**Spellcheck For Bias: *Dream Chasers***

Geena Davis Institute for Gender in Media

April, 2021

**Overview**

The purpose of this report is to identify opportunities for content creators to diversify character representations. This report measures representations of six identities in the script *Dream Chasers* for LEGO:

* [Gender](#bookmark=id.30j0zll)
* [Race/Ethnicity](#bookmark=id.1fob9te)
* [LGBTQ+](#bookmark=id.3znysh7)
* [Disability](#bookmark=id.2et92p0)
* [Age (50+)](#bookmark=id.tyjcwt)
* [Body Size](#bookmark=id.3dy6vkm)

**Methodology**

Spellcheck for Bias is based on inventions and software developed at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. For this report, we analyze characters who spoke 1 line of text or more. In *Dream Chasers*, 12 characters met this criterion:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER NAME** | **LINE COUNT** |
| MATEO | 56 |
| MR OZ | 55 |
| IZZIE | 47 |
| COOPER | 26 |
| NIGHT HUNTER | 14 |
| ALBERT | 7 |
| LOGAN | 6 |
| NIGHTMARE KING | 3 |
| SNEAK | 2 |
| SUSAN | 1 |
| SNIVEL | 1 |
| ZOEY | 1 |

Automated coding is combined with expert human coding to generate the quantitative and qualitative analysis below.

**Gender Analysis**

***For comparison, women constitute 51% of the U.S. population.***

* 3 characters are specified as female.
* The leading character (“Mateo”) is male.
* The script contains 1 character opportunity to increase gender diversity.

Characters by Gender

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FEMALE CHARACTER** | **MALE CHARACTER** | **GENDER UNSPECIFIED** |
|  | MATEO |  |
| Izzie | MR OZ |  |
| IZZIE | IZZIE |  |
|  | COOPER |  |
|  | NIGHT HUNTER |  |
|  | ALBERT |  |
|  | LOGAN | SNIVEL |
|  | NIGHTMARE KING | Snivel |
|  | SNEAK |  |
| SUSAN | SUSAN |  |
| Susan | SNIVEL | SNIVEL |
| ZOEY | ZOEY |  |

The See Jane Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the See Jane test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **YES** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is a woman who; |
| **YES** | Is not depicted with gender stereotypes or tropes. |

****

**Race/Ethnicity Analysis**

***For comparison, people of color constitute 38% of the U.S. population.***

* 0 characters are specified as characters of color.
* The leading character is (“Mateo”) has an unspecified race/ethnicity.
* The script contains 11 character opportunities to increase racial/ethnic diversity.

Characters by Race/Ethnicity

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER OF COLOR** | **WHITE CHARACTER** | **RACE/ETHNICITY UNSPECIFIED** |
|  |  | MATEO |
|  |  | MR OZ |
|  |  | IZZIE |
|  |  | COOPER |
|  |  | NIGHT HUNTER |
|  |  | ALBERT |
|  |  | LOGAN |
|  |  | NIGHTMARE KING |
|  |  | SNEAK |
|  |  | SUSAN |
|  |  | SNIVEL |
|  |  | ZOEY |

The Sidney Poitier Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Sidney Poitier test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **NO** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is a character of color who; |
|  | Is not depicted with race/ethnicity stereotypes or tropes. |



**LGBTQ+ Analysis**

***For comparison, LGBTQ+ people comprise 4.5% of the U.S. population.***

* 0 characters are specified as LGBTQ+.
* The leading character (“Mateo”) is unspecified.
* The script contains 12 character opportunities to increase LGBTQ+ diversity.

Characters by LGBTQ+ Status

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQ+ CHARACTER** | **HETEROSEXUAL CHARACTER** | **SEXUALITY UNSPECIFIED** |
|  | MATEO | MATEO |
|  |  | MR OZ |
|  |  | IZZIE |
|  |  | COOPER |
|  |  | NIGHT HUNTER |
|  |  | ALBERT |
|  |  | LOGAN |
|  |  | NIGHTMARE KING |
|  |  | SNEAK |
|  |  | SUSAN |
|  |  | SNIVEL |
|  |  | ZOEY |

The Vito-Russo Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Vito-Russo test, a script/manuscript must:** | |
| **NO** | Contain a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer. |
|  | That character must not be solely or predominantly defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity (i.e. they are comprised of the same sort of unique character traits commonly used to differentiate straight/non-transgender characters from one another). |
|  | The LGBTQ character must be tied into the plot in such a way that their removal would have a significant effect, meaning they are not there to simply provide colorful commentary, paint urban authenticity, or (perhaps most commonly) set up a punchline. |



**Disability Analysis**

***For comparison, people with disabilities constitute 19% of the U.S. population.***

* 0 characters are specified as having a physical, cognitive, or communication disability.
* The leading character is not specified as having a disability.
* The script contains 12 character opportunities to increase disability diversity.

Characters by Disability Status

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER WITH DISABILITY** | **CHARACTER WITHOUT DISABILITY** | **DISABILITY STATUS UNSPECIFIED** |
|  |  | MATEO |
|  |  | MR OZ |
|  |  | IZZIE |
|  |  | COOPER |
|  |  | NIGHT HUNTER |
|  |  | ALBERT |
|  |  | LOGAN |
|  |  | NIGHTMARE KING |
|  |  | SNEAK |
|  |  | SUSAN |
|  |  | SNIVEL |
|  |  | ZOEY |

The Marlee Matlin Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Marlee Matlin test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **NO** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) with a physical, cognitive, or communication disability who; |
|  | Is not depicted with disability stereotypes or tropes. |



**Age (50+) Analysis**

***For comparison, people ages 50+ constitute 34% of the U.S. population.***

* 0 characters are specified as ages 50+.
* The leading character (“Mateo”) is under 50.
* The script contains 7 character opportunities to increase age diversity.

Characters by Age

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER 50+** | **CHARACTER UNDER 50** | **AGE UNSPECIFIED** |
|  | MATEO |  |
|  | MR OZ | MR OZ |
|  | IZZIE |  |
|  | COOPER |  |
|  | NIGHT HUNTER | NIGHT HUNTER |
|  | ALBERT | ALBERT |
|  | LOGAN |  |
|  | NIGHTMARE KING | NIGHTMARE KING |
|  | SNEAK | SNEAK |
|  | SUSAN | SUSAN |
|  | SNIVEL | SNIVEL |
|  | ZOEY |  |

The Betty White Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Betty White test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **NO** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is 50+ who; |
|  | Is not depicted with age stereotypes or tropes. |



**Body Size Analysis**

***For comparison, people with large body types constitute 39% of the U.S. population.***

* 0 characters are specified as having a large body type.
* The leading character (“Mateo”) is not specified as having a large body type.
* The script contains 12 character opportunities to increase body type diversity.

Characters by Body Size

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER WITH LARGE BODY TYPE** | **CHARACTER WITH SMALL/MEDIUM BODY TYPE** | **BODY SIZE UNSPECIFIED** |
|  |  | MATEO |
|  |  | MR OZ |
|  |  | IZZIE |
|  |  | COOPER |
|  |  | NIGHT HUNTER |
|  |  | ALBERT |
|  |  | LOGAN |
|  |  | NIGHTMARE KING |
|  |  | SNEAK |
|  |  | SUSAN |
|  |  | SNIVEL |
|  |  | ZOEY |

The Cooper Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Cooper test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **NO** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) with a large body type who; |
|  | Is not depicted with size stereotypes or tropes. |



**Intersectional Analysis**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Female Character** | **Character of Color** | **LGBTQ+ Character** | **Character with a Disability** | **Character 50+** | **Character with Large Body Type** |
| **Female Character** |  | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |
| **Character of Color** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |
| **LGBTQ+ Character** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |
| **Character with a Disability** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** |
| **Character 50+** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** |
| **Character with Large Body Type** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  |

**Positive Aspects**

* Healthy depiction of masculinity: Male character (Cooper) de-escalates a potentially volatile encounter and tries to reconcile two male characters. Cooper states, “look you are both my friends and you’re going to have to get along” (17)
  + Male characters provide emotional support for one another: “they insisted on staying until you came around. You know what that sounds like to me? Friends” (25)
  + Depicts a vulnerable male character, whose central struggle is missing his friend. Demonstrates the importance of human relationships.
* Female character (Izzie) is a central part of the action scenes and fights back against villains instead of waiting to be rescued.
* Plot valorizes friendship and social bonds.
* Slurs/ ‘put-downs’ use neutral language.
* Characters escape the villain together, depending on each person’s unique skill (Mateo’s art; Izzie’s experience with anime).
* Episode has many opportunities for diversity.

**Potential Pitfalls**

* Potential Racism: villainous and ‘shadowy’ characters are called “the darklings”. This name resembles the racial slur “darkies”.
  + Potential Racism: While the mythical creatures may not have races, they do have colors. Nearly every villainous character is described as dark (shadowy, darklings) and is unattractive, while the forces of ‘good’ are light colored and attractive (bright unicorns). These palette choices may contribute to children associating ‘ugliness’ and ‘darker colors’ with ‘evil’, and pretty things that are ‘lighter’ with ‘good’.
* Potential Sexism: Episode valorizes ‘creativity’, however Mateo’s imagination (turns pen into sword) still promotes traditionally masculine forms of physical strength.
* Potential Ageism: Night Hunter calls Mr. Oz “old man”.
* Potential Ableism: If “Night King” is cast as disabled he may embody the “bitter crip” trope.