**Spellcheck For Bias: *Borderlands***

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FEBRUARY, 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 *Borderlands* for Lionsgate:

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

**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 *Borderlands,* 33 characters met this criterion:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER NAME** | **LINE COUNT** |
| LILITH | 359 |
| TINY TINA | 225 |
| CLAPTRAP | 226 |
| ATLAS | 155 |
| ROLAND | 149 |
| TANNIS | 106 |
| STEELE | 54 |
| KRIEG | 43 |
| MARCUS | 29 |
| MOXXI | 28 |
| LARRY | 26 |
| DRAWING GIRL | 19 |
| LILITH'S MOTHER | 18 |
| ELLIE | 17 |
| NARRATOR | 12 |
| SCOOTER | 6 |
| KROM | 5 |
| JAKOBS | 4 |
| PLEASANT AUTOPILOT VOICE | 3 |
| JUSTICE OF THE PEACE | 3 |
| HAMMERLOCK | 3 |
| ROBOT GUARD | 2 |
| TORTURE BOX VOICE | 2 |
| CITIZEN | 2 |
| BULLHORN PSYCHO | 2 |
| HEADLESS BUNNY | 2 |
| PSYCHO | 2 |
| CHILD #1 | 2 |
| CHILD #2 | 1 |
| STATUE | 1 |
| LANCE | 1 |
| SOLDIER | 1 |
| LANCE SOLDIER | 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.***

* 8 characters are specified as female.
* The leading character is specified as female.
* The script contains 13 character opportunities to increase gender diversity.

Characters by Gender

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FEMALE CHARACTER** | **MALE CHARACTER** | **GENDER UNSPECIFIED** |
| LILITH |  |  |
| TINY TINA |  |  |
|  | CLAPTRAP |  |
|  | ATLAS |  |
|  | ROLAND |  |
| TANNIS |  |  |
| STEELE |  |  |
|  | KRIEG |  |
|  | MARCUS |  |
| MOXXI |  |  |
|  | LARRY |  |
| DRAWING GIRL |  |  |
| LILITH’S MOTHER |  |  |
| ELLIE |  |  |
|  |  | NARRATOR |
|  | SCOOTER |  |
|  | KROM |  |
|  | JAKOBS |  |
|  |  | PLEASANT AUTOPILOT VOICE |
|  |  | JUSTICE OF THE PEACE |
|  | HAMMERLOCK |  |
|  |  | ROBOT GUARD |
|  |  | TORTURING BOX VOICE |
|  |  | CITIZEN |
|  |  | BULLHORN PSYCHO |
|  |  | HEADLESS BUNNY |
|  | PSYCHO |  |
|  |  | CHILD 1 |
|  |  | CHILD 2 |
|  |  | STATUE |
|  |  | LANCE |
|  | SOLDIER |  |
|  |  | LANCE SOLDIER |

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. |

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**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 has an unspecified race/ethnicity.
* The script contains 31 character opportunities to increase racial/ethnic diversity.

Characters by Race/Ethnicity

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER OF COLOR** | **WHITE CHARACTER** | **RACE/ETHNICITY UNSPECIFIED** |
|  |  | LILITH |
|  |  | TINY TINA |
|  |  | CLAPTRAP |
|  |  | ATLAS |
|  |  | ROLAND |
|  |  | TANNIS |
|  |  | STEELE |
|  |  | KRIEG |
|  |  | MARCUS |
|  | MOXXI |  |
|  |  | LARRY |
|  |  | DRAWING GIRL |
|  |  | LILITH’S MOTHER |
|  | ELLIE |  |
|  |  | NARRATOR |
|  |  | SCOOTER |
|  |  | KROM |
|  |  | JAKOBS |
|  |  | PLEASANT AUTOPILOT VOICE |
|  |  | JUSTICE OF THE PEACE |
|  |  | HAMMERLOCK |
|  |  | ROBOT GUARD |
|  |  | TORTURING BOX VOICE |
|  |  | ECHOING VOICE |
|  |  | CITIZEN |
|  |  | BULLHORN PSYCHO |
|  |  | HEADLESS BUNNY |
|  |  | PSYCHO |
|  |  | CHILD #1 |
|  |  | CHILD #2 |
|  |  | LANCE |
|  |  | SOLDIER |
|  |  | LANCE SOLDIER |

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; |
| **NO** | Is not depicted with race/ethnicity stereotypes or tropes. |



**LGBTQ+ Analysis**

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

* 2 characters are specified as LGBTQ+.
* The leading character has an unspecified sexual orientation.
* The script contains 29 character opportunities to increase LGBTQ+ diversity.

Characters by LGBTQ+ Status

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQ+ CHARACTER** | **HETEROSEXUAL CHARACTER** | **SEXUALITY UNSPECIFIED** |
|  |  | LILITH |
|  |  | TINY TINA |
|  |  | CLAPTRAP |
|  |  | ATLAS |
|  | ROLAND |  |
|  |  | TANNIS |
|  | STEELE |  |
|  |  | KRIEG |
|  |  | MARCUS |
|  |  | MOXXI |
|  |  | LARRY |
|  |  | DRAWING GIRL |
|  |  | LILITH’S MOTHER |
|  |  | ELLIE |
|  |  | NARRATOR |
|  |  | SCOOTER |
|  |  | KROM |
| JAKOBS |  |  |
|  |  | PLEASANT AUTOPILOT VOICE |
|  |  | JUSTICE OF THE PEACE |
| HAMMERLOCK |  |  |
|  |  | ROBOT GUARD |
|  |  | TORTURING BOX VOICE |
|  |  | ECHOING VOICE |
|  |  | CITIZEN |
|  |  | BULLHORN PSYCHO |
|  |  | HEADLESS BUNNY |
|  |  | PSYCHO |
|  |  | CHILD #1 |
|  |  | CHILD #2 |
|  |  | LANCE |
|  |  | SOLDIER |
|  |  | LANCE SOLDIER |

The Vito-Russo Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Vito-Russo test, a script/manuscript must:** | |
| **YES** | Contain a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer. |
| **YES** | 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). |
| **NO** | 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.***

* 2 characters are specified as having a disability.
* The leading character is not shown as having a disability.
* The script contains 31 character opportunities to increase disability diversity.

Characters by Disability Status

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER WITH DISABILITY** | **CHARACTER WITHOUT DISABILITY** | **DISABILITY STATUS UNSPECIFIED** |
|  |  | LILITH |
|  |  | TINY TINA |
|  |  | CLAPTRAP |
|  |  | ATLAS |
|  |  | ROLAND |
| TANNIS |  |  |
|  |  | STEELE |
|  |  | KRIEG |
|  |  | MARCUS |
|  |  | MOXXI |
|  |  | LARRY |
| DRAWING GIRL |  |  |
|  |  | LILITH’S MOTHER |
|  |  | ELLIE |
|  |  | NARRATOR |
|  |  | SCOOTER |
|  |  | KROM |
|  |  | JAKOBS |
|  |  | PLEASANT AUTOPILOT VOICE |
|  |  | JUSTICE OF THE PEACE |
|  |  | HAMMERLOCK |
|  |  | ROBOT GUARD |
|  |  | TORTURING BOX VOICE |
|  |  | ECHOING VOICE |
|  |  | CITIZEN |
|  |  | BULLHORN PSYCHO |
|  |  | HEADLESS BUNNY |
|  |  | PSYCHO |
|  |  | CHILD #1 |
|  |  | CHILD #2 |
|  |  | LANCE |
|  |  | SOLDIER |
|  |  | LANCE SOLDIER |

The Marlee Matlin Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Marlee Matlin test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **YES** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) with a physical, cognitive, or communication disability who; |
| **YES** | Is not depicted with disability stereotypes or tropes. |

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**Age (50+) Analysis**

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

* 3 characters are specified as ages 50+.
* The leading character is under 50.
* The script contains 20 character opportunities to increase age diversity.

Characters by Age

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER 50+** | **CHARACTER UNDER 50** | **AGE UNSPECIFIED** |
|  | LILITH |  |
|  | TINY TINA |  |
|  |  | CLAPTRAP |
|  |  | ATLAS |
|  | ROLAND |  |
| TANNIS |  |  |
|  | STEELE |  |
|  |  | KRIEG |
| MARCUS |  |  |
| MOXXI |  |  |
|  |  | LARRY |
|  | DRAWING GIRL |  |
|  | LILITH’S MOTHER |  |
|  | ELLIE |  |
|  |  | NARRATOR |
|  |  | SCOOTER |
|  | KROM |  |
|  |  | JAKOBS |
|  |  | PLEASANT AUTOPILOT VOICE |
|  |  | JUSTICE OF THE PEACE |
|  |  | HAMMERLOCK |
|  |  | ROBOT GUARD |
|  |  | TORTURING BOX VOICE |
|  |  | ECHOING VOICE |
|  |  | CITIZEN |
|  |  | BULLHORN PSYCHO |
|  |  | HEADLESS BUNNY |
|  |  | PSYCHO |
|  | CHILD #1 |  |
|  | CHILD #2 |  |
|  |  | LANCE |
|  |  | SOLDIER |
|  |  | LANCE SOLDIER |

The Betty White Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Betty White test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **YES** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is 50+ who; |
| **YES** | 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.***

* 3 characters are specified as having a large body type.
* The leading character is not specified as having a large body type.
* The script contains 25 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** |
|  | LILITH |  |
|  | TINY TINA |  |
|  | CLAPTRAP |  |
|  |  | ATLAS |
|  |  | ROLAND |
|  |  | TANNIS |
|  |  | STEELE |
|  | KRIEG |  |
| MARCUS |  |  |
|  |  | MOXXI |
|  |  | LARRY |
|  | DRAWING GIRL |  |
|  |  | LILITH’S MOTHER |
| ELLIE |  |  |
|  |  | NARRATOR |
|  |  | SCOOTER |
| KROM |  |  |
|  |  | JAKOBS |
|  |  | PLEASANT AUTOPILOT VOICE |
|  |  | JUSTICE OF THE PEACE |
|  |  | HAMMERLOCK |
|  |  | ROBOT GUARD |
|  |  | TORTURING BOX VOICE |
|  |  | ECHOING VOICE |
|  |  | CITIZEN |
|  |  | BULLHORN PSYCHO |
|  |  | HEADLESS BUNNY |
|  |  | PSYCHO |
|  |  | CHILD #1 |
|  |  | CHILD #2 |
|  |  | LANCE |
|  |  | SOLDIER |
|  |  | LANCE SOLDIER |

The Cooper Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Cooper test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **YES** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) with a large body type who; |
| **YES** | 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** | **YES** | **YES** | **YES** |
| **Character of Color** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |
| **LGBTQ+ Character** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |
| **Character with a Disability** | **YES** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** |
| **Character 50+** | **YES** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **YES** |
| **Character with Large Body Type** | **YES** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **YES** |  |

**Positive Aspects**

* This script is notable for its dynamic, multi-dimensional, lead and supporting female characters who defy feminine stereotypes about agency and action. Lilith and Tiny Tina flip the “Damsel in Distress” Trope at every turn.
* There are also several moments where traditional gender roles are intentionally flipped. A male character, Roland, demonstrates healthy masculinity by constantly making emotional appeals not to turn Tina in. In these instances, female characters are written as logical and rational, persuaded to think emotionally by Roland.
* Among the many female characters, there are women who are written as leaders in stereotypically masculine fields (e.g.,Steele is a military leader, and Tannis is an expert Xeno-Archaeologist).
* Not only is Tannis a female STEM expert, but she passes on her love for STEM to Tiny Tina, asking "You gonna kill them with math?” and showing her how it’s done. A great nod towards women in STEM and the importance of encouraging young girls to pursue STEM paths.
* The script creatively avoids hurling insults or using curse words that degrade marginalized identities (e.g., “Son of a Taint”).
* Having the wedding scene be a gay couple is a wonderful plot twist, done without using homophobic slurs or stereotypes.

**Potential Pitfalls**

* Potential Racism: Tiny Tina’s character is hilarious and wildly creative, but at times her speech patterns and lyrical rhyming dances on the edge of cultural appropriation (e.g., “This fancy-ass wimminz is pointin' guns at your best freh-end...!” and “Daaamn, stretch. You are unnpopulaaah”).
* Potential Sexism: On a few occasions, gendered language and slurs are used (e.g., “you horrendous she-devil,” “hidin’ under a car like a B-Y-ITCH,” “look at this bad bitch,” “y’all bitches need to…” etc.). Consider using alternative terms.
* Potential Ableism: Throughout the script numerous ableist terms are used to describe Krom’s army. The terms “psycho,” “lunatic,” and “freak” are all degrading ableist terms and can easily be swapped out for more inclusive language.
* Potential Racism: If ClapTrap is cast as a person of color, we suggest giving him more agency and being careful to avoid the Servant Trope.
* Potential Ableism: At the very end, the blind girl is given the ability to see again, which might imply her disability was inherently bad and needs fixing for all to be right in the world again.
* Potential Sexism: There is some gendered descriptive language that is easy to avoid (e.g., "Large Artillery Weapons are manned" can be swapped to “employed” or “personed”).
* Potential Racism: There is some racialized descriptive language that is easy to avoid (e.g., "gang" which can be swapped out for “crew”).