidou, E. (2013). Adapting Superhero Comics for the Big Screen: Subculture for the Masses. *Adaptation*, 6(2), 230–238.

This article demonstrates how media convergence triggers the integration of comics once understood as ‘subcultural’ into mass culture. In doing so, it alters the source material to make it more ‘palatable’ to a mass audience. This results in the erasure of specific subjecthoods and identity markers that are not considered mainstream. This effectively, wipes out what makes the comic ‘subcultural’ to begin with.

*Keywords:* convergence, comics, subculture