The Image of the Black Journalist in Brazilian Popular Culture

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Introduction

This study investigates the portrayal of Black journalists in Brazilian popular culture in the 21st century. Specifically, it examines the representation of Black journalists in fictional television programs and films, highlighting their roles, behavior, and career progression. Regarding soap operas and TV series, we explored shows featuring Black journalists, investigating how these characters' work and behavior are portrayed within the storyline. While the number of programs featuring prominent Black journalists is limited, it is essential to analyze how these characters contribute to the narrative and how they are represented within the journalistic context because it can help us to understand the role of the media in shaping public perceptions of race.[1] By analyzing how Black journalists are portrayed in popular culture, we can also identify areas where there is room for improvement in terms of representation and diversity. There have been some positive developments regarding representation in recent years. It is important to continue to analyze how Black journalists are represented in the media and to challenge stereotypes about Black people.

Included in this study is a comprehensive list of all the productions analyzed, the positions held by Black journalists in these programs, and the year each program was

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[1] LOTZ, Amanda; GRIMES, Stephanie M.; JOHNSON, Catherine. The State of Black Representation on Television. Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California, 2022

released. It is important to note that real life news nonfiction programs are typically composed of mixed-gender teams, but the presence of Black journalists is limited. In fictional soap operas and films, it is even rarer to find programs featuring Black journalists in prominent roles. However, despite the limited number of news programs, Black journalists often occupy prominent areas in journalism, such as investigative reporting and crime coverage.

This study seeks to highlight the main representation strategies employed in each type of fictional TV and movies that features a black journalist, and how each addresses the principles of journalism. By analyzing the selected films and soap operas, we can gain insights into how the image of the Black journalist is portrayed to the Brazilian audience and is constructed in Brazilian popular culture.

Literature Review

The IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística) survey in 2018 revealed that only 2.8% of Brazilian households did not have a television, indicating the strong presence of this medium in people's lives, especially in the North of the country, where the percentage of homes without TVs was the highest, reaching 6.3%. In fact, more Brazilians own televisions than refrigerators. This pervasive presence of television in people's lives can exert significant influence across various areas, including the construction of our identity and how we perceive ourselves in the world. Thus, it's important to emphasize that the media play an essential role in shaping individuals' identities and social roles.[2, 3]

Stuart Hall discusses the ongoing construction of identity through media representations. Television, as the dominant means of communication in Brazil, plays a significant role in shaping the identity and social roles of individuals. According to Hall

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[2] (IBGE, 2018).
[3] HALL, Stuart. A identidade cultural na pós-modernidade. Tradução de Tomaz Tadeu da Silva e Guacira Lopes Louro. 11. ed. Rio de Janeiro: DP&A, 2006.

(2006), identity is an ongoing process, shaped by cultural representations and meanings propagated by the media. Muniz Sodré (2015) reinforces this view, stating that the lack of positive representations of Black people on Brazilian television contributes to internal discrimination and the devaluation of black identity itself.

Amanda Lotz, Stephanie Grimes, and Catherine Johnson (2022) explore the representation of Black journalists on American television, highlighting how these representations influence public perceptions and viewers' identities. Comparing these analyzes with the representation of Black journalists in Brazilian popular culture can reveal significant similarities and differences, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of these representations[2]. The presence of positive role models in the media is essential for building a healthy self-perception and inspiring young Black people. Martins (2015) points out that the lack of positive representations on Brazilian television contributes to internal and external discrimination, since individuals do not find models with whom they can identify and be proud. [3.]

Television is ubiquitous in Brazilian households, as revealed by the 2018 Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) conducted by IBGE, which found that only 2.8% of the 69.3 million permanent private households in Brazil did not have a television. This prevalence is particularly notable in northern Brazil, where the percentage of non-TV owners was the highest at 6.3%. In fact, more Brazilians own TVs than refrigerators.[4]

This widespread presence of television indicates its significant influence in various aspects of Brazilian life, including shaping individual identities and self-perceptions. The process of identity construction is viewed as ongoing, shaped over time through unconscious processes of identification. Rather than considering identity as a static concept, it is more accurately understood as an ongoing process of identification. This process grants individuals

responsibility and autonomy in constructing their social roles and representations. It is essential to recognize the role of media in this ongoing process of identification.[5,6]

The media serves essential social functions such as cultural reproduction, socialization, and integration, shaping individuals' thoughts and actions. It provides the framework through which many people form their sense of class, race, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality. Consequently, television plays an essential role in constructing Black identity. As Martins (2015, online) notes, sociologists and scholars emphasize that the lack of Black representation on TV, Brazil's primary mass media outlet, actively influences the identity formation of this population and its perception by others.

The representation of journalists in Brazilian cinema has evolved significantly over time, reflecting the country's political and social transformations. According to Silva (2014), the images of journalists in Brazilian cinema vary between stereotypes of heroes committed to the truth and ambitious villains in search of power and fame. This duality highlights how cinema both reflects and shapes public perception of the journalistic profession.

Silva's analysis reveals that, since the mid-1950s, the representations of journalists in Brazilian cinema have not remained static, fluctuating according to the historical context and the idiosyncrasies of the media involved. This study is fundamental to understanding how stereotypes and images of journalists are constructed and solidified in Brazilian popular culture, and to what extent cinema contributes to the mythification of the journalistic profession.

The negative portrayal of Blackness on Brazilian television leads to a rejection of these representations by the Black population, causing them to disassociate from their own identity and origins. This perpetuates a distorted image of Blackness, forcing individuals to seek validation from the white population due to the absence of positive representations in

mass media. This not only reinforces external discrimination but also results in self-discrimination as negative stereotypes are internalized. Additionally, pre-established roles further exacerbate these challenges. As identity formation is influenced by self-perception and role models, the lack of positive representation in visual media, particularly television, presents significant obstacles for a predominantly Black population to value and identify with themselves.[4,5]

Insufficient representation of Black individuals across various domains not only diminishes the aspirations of young Black people but also perpetuates negative stereotypes about the Black community. The scarcity of successful Black role models in the media further compounds this issue, discouraging others from pursuing diverse career paths and suggesting that success is attainable only through overcoming significant obstacles. As a result, there is a lack of readily accessible role models for others to emulate, exacerbating the challenge of identity affirmation and recognition.[4]

Thus, it is important to emphasize positive representation in the media and how the limited presence of Black individuals in influential positions can negatively impact the aspirations of young Black individuals. It also addresses the idea that there is a need for more diverse and positive role models for the Black community to inspire and motivate future generations.

Methodology

To establish a robust theoretical foundation for this study, we embarked on an extensive exploration of the representation of Black journalists in Brazilian popular culture. This preliminary investigation encompassed a diverse range of sources, including

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[4] LOTZ, Amanda; GRIMES, Stephanie M.; JOHNSON, Catherine. The State of Black Representation on Television. Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California, 2022

newspapers, videos, synopses, and viewer comments. However, to delve deeper into the subject, it became imperative to immerse ourselves in media content available on platforms such as YouTube and Globoplay. The IJPC Online Database, specifically the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture project, emerged as a valuable resource, providing additional insights into the portrayal of journalists in popular culture. This resource afforded us access to a wealth of information, including plot summaries, thereby facilitating the categorization of genre, media category, and description.

Extensive previous research has delved into the representation of Brazilian journalists using a wide array of methodologies, ranging from analytical approaches to impressionistic tests. These studies were conducted with the overarching goal of comprehending the professional ethos. Our extensive literature search included numerous articles, stories, and synopses sourced from newspapers, magazines, and online publications dedicated to journalism, thus enriching the existing corpus of literature on this subject.

Moreover, we extended our inquiry to encompass research specifically related to the image of Black journalists in the media and the far-reaching impact of such representations on audiences. This broader perspective enabled us to contextualize the portrayal of Black journalists within the larger discourse on media, identity, and societal perception.

By synthesizing information gleaned from this diverse array of sources, this comprehensive literature review not only presents an in-depth overview of existing research but also provides a nuanced understanding of the image of the Black journalist in Brazilian popular culture. Furthermore, it sheds light on the broader implications of media representation, influencing audience perceptions and societal attitudes. The methodology adopted for this study was exploratory and descriptive in nature. The initial phase involved an extensive search for soap operas and films featuring Black journalists in some capacity.

Subsequently, we delved into the respective soap opera or film plots to discern how these characters were developed within the storyline.

It is pertinent to note that any researcher can review the appendices, examine the coding for each program, and peruse the comprehensive synopses to make independent observations and assessments regarding the descriptions if necessary. The identified journalistic characters were then systematically categorized into broader classifications and subcategories. The selection of programs featuring Black journalists in 21st-century Brazil adhered to specific criteria, and each program was meticulously categorized based on decade, genre, ethnicity, media category, title, and description. The accuracy and consensus of these findings were rigorously verified.

One challenging aspect of this analysis was determining whether the portrayal of a character was predominantly positive or negative. Frequently, central characters exhibited a combination of positive and negative attributes. Consequently, the identified journalistic characters were methodically allocated into broad categories and subcategories. To this study, a journalist was defined as any character assuming the role of a journalist, engaging in the collection, dissemination, and commentary of news, irrespective of the medium involved. Through this meticulously designed methodology, our aim was to provide a comprehensive analysis of the representation of Black journalists in Brazilian popular culture during the 21st century.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of diverse and positive representations of Black journalists in Brazilian TV shows and film, highlighting their contributions and challenges while promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities in the field of journalism. They are shown working in 10 specific jobs that highlight the diversity within the journalism field. Among these, reporters and their editors are the most prominent and widely recognized

roles, with reporters being the most frequently depicted.

The portrayal of reporters in Brazilian TV shows and film showcases their vital role in gathering and delivering news, emphasizing their skills, characteristics, and the challenges they face. Other job titles depicted include editors, producers, anchors, and presenters, each bringing a unique perspective and skill set to journalism. The findings also discuss how the representation of journalists varies across different media formats, ranging from positive to negative depictions.

Specific examples from Brazilian TV shows and films illustrate the complexities associated with journalistic roles and responsibilities. Some characters embody journalistic integrity and the pursuit of truth, while others may exhibit unethical practices, creating a nuanced portrayal. Main characters in these media narratives, often portrayed positively, play a significant role in informing the public and upholding principles of journalism. They are depicted as trustworthy sources of information and catalysts for positive change. Minor journalistic characters, while having limited screen time, represent a variety of roles within the journalism field. They can be portrayed positively as determined individuals committed to truth and justice or negatively when engaging in sensationalism and unethical practices. These characters contribute to the overall image of journalism, showcasing its multifaceted nature.

Findings

The analysis of selected soap operas and films yielded intriguing insights into the portrayal of Black journalists in Brazilian popular culture. The provided tables and graphs offer a comprehensive overview of the programs, organized by decade, genre, gender, ethnicity, media category, job title, and descriptions of the journalist's professional and personality traits. In summary, the representation of Black journalists in Brazilian popular

culture through television programs and films underscores the diversity of genres utilized to depict these characters. Key observations include:

- Genre Diversity: The table presented illustrates the distribution of Black journalists across various storytelling genres, reflecting the versatility of Brazilian popular culture in portraying these professionals. Many programs combine multiple genres to create unique narratives, making genre categorization complex.

- Gender Representation: The data shows that male journalists are more prominently represented across different genres, although there's significant representation of female journalists in lead and supporting roles. Black female journalists are depicted as strong, dedicated, and challenging traditional gender roles.

- Positive Female Roles: Notably, films and soap operas showcase Black female journalists in significant and positive roles, including reporters, editors, producers, and anchors, contributing to a more inclusive media landscape.

- Ethnicity and Race: The analysis highlights that Black individuals have gained more visibility in Brazilian television during the 21st century, marking progress in representation. However, it acknowledges that there is still work to be done to ensure equal opportunities for journalists of all ethnic backgrounds.

- Examples: Specific programs like "Novo Mundo," "Filhas de Eva," "Medida Provisória," and "Na forma da Lei" are cited as examples where Black journalists symbolize increased visibility, recognition, and contributions to the media industry.

- Broadcast Journalism: Black journalists are prominently featured in the category of broadcast journalism, assuming roles like TV producers, anchors, presenters, reporters, and editors. They are depicted as central figures responsible for shaping public discourse and providing news.

● Empowerment: The representation of Black journalists in television news programs serves to inspire individuals from diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in journalism and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable media industry.

FICTION

Novo Mundo (2017)

The soap opera "Novo Mundo" delves into the arrival of the Portuguese crown in Brazil, portraying a society divided by class and race. Among the characters, Libério, a Black journalist, emerges as a symbol of resilience and activism. Despite facing societal opposition, Libério uses his position as a journalist to expose injustices and advocate for racial equality. His love story with Cecília, a white woman, challenges societal norms, highlighting the complexities of interracial relationships in a deeply prejudiced society.
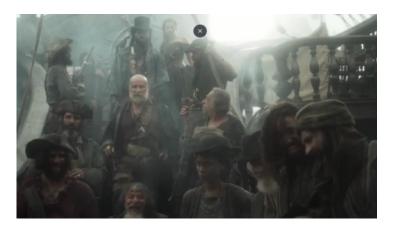

Fig. 1. Fred and his cronies

Additionally, Diara, initially depicted as a slave, undergoes a transformative journey, marrying a wealthy Austrian man and ascending to the status of a baroness. Her character evolution reflects themes of love, race, and social dynamics, while her activism against slavery and racial prejudice serves as a beacon of hope for racial equality. Despite facing

hardships and discrimination, Diara and Libério's resilience and determination offer positive

representations of Black individuals in Brazilian popular culture.

Medida Provisória (2022)

The film adaptation of "Namibia" offers a compelling narrative set in a fictional Brazil

where Black and mixed-race individuals face a mandate to return to Africa, prompting racial

segregation. At the heart of the story is André, a Black journalist, whose character embodies

resilience and commitment to advocating for the rights of the Black community. André's

portrayal showcases his pivotal role in challenging societal injustices, particularly the forced

return policy, and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups through his journalistic

endeavors.

Fig. 2. Resgate-se já (Rescue yourself now)

Throughout the film, André's character undergoes a profound journey of personal growth and transformation, evolving from a less involved figure to a dedicated advocate for racial justice. His unwavering determination to resist oppression and fight for equality underscores the significant impact that individuals, particularly those within the media, can have in shaping societal change. By highlighting André's struggles, challenges, and triumphs, the film underscores the vital role of journalism in confronting systemic racism, promoting social reparations, and addressing historical injustices. Through André's narrative arc, audiences are compelled to reflect on the power of activism and the enduring quest for justice in the face of adversity.

Filhas de Eva (2021)

The series centers on the lives of three women navigating personal challenges and societal expectations. Among them, Gasparian stands out as a determined journalist embroiled in an investigation exposing corruption in the city. Gasparian's emotional connection with Stella and Ademar adds depth to his character as he delves into a corruption scandal implicating Stella's husband. His relentless pursuit of truth and justice underscores the series' broader message about the importance of combating injustice and forging one's path in life.

Fig. 3 To the left: journalist Gasparian

Gasparian's portrayal as a dedicated investigative reporter emphasizes his unwavering commitment to uncovering the truth, even in the face of danger. His character serves as a beacon of integrity and ethical journalism, highlighting the pivotal role of the press in holding power to account and exposing systemic corruption. Gasparian's interactions with Stella and other characters reveal his nuanced understanding of justice and his willingness to confront difficult truths, regardless of the personal consequences.

Throughout the series, Gasparian's investigative efforts shed light on police brutality, bribery, and other forms of corruption plaguing the city. As a Black journalist, he embodies resilience and courage in his pursuit of justice, challenging societal norms and advocating for accountability. Gasparian's character serves as a catalyst for change, inspiring others to confront injustice and fight for a more equitable society.

Apocalipse (2018)

Bárbara, portrayed by Renata Dominguez in the TV series "Apocalipse," is a determined and ambitious journalist working alongside main characters Zoe and Benjamin. Initially depicted as competitive and occasionally envious of Zoe's success, Bárbara matures throughout the plot, becoming an essential ally in uncovering the truth behind a series of crimes related to the apocalypse. Despite facing blackmail and personal challenges, Bárbara remains steadfast in her commitment to ethical journalism, emphasizing the importance of journalistic integrity and truthfulness in her reporting. Her character undergoes significant growth, learning the value of friendship, loyalty, and ethical conduct, ultimately emerging as a role model for younger journalists and reinforcing positive values of professionalism and

solidarity.

Fig. 4 Journalist Bárbara

Throughout the series, Bárbara's character arc is marked by her unwavering dedication to reporting the news about a serial killer terrorizing Rio de Janeiro. Despite personal challenges, including a complex relationship with her best friend Diogo and facing threats to her professional reputation, Bárbara maintains her focus on delivering accurate and ethical journalism. Her portrayal highlights the importance of journalistic responsibility and the resilience required to uphold ethical standards in the face of adversity.

Renata Dominguez's performance as Bárbara garnered praise from both critics and audiences, with her character's journey serving as a central narrative thread in "Apocalipse." Bárbara's evolution from a competitive colleague to a respected journalist reflects themes of personal growth, redemption, and the importance of integrity in the field of journalism. Overall, Bárbara's character contributes depth and complexity to the series, underscoring the significance of ethical conduct and solidarity in the pursuit of truth.

Na forma da Lei (2010)

The series "Na Forma da Lei" follows the journey of five friends seeking justice for

the wrongful death of law student Eduardo Moreno. Among them is Ademir, a Black

journalist, who evolves into an investigative journalist following the tragedy. Ademir plays a

pivotal role in investigating the crime, using his journalistic skills to uncover corruption and

injustice within the Brazilian justice system. Alongside his college friends, he delves deep

into the case, determined to bring the truth to light and seek justice for Eduardo.

Fig. 5 The journalist Ademir.

As the investigation unfolds, Ademir's dedication to exposing the truth becomes

increasingly evident. He navigates through complex webs of corruption and intrigue,

unearthing hidden connections and shedding light on the nefarious deeds of powerful figures

like Senator Viegas and his son Maurício. Ademir's role as an investigative journalist

underscores the importance of media in holding the powerful accountable and advocating for

justice in the face of impunity.

Throughout the series, Ademir's character embodies resilience, courage, and

unwavering commitment to the pursuit of truth and justice. His relentless pursuit of justice

serves as a driving force for the narrative, highlighting the essential role that journalists play

in uncovering truth, exposing corruption, and fighting for a more just society. Despite facing

numerous challenges and threats, Ademir remains steadfast in his mission, symbolizing the

power of journalism in challenging injustice and advocating for change.

Ti-Ti-Ti (2010)

The soap opera "Ti-Ti-Ti" revolves around the enduring rivalry between Ariclenes and André, two figures entrenched in the haute couture industry. As they vie for supremacy, Ariclenes resorts to underhanded tactics, including plagiarizing designs from André's long-lost mother. Amidst this backdrop, journalist Adriano, who feigns homosexuality to advance in the fashion world, navigates a complex web of deceit and ambition. His role as a fashion columnist became instrumental in unraveling the secrets of Ariclenes and promoting emerging talents like Jacques Leclair.

Fig. 42 Journalist Adriano

Adriano emerges as a multifaceted character, adept at manipulating situations and people to further his career aspirations. Despite his moral ambiguity, he serves as a catalyst for change within the fashion industry, using his column to expose injustices and champion rising talents. However, Adriano's personal and professional struggles reflect the societal constraints faced by Black, gay individuals in the media landscape, where stereotypes often

overshadow nuanced portrayals.

While Adriano's character adds depth to the narrative, his portrayal raises questions about representation and stereotyping in Brazilian television. As a supporting character, he lacks agency and is overshadowed by more prominent figures. Moreover, the soap opera's focus on entertainment rather than social commentary limits the exploration of Adriano's identity and experiences as a marginalized individual. Nonetheless, his presence underscores the evolving dynamics of representation in media and the complexities of navigating intersecting identities in pursuit of success.

Discussion

The presence of Black journalists in television programs and films reveals valuable insights about diversity and inclusion in the media and society. The inclusion of Black characters in the media is not just a matter of representation but also an opportunity to address stereotypes, promote leaders and role models for the Black community, and explore historical and cultural issues.

These characters not only challenge racial stereotypes but can also inspire young people to pursue careers in the media, serving as models of success. Furthermore, they can open dialogues about racism, inequality, and the challenges faced by Black professionals in the communication industry.

The analysis can also highlight the importance of creating complex and multifaceted characters rather than one-dimensional stereotypes. This contributes to a more authentic and inclusive representation in the media. By studying the representation of Black journalists in the media, we can encourage broader discussions about racial issues and the role of the media in shaping societal perceptions. This, in turn, can raise awareness about the importance of

diversity and racial equality in the media and society.

In summary, Black journalists in television programs and films are not just fictional characters but also reflections of society and the communication industry. Through the analysis of these characters, we can learn valuable lessons about inclusion, diversity, and ethnic representation, with the potential to positively influence popular culture and society.

Table 1 – Results

TITLE	YEAR	DECADE	GENRE	MALE/ FEMALE	JOB TITLES
Ti-Ti-ti	2010	2010-2019	Drama	Male	Reporter, Correspondent
Na Forma da Lei	2010	2010-2019	Mystery	Male	Reporter, Correspondent
Novo Mundo	2017	2010-2019	Drama	Male	Anchor, Commentator, Host
Apocalipse	2018	2020-2023	Mystery	Male	Reporter, Correspondent
Filhas de Eva	2021	2020-2023	Drama	Female	Reporter, Correspondent
Medida Provisória	2022	2020-2023	Action	Male	Executive

Conclusion

The representation of Black journalists in Brazilian media, specifically in films and TV shows, reveals a mix of positive and negative depictions. Black journalists are often underrepresented in prominent roles, mainly occupying minor or supporting positions. It's important to note that these negative depictions are not exclusive to Black characters but are part of a broader issue concerning the representation of journalists, regardless of their racial or ethnic background.

The analysis highlights the urgent need for greater diversity and inclusion in the media industry, providing substantial opportunities for Black journalists to occupy central roles in narratives, thus contributing to a more accurate and inclusive reflection of society. The examples demonstrate a varied representation of Black journalists, with both positive and negative portrayals, emphasizing the complexities and challenges faced by journalists in different media contexts and underscoring the need for balanced and nuanced representations.

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APPENDIX A - Presentation table of the fictional works studied.

Novo Mundo (2017)	Apocalipse (2018)
Type: Movies Made for Television and Miniseries **Year:** 2017 **Genre:** Drama **Character gender:** Male (Liberio) **Character ethnicity:** Black **Media Category:** Newspaper **Job Title:** Journalist **Description Major:** Positive **Description Minor:** Positive	**Type:** Movies Made for Television and Miniseries **Year:** 2018 **Genre:** Drama, Mystery **Gender:** Female (Bárbara) **Ethnicity:** Black **Media Category:** Television **Job Title:** Journalist Anchor **Description: Major:** Positive **Description: Minor:** None
Medida Provisória (2022)	**Na forma da Lei (2010)**
Type: Movie **Year:** 2022 **Genre:** Fiction/Drama **Gender:** Male (Andre) **Ethnicity:** Black (André) **Media Category:** Newspaper **Job Title:** Investigative Journalist (André) **Description Major:** Positive **Description Minor:** Positive	**Type:** TV Series **Year:** 2010-2011 **Genre:** Crime/Drama **Gender:** Male **Ethnicity:** Black **Media Category:** Television - Crime/Drama **Job Title:** Investigative Journalist **Description: Major:** Ademir, Positive
Filhas de Eva (2021)	**Ti-Ti-Ti (2010)**
Type: Movies Made for Television and Miniseries **Year:** 2021 **Genre:** Drama **Gender:** Male (Gasparian) **Ethnicity:** Black (Gasparian) **Media Category:** Newspaper **Job Title:** Investigative Journalist (Gasparian) **Description: Major:** Positive **Description: Minor:** Positive	**Type:** Telenovela **Year:** 2010 **Genre:** Drama, Romance **Gender:** Male (Adriano) **Ethnicity:** Black **Media Category:** Television - Soap Operas **Job Title:** Journalist, Columnist **Description: Major:** Negative **Description: Minor:** Transformative Positive