***Global Learning Learning Outcomes***

**LO1: Explain social, economic, cultural and/or political phenomena in a global context. [red bold]**

LO2: Explain how worldviews are shaped by differing historical, scientific, and/or cultural contexts. [blue underlined]

*LO 3: Relate their worldview to those in communities outside of the US. [purple italic]*

***Sample Assignment: Paper Prompt and Essay***

**Prompt: Using assigned readings from Module 1 and the editorials linked below, analyze the film *Black Panther* as a representation of Africa.  Who is the audience for the film and how does that shape the way that the film portrays Africa?**  What kinds of stereotypes does the film utilize and why?  What kinds of images of Africa does the film portray?  To what extent does the film challenge stereotypes of Africa?  Identify examples - how might these examples transform the way that we understand Africa?  *What kinds of questions does the film raise for you?  For the general viewer?  How and why might African audiences view it differently?  How might we use this film to engage audiences in learning more about African history?*

**Student Paper:**

**Now, despite the enormously important image Black Panther has had culturally around the world since its release, It must be said that it is at its core a Marvel Comics film. It, like all the other “MCU” movies, is meant to appeal to a broad audience of international moviegoers, most of which are Western citizens, and this fact makes the way Black Panther portrays Africans much more critical to its existence and quality. The people who watch this movie more often than not will be people who aren’t native to or are not experts in African culture and history, so the subtle and clear displays of these real world aspects have to be handled in a manner that is sensible to newcomers while authentic to the wide world of African People.**

A lot of the inspiration for the art and world of Wakanda is based on the genre of Afrofuturism, which is a science fiction subgenre that emphasizes high tech fantasy and futuristic civilization mixed with various African and Pan African cultures and people. The key element that makes this style distinct from other forms of cross cultural science fiction seen in the Thor trilogy for example is how the idea of Futuristic Africa is set against the stereotypes and realities of the people of the diaspora. Black Panther acknowledges this in subtle and obvious ways, examples stemming from the differences between the space age technological Wakandan people led by Tchalla and the more traditional, old world style Jabari Tribe led by Mbaka. Other examples can include the juxtaposition between the rugged, American stylings of the main tragic villain of the story Eric Killmonger, and the East African, tribal wear of the Wakandans like Okoye and the rest.

The movie challenges some stereotypes in its narrative, but also uses them to point a finger to the audience on their ideals of who Black People really are. This is emulated in the struggle between Killmonger’s sudden and violent takeover of Wakanda despite being seen as an “outsider”, dispute being of the same blood and origin as any of the royals, and Tchalla’s struggles with the principles of his forefather’s isolationist ideals. Wakanda uses a cloaking system to make itself appear as “poor” and “not worth seeing” to protect itself from foreign speculation, but the truth is that it is much more than what is shown on TV. The film is using the stereotype of Africa being destitute to highlight how Africa is not poor at all, but truly, is overexploited for it’s resources, and that Wakanda in this sense has to use the worst of the continent’s international image just to shield itself from possible colonialism. This may cause a viewer to rethink whether or not the idea of nations like Ghana, Namibia or Congo they have in their head is congruent to how they are in reality, and if the image they have is based on a ruse.

Killmonger is the son of a prince of Wakanda, who was killed by the late King Tchaka himself, but because he was not allowed to live with his people in the motherland, he grew up in Black America as one of “us”, as some would say. This causes him to embrace certain Black American stylings like gold rings, grills, and cornrows, and though many see these things as “ghetto” and “trashy”(wrongfully), Killmonger carries himself with confidence and power, asserting that his difference from the Wakandans is what makes him Kingly, and it is what makes him strong. This type of characterization makes one reconsider how they view the individuals who dress themselves in culturally Black clothes, accessories, and mannerisms, as being more than just a “rube” or a “gangbanger”, as you may hear often on tabloids.

*African people may view this movie differently because it may not be addressing ideas they may not already be familiar with, as explained earlier the film is more bent to appeal to Westerners. The settings, costumes, and customs may feel familiar to them, and many may be pleased with the representation of their customs, ideals, and history given their views of colonizers and imperials, but given that we don’t see much of Africa outside of Wakanda in most of Black Panther, it may seem more like grandeur rich fiction to some of the more jaded audience goers. The character Killmonger, however, may give some Africans a new perspective on how Black people all over the world view Africans their view of Black Americans.*