

# Reflection on the movie black panther

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Black Panther, a recent addition to Marvel's range of cinematic movies, was greeted with great anticipation since the announcement of its release and for good reason. Not only did the movie exhibit cinematic brilliance, but its unique representation of cultural heritage and female empowerment was one that was very needed in today's society.

Ryan Coogler's "Black Panther" (2018) is a well-written film about a young king T'Challa who after many years returns to his home Wakanda, Africa to take up his position as king. T'Challa's throne is not handed to him, and he has to fight to earn it as tradition requires. Winning the fight brought him his greatest enemy and villain. T'challa is now obligated to protect his country from enemies that its affluence of Vibranium (a unique, innovative and rich natural resource) attract. To do this, T'challa is forced to relinquish the full power of Black Panther in order to defeat his foes. Cultural representation was a key element in the making of this film. Although it was a movie on a fictional African country, Wakanda was based on authentic tribes and cultures.

Throughout the film, we see correlations between real African tribes and aspects of the Wakandan culture expressed from the detailed traditional costumes to the language and traditions. Eric Mutema, a Kenyan journalist identified some of them in his article, stating that " W'Kabi, as well as others, appear in several scenes wearing the Basotho Blanket. . . a distinctive form of woolen tribal blanket traditionally worn by Sotho People in Southern Africa" and " a Wakandan elder in the throne room wears a lip plate. The Mursi, Chai, and Tirma in Ethiopia are some of the groups that wear lip plates in Africa. . . [a] chief distinguishing characteristic". All of these facets of

culture were designed to closely mirror cultural practices that can be seen in some African countries today which gives it an aspect of authenticity that most films similar to this one lack. African History was also an integral part of this movie and was the foundation on which the movie plot was built.

Almost 150 years ago, Africa was colonized by Europeans and exploited for its natural resources, bringing about the slavery of Africans by outsiders. To this day, African Americans are still to this day suffering from its effects. Similarly, Wakanda is illustrated as a country of plentiful natural resources that was attractive to imperialists but fortunately, the land possessed vibranium, a unique material and strong energy source that made Wakanda very powerful and enabled its inhabitants to hide from the terrors of colonialism. And of course, female representation was not lost in the plotting of this movie. Throughout the movie, we are introduced to women who have significant and unique roles to play in the story. T'Challa leads his country accompanied by four strong women, each of them being of unique and vital importance to him. T'Challa's sister, Shuri, is a clever teenager with some innovative ideas; Nakia, the central focus of the film and T'challa's love interest, lacks stereotypical flaws that often deters focus from the intellect of women in so many similar movies; and Okoye, the fierce chief of security, an uncommon role given to women that makes the movie even more profoundly unique.

Black Panther gives females unorthodox roles, thus earning the producers praise for their use of gender politics. Christopher Lebron, a professor and author for the Boston Review also agrees that it is fair to add that the

creators did an excellent job of “ elevating the women to central characters with influence and power that turns more on their minds and integrity than their bodies”. This aspect of the film was very well played and was well received by the audience.

Overall, I would highly recommend the movie, Black Panther, because it is unique in its representation of otherwise inferior groups, giving a mainstream platform that celebrates its multitudinous African roots and traditions. This movie is proudly black and gives a sense of cultural identity. In addition, the movie celebrates women as characters of influence, shifting focus on their intellect rather than physical appearance. All of these things are factors that caused the movie to have great success in its release, making it the third highest-grossing film of all time.