

Concientización:
A Journal of Chican@ & Latin@ Experience and Thought
Volume 7, Nos. 1 & 2, Winter 2011-Spring 2012

Concientización is an interdisciplinary, refereed student journal dedicated to promoting the study of Chican@ & Latin@ experience and thought. We are committed to creating alliances across boundaries of nation, race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality. In that spirit, we incorporate in our mission the study of Latin@s and Chican@s in diaspora; the study of racial, ethnic, class, sexual, and gender identities; and the study of community and nation building.

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Editor's Note to Reader

The works contained within this volume represent not only the scholarship of students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but also their passions. This volume provides the reader with a variety of topics from undergraduate and graduate students whose scholarship focus on issues of education, social justice, identity, history, and imaginary "Latinidad" (Flores, 1997).

This year, we have the pleasure of including a special section "Movie reviews from CLS 419: Latina/os and U.S. Entertainment Media. In this section students prove critical surveys of participation and representation of Latinas and Latinos in U.S. film and to a lesser extent, television, since the era of silent film. Also, authors will explore contemporary issues and debates related to Latina/o representations and shifting and static notions in the U.S. public imaginary.

The journal's cover is a photo from the movie *West Side Story*. The photograph was chosen to reflect this year's movie review submissions and the message that these movies tell us about Latina/os in the U.S. In this photo Rita Moreno is depicted as stereotypical Harlot (Ramirez-Berg, 2002); which is not surprising since most Latina/os in these roles will only be used to fit false Latino imagery. We hope these essays and reviews are another avenue toward learning about the central questions, topics, and applications that have emerged in this field of inquiry.

Section One: Education and History

In this section, the authors offer two systematic and interdisciplinary analyses of Mexican-American and Latin origin people, cultures, and collectivities within the United States. The first focuses on Latinas in higher education; and the second focuses on the historical beginnings of Latina/o based populations in Latin America.

Megan Hall introduces this theme by sharing a piece on Latinas in higher education. As she introduces this theme she argues that new solutions are necessary to improve the number of Latinas that advance to post-secondary education. Specifically, solutions must encompass greater involvement on three levels: schools, governments, and communities and families.

Valencia DeAna Lynch explores the specific reasons why Afro-descendants were targeted by the Spanish Inquisition and how slaves were often accused of blasphemy. Both of these sub-categories highlight the ways that Afro-descendant men and women navigated their way through the Colonial Spanish world and managed to gain moments of agency by creating pockets of spiritual resistance from African culture.

Under-representation of Latina Students in Higher Education

Megan Hall

Abstract

The under-representation of Latina students in higher education is unacceptable in the United States, a nation dedicated to equality. Specific problems within this issue are the pipeline of Latinas' educational attainment and fewer Latinas attending four-year collegiate institutions. These problems are caused by Latinas' low access to high-quality secondary education, undocumented citizenship status, social barriers, and limited Latina role models in higher education. Solutions are necessary to improve the number of Latinas that advance to post-secondary education. Specifically, solutions must encompass greater involvement on three levels: schools, governments, and communities and families.

Esperanza immigrated to the United States in 1998 at the age of 13. She was brought to this new country by her older siblings, in search of a better home after the death of their parents in El Salvador (Galassi, 2003). Esperanza worked hard in El Salvador learning English, so upon arrival to U.S. education system, she was prepared to succeed. Her hard work, first in El Salvador and later in her American high school paid off, as she graduated 5th in her class of almost 350 students. This story does not end expectedly, though, because Esperanza, unlike her fellow American classmates, will not be able to pursue the "American Dream" by advancing to higher education. Her undocumented citizenship status, in a country she calls her home, prohibits her from reaching her dreams. Esperanza, a Latina, is not alone in her oppression of Latina students in higher education in a nation—ironically—committed to equality, freedom, and justice for all.

We see the manifestation of the under-representation of Latinas in higher education through the lack of Latina role models as professors, administrators, and students. Because an increase in Latina students is necessary before we will see more Latina professors and administrators, I will address the lack of Latina students in higher education in this paper. To better understand this particular population within the issue of under-representation, it is important to identify specific problems, causes of these problems, and then, finally, tangible solutions—solutions that will help students like Esperanza reach her college goals and career dreams. First, I will examine two key problems: the pipeline of Latinas' educational attainment and, secondly, fewer Latinas attend four-year collegiate institutions.

The pipeline of Latina educational attainment uses three points of educational advancement—high school graduation rate, baccalaureate attainment, and graduate school attainment—to identify where Latinas are being left behind in the educational process (Solózano & Ornelas, 2002). This progression shows that out of 100 Latina students that proceed through elementary education only 44 are expected to graduate from high school. Of these 44 high school graduates, 24 are expected to enroll in college, with 11 attending a four-year college and 13 attending a community college. One of these 13 are expected to transfer to a four-year institution, but only seven of the 11 enrolled in a four-year college will persist to the third year, making a total of eight Latinas advancing to the third year at a four-year institution. Six of these eight are expected to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree and two of the six are expected to pursue a graduate or professional degree. Out of the entire 100 Latinas, "less than one" will earn a doctoral degree. This data is from 2002, but, sadly, in 2010 Latina high school dropout rates—the point of educational attainment at which most Latinas were left behind—is still high, according to Mariela Dabbah (2010). The most recent U.S. statistics from 2008 indicated that only 63.7% of Hispanic females graduated high school, compared with 87.8% of white females. Furthermore, only 14.1% of Hispanic females graduated college, compared to 29.1% of white females (U.S. Census Bureau

1, 2008). Yes, Latinas are graduating high school and college—but *less than half as often* as white females. This trend is unacceptable in a society that claims racial equality. Beginning at the point of high school graduation, the educational attainment pipeline explains that Latinas are under-represented in overall educational advancement.

A more specific problem of Latinas' advancement towards higher education is the low rate of enrollment at four-year colleges. As of 2004, 58% of Latinas enrolled in college are attending a two-year institution, and the rate of transferring from a two-year to a four-year college is very low (Haro, 2004). Fewer Latino students continue their educational advancement when they start at a two-year college. According to a report by the American Council on Education, only 55% of Latino students who started at a two-year institution in 2005 were still enrolled or had earned a degree by 2008, compared with 60% of ten years ago (Banchemo, 2010). Latinas are enrolling in college, but not proceeding towards advanced levels of undergraduate education or receiving the credentials of a four-year institution. This is a problem because the educational path of four-year institutions leads to careers of higher social status, which also contributes to Latinas' under-representation in careers. Before Latinas can benefit from equality in careers and greater social equality, they must be provided access to the path towards this goal: equal education.

Now that I have identified the specific problems regarding the under-representation of Latina students in higher education, I will explain the causes of these problems. Specifically, causes include low access to high-quality secondary education; undocumented citizenship status; social barriers, and limited Latina role models in higher education.

To begin, Latinas have limited access to high quality secondary education that will lead to acceptance at a postsecondary institution. Because of this lack of quality secondary education, many Latina students are not well prepared for higher education (Banchemo, 2010). Specifically, Latinas lack access to AP classes and college-preparatory math and science. In schools serving urban, low-income communities (where much of the student body is Latina), overall AP enrollment is low: in California schools where more than 90% of the student population is Latino/a, AP enrollment is less than 15% of students (Solórzano and Ornelas, 2002). Conversely, in suburban affluent communities, California high schools offer more AP courses, but Latinos are disproportionately under-represented in AP enrollment: 43% of students are Latino/a, but only 7% are enrolled in AP courses, compared to 28% and 47%, respectively, of whites (Solórzano and Ornelas, 2002). AP classes are not available at urban high schools that enroll mainly Latinos, but at suburban high schools where AP classes are available, Latinos do not have access to AP enrollment. Limited access to advanced coursework inhibits Latinas from being accepted at colleges that have merit-based admission standards. For example, admission standards at UCLA, California State University, and University of Washington—universities in states that have passed propositions outlawing affirmative action—place primary emphasis on performance in college-preparatory courses and allot extra GPA points to AP courses. AP course completion also identifies admitted students as “honors,” allowing them certain privileges in course registration (Miksch, 2008). Lack of advanced courses in high school not only inhibits Latinas admittance to four-year institutions, but also impacts their progression through the university once enrolled, ultimately leading to the under-representation of Latinas at four-year institutions.

Latinas lack access to non-AP college-preparatory courses in math and science. A 2010 Bayer Facts of Science Education survey, polling female and under-represented minorities, concluded that the lack of quality math and science programs at secondary institutions contributes to women and minorities' under-representation in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) careers (Gilroy, 2010). Limited access to high quality, college-preparatory courses inhibits Latinas from advancing toward higher education and obtaining high status careers in our society.

Beyond inadequate access to quality secondary education, some Latinas face legal barriers to undocumented citizen status. A recent report released by the American Council on Education identified obstacles caused by immigration status as a factor that has prevented Latinas' college

completion (Banchero, 2010). Specifically, public colleges, such as Georgia's college system, have established tuition policies that prohibit the admission of undocumented citizens (CNN Wire Staff, 2010). Policies like this prevent undocumented citizens, regardless of their commitment to U.S. government and society or their academic qualifications, from achieving academic success, even after living the majority of their life on U.S. soil. This policy causes the under-representation of Latinas in higher education in the U.S. because many Latinas are simply not born in the United States. Of foreign born members of U.S. population between the ages of five and 24 years, 55% are Latinos of Caribbean or Central America origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). In states with policies prohibiting undocumented citizens to enroll in college, a Latina who has worked hard her whole life to achieve the "American Dream" in the only country she calls home, like Esperanza, applies to college only to have her dreams shattered by the system that told her she could succeed. This is the same system, the U.S. government, which refuses to grant her true equality and freedom.

Social barriers are a third cause to the problems of the under-representation of Latinas in higher education. The previously mentioned 2010 Bayer Facts of Science Education survey identified "persistent stereotypes" of women and minorities as a primary cause of these groups' low numbers in the fields of math and science. More specifically, negative racial stigma and racial discrimination create barriers to academic success (Gilroy, 2010). Additionally, Latinas are portrayed as dropouts in the education system (Mendoza, 2010). Social expectations of failure in higher education discourage Latinas from pursuing academic success through four-year institutions, ultimately resulting in the under-representation of Latinas in higher education.

Lastly, the lack of Latina role models in higher education causes the low rate of Latina students enrolled in four-year colleges. There is a disparity in representation of Latinas in academia (Segura, 2003); there are fewer Latina leaders in higher education proportional to the number of Latinas in our society. Latina role models are effective motivational guides to Latinas students. College-aged Latinas with politically active, successful Latina role models show greater pro-action regarding their education (Solórzano & Delgado, 2001). Successful Latina role models in academia or who have pursued higher education are an important inspirational factor in encouraging young Latinas to pursue high education, as well. The lack of these role models contributes to the lack of Latina students in four-year colleges and Latinas' overall lower educational attainment.

I have explained the causes of under-representation of Latina students in higher education—low access to high-quality secondary education; undocumented citizen status; social barriers; and limited Latina role models. Finally it is pertinent to examine tangible solutions that lead to Latina's higher educational attainment and increased enrollment at four-year institutions. Solutions are threefold: school involvement, governmental involvement, and community/family involvement.

First, to better prepare Latinas for success in post-secondary institutions, schools, both high schools and post-secondary institutions, must be involved to increase Latinas' access to college preparatory classes. One example of how schools can effectively play an active role in Latina success is the PUENTE program in California (Haro, 2004). This program has three components: enrollment in a college-preparatory English class, an academic counselor, and a college-educated mentor. Comprehensive programs like this not only provide Latinas access to the high quality secondary education they need in order to enroll in four-year institutions, but also provide an accomplished Latina role model. Colleges and high schools must form partnerships with the common goal of providing equal educational opportunities in order to eliminate Latina under-representation in the higher education system. Furthermore, colleges can put into place policies that address the disparity of students' access to high school AP courses. Colleges must evaluate prospective students' AP coursework relative to the AP courses offered at her or his high school or relative to the number of minorities enrolled in AP courses (Solórzano and Ornelas, 2002). This

approach to the college admissions process will remove evaluation solely on the weighted GPA resulting from AP courses and give Latinas, who have limited access to AP courses, an equal opportunity at pursuing a college education

Next, governmental solutions include passage of the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act and research regarding Latina education. Through passage of the DREAM Act, governmental involvement in minority education will not only provide a path to citizenship for undocumented minors who meet high standards of moral character, academic potential, and national commitment, but will also provide affordable access to higher education for these minors (Galassi, 2004). Instead of denying Latinas access to higher education, our federal government must accept and acknowledge the positive contributions Latinas have made to our society by granting Latinas—who have lived, worked, and gone to school in America—the opportunity to fulfill their “American Dream” as a *legal* American. Secondly, our federal government must invest in research examining Latina education experience in order to identify how governmental intervention in the academic process can be more beneficial to Latinas (Datnow et al., 2010). With a greater body of knowledge regarding the barriers facing Latinas in their pursuit of academic success, change agents can be developed to bring equality to Latinas in higher education.

Finally, communities and families play an important role in solving the issue of under-representation of Latinas in higher education. Community groups, such as the Association of Chicana Activists in San Diego, California, must support the academic advancement of Latinas by offering workshops on education, empowerment, leadership, college, and political awareness (Anonymous, 2008). Workshops or events like these will better prepare Latina students for the challenges of college and motivate them to overcome negative social stigma and pursue college education. Community support groups also provide Latina role models who are active and involved in their community, setting a positive example for how Latina students can remain active once in a college community. Also, parental support is pertinent to Latinas academic success, especially for Latinas pursuing degrees at four-year institutions (Haro, 2004). Parents’ encouragement to succeed will help buffer racial discrimination Latinas face in higher education. Parental voice is also effective when legal action is necessary to fight inequalities in education, such as class action lawsuits against high schools for discrimination in course access (Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002). In this way parents and communities can work together to take legal action that leads to equal access to high quality secondary education for Latinas. Universal equality in high school education is one of the first steps towards eliminating the under-representation of Latina students in higher education.

These solutions on the levels of schools, government, and community are the necessary changes that will provide students like Esperanza an equal opportunity to pursue her dreams of college and a successful career resulting from her experience in higher education. Whether or not she can *legally* call herself an American, her aspirations qualify her for equal treatment as a citizen and a person in a nation—her home—dedicated to such constructs of equality, freedom, and justice. One day she, as a Latina, will be an equally represented member of higher education.

About the Author:

Megan will graduate in May 2012 with majors in Dietetics and Psychology and a certificate in Gender and Women Studies. In her final semester, Megan is conducting a project about diabetes and diet recommendations in rural Ecuador. Growing up in a small Wisconsin town taught her the importance of community. Megan will attend Tulane University pursuing an MPH in Nutrition and hopes to pursue a career working with nutrition and maternal health projects in Latin America communities.

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The Black Slave, The Inquisition, and Resistance in Colonial Mexico

Valencia DeAna Lynch

Abstract

This paper discusses resistance tactics of Afro-descendant slaves in Colonial Mexico during the 17th and 18th centuries. Slaves used religion and religious practices as tools of cultural retention, religious syncretism, and creolization. Unacculturated Africans tended to use healing and divination practices learned in Africa and brought to the colony of New Spain. More assimilated slaves and slaves born in Colonial Mexico tended to subvert Christianity and use blasphemy to find pockets of freedom from bondage. From within the constraints of enslavement and within the gaze of Spanish slaveholders and Inquisitors, Afro-descendants resisted, even if not completely attaining their freedom.

Introduction

Racial slavery as an institution formed an integral part of the economy of colonial Latin America. It involved the buying, selling, and owning of Black people who were utilized to aid in the exploiting and birth of these lands we now call, “The Americas.” Herman Bennett, author of *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* notes that, “In 1640, the year the Portuguese slave trade to Spanish America ended, the Kingdom of New Spain (colonial Mexico) contained the second-largest population of enslaved Africans and the greatest number of free black in the Americas” (2003,1). Many people are unaware that slaves were brought to Mexico in large numbers, usually only remembering the presence of slavery in the US, the Caribbean, Brazil, or other places with a noticeably “Black” population. Remembering the experiences of Black slaves in New Spain can shed light on power dynamics, systems of belief, and racial tension that existed between not only the master and the slave, but the Afro-descendant and Spanish colonial America at large. As research continues to demonstrate, Black slaves in Mexico dealt with similar barriers during the Spanish Inquisition, extended by Philip II to his New World dominions in 1596 and officially established in Mexico in 1571 (Bennett, 2003; Palmer, 1976).

As a form of social control, the Spanish Inquisition provided a means for people to appear before the Holy Office who would serve as a way to check the community and assure that people were living according to Catholic standards of morality. Those who were deemed guilty were often subject to public forms of humiliation, whippings, and sometimes death. Not all “castas” (non-Spaniards or person of mixed-race) were summoned before the Holy Office. Because “the Indians were viewed as ‘gente miserable’ or as ‘weak people,’” they were not subject to come before the Inquisition as opposed to the Africans who “engendered fear rather than pity or paternalism” (Palmer, 1976, 132). The child-like status of the indigenous population of New Spain prevented them from being labeled as *gente de razón* (people of reason) (Bennett, 2003) as opposed to Africans who were imported to work because of their strength and adaptability to new conditions. While the Spaniards did not believe the Africans were as intelligent as Europeans, Spaniards certainly believed that slaves were always conspiring against them or trying to rebel. Africans also were from a continent that carried negative connotations in the social imaginaries of most Europeans. Their “scheming ways” and frightful origins made them especially vulnerable to Spanish means of social control. During the time of the Inquisition, the tribunal “never identified persons of African descent as a specific target, but nearly 50 percent of the Inquisition proceedings involved Africans and their Creole descendants” (Bennett, 2003, 9). Taken with the previous factors, their high occurrence in the

Inquisition records also correlates with the high numbers of Blacks in New Spain, “A 1646 census enumerated 35,089 Africans and 116,529 personal of African descent in New Spain” (Bennett, 2003, 1). Racial tension brewed among Spaniards and Africans and consequently, slave-owners constantly feared the violent resistance and often chose to chastise and punish their slaves harshly (Palmer, 1976).

This paper seeks to explore the specific reasons why Afro-descendants were targeted by the Spanish Inquisition. What was the type of Afro-descendant being targeted? Finally, because authorities felt the need to socially control Blacks, why were they viewed as a threat? In other words, what made Black people so scary? All of these questions are intertwined. This paper is divided into two main sections: the reasons Blacks were feared and the activities they were accused of in the Inquisition records. Slaves were often accused of witchcraft and blasphemy and both of these sub-categories highlight the ways that Afro-descendant men and women navigated their way through the Colonial Spanish world and managed to gain moments of agency and social mobility from within their state of bondage. It also allowed them to use religion to their benefit, creating pockets of resistance from pieces of African culture slaves brought with them, creolized forms of religion formed through the slave experience, and Christian practices slaves learned from Spanish religious authority. Even the information that slaves gained through Spanish institutions was later reinterpreted and renegotiated by slaves who managed to use new information to their benefit.

Why Were Blacks So Feared?

Afro-descendants in New Spain were feared for many different reasons. As mentioned before, they were not viewed with the level of paternalism that indigenous people were. Blacks were viewed as threatening, violent, inherently rebellious, and to an extent, evil. In light of these widely held perceptions, Black were highly watched and controlled. As slaves, they were the victims of cruel and unusual punishments ranging from excessive whippings to the pouring of hot substances onto their skin and open wounds. Additionally, Blacks did not meet the standards of blood purity or “limpieza de sangre” and this justified the harsh treatment that they received. In Martinez’s, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* she writes,

“Particularly important among these developments was the importation of black slaves to Spanish America, which as evidenced in the growing popularity of the myth of the curse of Ham to explain enslavement practices, strengthened Iberian associations of slavery with black skin color and ancestral kin. More important from a long-term perspective, slavery made it difficult for blacks to make genealogical claims, which in turn affected their descendants’ ability to claim that they were Old Christians” (2008, 20).

After the Spaniards expelled the Moors and Jews from Spain, it became imperative for Christians to prove they were not new converts but that they were “Old Christians”. Being Old Christian carried such symbolic meanings as loyalty to the Spanish Crown and high family honor. Martinez explains that this discourse was later imported to the Spanish colonies where Africans and indigenous people became the new subjects of attacks on “blood purity”. The ability to make genealogical claims was tied to ideas about honor and prestige. For the upper tiers of society, ideas about public perception often mattered more than the actual biological makeup of the person. For Blacks, not only were phenotypically marked with a trait of the “other” but their lack of documentation or *probanza* of their lineage made any sort of social ascendance nearly impossible. However, there were some violent means that slaves used to escape this dilemma: maroon age and rebellion.

These were two material fears that slave-owners and Spaniards had which stemmed from the ideological concerns mentioned above. There were many attempts to keep slaves from gathering in large numbers because masters believed they could control conspiracies and plotting. No slave was allowed to bear arms (Palmer, 121). Some Spaniards believed that as men without faith or honor, slaves were just looking for opportunities to put Spaniards in the same chains they bore. Additionally, runaway slaves or “maroons” were threats to Spaniards in several ways. They engaged in violent attacks directed toward Spaniards in attempts to keep their freedom and occasionally robbed indigenous people or Spaniards on roads. Perhaps the most powerful weapon of maroons for Afro-descendants was that they “stood as *living symbols* to their counterpart as to what was achievable in terms of escape from bondage” (Palmer, 1976, 123). Successful maroons (runaways that evaded capture) served as inspiration for Blacks still in captivity. One famous maroon from New Spain was named Yanga, a leader of a community of runaway slaves for thirty years (Davidson, 1996). He and his followers had a number of encounters with Spaniards, one in particular resulting in large casualties for combatants on either side (Davidson, 1996). Despite this, their community was eventually able to negotiate their freedom and evade further attacks. Davidson (1996) notes, “This experience demonstrates that under capable leadership, slaves could maintain an active guerrilla campaign, negotiate a truce, and win recognition of their freedom” (97). However, the threat of maroonage was still a threat to Spaniards because of the attacks they already faced at the hands of escaped slaves. Additionally, a runaway slave also represented an economic loss as slaves were a valuable source of property. As Palmer (1976) so eloquently puts it, “The dilemma produced by this situation was that, although the Spaniards feared the Africans, they simply could not do without their services” (123). Besides working in the mines and plantations, there was other less common but highly prized services that slaves offered: divination, witchcraft, and curing.

Women and Divination in Colonial Mexico

There were many ways in which slave-owners and other members of New Spain’s society benefited from the presence of diviners in society. But first, it is important to answer the question: Who were the slaves who practiced divination? For the most part, these slaves were female *bozales* or slaves that had been recently brought from different parts of Africa including Angola, New Guinea, Mozambique, and the Congo (Villa-Flores, 2005). This is interesting in several ways: the gender ratio of male to female slaves was 3:1 (Palmer, 1976). Thus, men outnumbered women because it was believed that they worked better and lasted longer. Men appeared more frequently, but when women did appear in the Inquisition records, it was for cases related to divination and what Spaniards called, “talking through the chest” (a kind of voice dissociation). Talking through the chest occurred when someone claimed to be inhabited by a spirit or entity that spoke through the human subject, resulting in vocal sounds that sounded like conversation sometimes or in unintelligible noises at other times (Villa-Flores, 2005). There are several instances of female slaves being brought before the Inquisition on charges of talking through the chest. Black slaves who engaged in this activity were particularly threatening for the religious authorities because it was believed the “possible source of such disembodied voices was either a demonic ‘familiar spirit’ or Satan himself,” (Villa-Flores, 2005, 301). Demonic threats were incredibly intolerable in that they were a direct contestation of the Christianizing mission that the Spaniards engaged in and hence, they presented a challenge to colonial religious authority. Villa-Flores writes,

“In contrast to free women, slave diviners were not as much perceived by the Inquisition as breaching the gender conventions of submission and honor, as exhibiting a dangerous

behavior that promoted superstition and social scandal among the faithful, and could potentially affect the balance of power within the master-slave relations in colonial Mexico” (2002, 302).

The fact that these women were *bozales* already put them in categories as social “others” in terms of gender and non-assimilated slaves. However, as new arrivals to New Spain, slave diviners were believed to be corrupting the population, infecting the social body with their impure ways. Slaves’ deviant behavior only enhanced their otherness, subjecting them to close vigilance because they inspired fear and suspicion. However, in the small number of cases that have been identified of slave women “talking through the chest” in Colonial New Spain, we see that masters were profiting from their slaves special “talents”. In other words, it seems that within the Spanish class, the religious authorities were more threatened by slave diviners because it directly challenged their authority. Slave-owners tended to be less threatened by these slaves because the slaves’ abilities garnered the attention of other Spaniards who were willing to pay to have their problems solved or reconciled by other-worldly spirits. By economically exploiting slave diviners, slave masters also took a hand in spreading the superstitions and alternative sources of knowledge that so bothered the Holy Office (Villa-Flores, 2005).

Slave diviners’ recent arrival from Africa was a crucial link to their practices because there is evidence that divination practices formed part of the process of cultural retention and reinvigoration of African practices in the New World⁵. However, practices were not only African in nature. One woman named Leonor de Isla clearly demonstrated the religious syncretism that was prevalent in Afro-Mexican society. Here is a fragment of one of her prayers: “Our Lord, Jesus Christ, by the holy cross on which you were hanged and crucified on Mount Calvary, and you who fixed your eyes on the thief at your right hand, you who may subject all men and women to do my will and make them walk where I desire... May they never love God more than [sic.] your servant Leonor [and] may they approve all that I may desire to order in the name of God and the Holy Spirit. Amen” (Palmer, 1976, 162). Leonor was charged by the Holy office for knowing all the devils in hell and calling them by name (Ibid.). Her use of Catholic terminology not only points to the degree of syncretism that she was engaging in, it also pointed to her use and control over Catholic prayers, showing that she was not simply absorbing the teachings of the religious authority, she maintained a sense of agency over the teachings and incorporated them into her practices as she saw necessary. This was threatening by the Holy Office because she was not a passive subject but someone actively pursuing her own agenda using the tools that the Spanish hand unwittingly given her, in this case, prayers. In this case, diviners were more threatening to Catholic Church than to their owners. However, in cases where slaves were gaining honor through healing practices, they were a threat to the whole community of Spaniards.

Afro-descendant curing was also another reason slaves were brought before the Inquisition. There was a sense in which Spaniards were afraid to rely on African divination, but they had to. Bristol (2006) writes, “Between 1607 and 1738 only 438 people earned medical degrees in Mexico. Such a small number of physicians could not satisfy the medical needs of even the Spanish population of New Spain, which numbered 13,780 in 1646, much less the majority non-Spanish population” (2). Therefore, many people were forced to substitute medical doctors for Afro-Mexican slave medicine, often times referred to by a term that carried a loaded meaning: *hechicería* or witchcraft (Bristol, 2006). In Europe, anything deemed “magical” was always believed to be the work of the Devil. Unfortunately, this led many Spaniards to misrepresent or judge actions of indigenous people, who viewed magic as being a privilege that should be concentrated in the hands of specialists, and Africans who believed that only “black” magic (negative curses and the like) was taboo and “white” magic was socially acceptable (Palmer, 1976). The tension between the necessity for African methods of healing or divination

and the societal taboo behind all things “magical” led Afro-descendants who engaged in such activities. They were feared but also occupied a special social space because other forms of help were scarce and times were hard.

Slaves used these conditions to their advantage as a way to increase social mobility, personal reputation, and honor. When slaves successfully healed a person or their loved one, the tales of this success traveled by word of mouth past the individual case and into the community where others with similar illnesses would hear and see the slave in hopes of a cure. Likewise, when Afro-descendant women in New Spain spoke through the chest, they usually did so to answer a question of a community member who wanted to know where something they had lost had gone, who had stolen what from them, or other acts that had been committed against them that they did not have clear answers for (Villa-Flores, 2005). When these community tensions were reconciled, these ventriloquists became special problem-solvers in the community. Sometimes, even one instance of being right was enough to repel several instances in which they had been wrong (Villa-Flores, 2005). Even though slaves may not have been born with the honor because they did not have “limpieza de sangre,” their talents allowed them to earn honor in colonial New Spain. Spiritual practices allowed *bozal* slaves to navigate colonial New Spain and experience mobility from within bondage. Blasphemy was another way that slaves were able to negotiate their experience of bondage in a different way, even more connected to the Christian faith than the last.

Blasphemy as Resistance

Unfortunately for Africans, corporal punishment was the way that people of “low” caste paid for their transgressions. As a result, slaves suffered great torture at the hands of their masters who showed great sadism when they cut, maimed, branded, burned, or chained their slaves. In the midst of great bodily harm and punishment, slaves often renounced God. Renouncing God was a blasphemous act that allowed slaves to temporarily evade further punishment because they caught the slaveholder off-guard. There is evidence to suggest that blasphemy was taught among slaves to avoid bodily harm (Villa-Flores, 2002). Blasphemy was the most common crime that slaves were accused of; therefore, there was probably a considerable amount of corporal punishment towards slaves. Sometimes, a neighbor would overhear and report this slave to the Inquisition or a family member of the slave-owner would report the slave (Villa-Flores, 2002). It is unfortunate that slaves had to turn themselves in to another form of domination, the Inquisition to get some temporary relieve from the brutal treatment of their masters. They sometimes reported themselves to authorities to escape the rage of their masters and be incarcerated for a few days. At least in jail, slaves could eat, sleep, and be clothed during trial all on their master’s tab. Blasphemy trials could take months at a time and if the slave-owner was deemed to culpable of the blasphemy because of their cruelty, the slave could be sold or traded to a different slave-owner. Assuming this slave-owner was less cruel than the one the slave was currently under, this would be a win situation for the Black slave.

However, if the slave were to lose, there was a possibility that the slave could be whipped anywhere from 50-200 times, publically humiliated, or still worse, they could be turned over to their masters for punishment. Before a slave could even be convicted of blasphemy, there were a number of questions they had to answer: how long had they been Christians? Did they know the basic prayers of the Catholic faith? Had they ever been tried before the Inquisition? Had he/she received Holy Communion and Reconciliation when mandated by the Church? Was he/she in their proper state of mind when they blasphemed (Villa-Flores, 2002)? Behind these questions was the assumption that the blasphemy was no accident, “For inquisitors, the slaves’ ‘conditional’ utterance involved a great deal of premeditation and was thus

considered especially reprehensive as a sign of trickery and deceit,” (Villa-Flores, 2002). While there may have been slaves that did use it with knowledge that they may be temporarily relieved from the watch of their masters, they certainly did not commit blasphemy solely or even mostly for “trickery” or “deceit”. Slaves primarily used blasphemy as a survival tactic but also as a way to hold the slave-owner accountable for their actions.

The Siete Partidas were a series of laws created in Spain that had the potential to make Spanish slavery the most humane institution in the world (Palmer, 1976). These laws had provisions to allow slaves to marry, not be mistreated, be provided with an adequate diet, inherit property; they also had the right to manumission. Although many slave-owners did not obey The Siete Partidas or did not know about them, they still were conversant with the ideological tradition that nurtured and shaped those laws. By extension, so were their slaves. Slaves knew what their masters were supposed to be providing and how they were supposed to be treated the ones who blasphemed also had longer time to dialogue with this “ideological tradition” because most of them were young, male, and Creole or ladino slaves. Most who did not fit this category were mulattoes. Unlike those accused of witchcraft, those accused of blasphemy rarely were *bozales*. This suggests two things: First, that perhaps slaves who were becoming more acculturated were getting “too big for their britches” meaning that as Spanish-speaking slaves who had time to get to know the culture and institutions of the Spanish, these slaves more avidly challenged their situation in direct and indirect ways. Understandably, Creole and ladino slaves needed to be “kept in their place” so that they would not forget that they were slaves. Second, it was believed that ladino and creoles had *mañas* or “bad habits” which had the potential to spread amongst Africans (Villa-Flores, 2002). Nonetheless, these young men continued to show agency through their blasphemies, using Christianity as a “language of contention” (Villa-Flores, 2002). They were not willing to just accept the torture and beatings of their masters but were able to use religious language to counter-act the whip even if their attempts did not always provide a long-term solution to their problems.

Conclusion: *What Do These Forms of Spiritual Resistance Demonstrate About New Spain?*

During the 16th and 17th century, Afro-descendant slaves in New Spain were one of the biggest segments of the population. They were coming from a part of the world that inspired fear in most Europeans because they thought that Blacks were inherently evil, rebellious, violent, and malicious. All of these negative stereotypes traveled the Atlantic with these slaves who were treated with cruelty and brutality by their masters. In essence, part of the reason that Blacks were humiliated and punished in Colonial Mexico was because Spaniards were afraid of them. However, Spaniards did not only fear Afro-descendants because of stereotypical notions of Blackness, they were also inspired by tangible instances when slaves ran away or rebelled against them. Maroonage was the most impactful signs of rebellion against the slave-owner because the slave actively sought out their freedom by leaving their situation of confinement and seeking to liberate themselves, creating community and a new life on their own terms. Yanga, a maroon from Veracruz, Mexico was on the run with a group of followers for thirty years before the Spanish finally gave up and negotiated freedom with Yanga and his community. Yanga and his supporters were not afraid to be caught. Despite their supposed “lesser” standing in society because of their *casta* status, these maroons actively challenged the Spaniards and engaged in armed combat with them. This open act of defiance was a threat to anyone who owned slaves because more than “rebellious blacks” maroons were symbolic icons of freedom for any enslaved person. Successful maroons proved that Black people were not natural slaves and that they could be free if they fought for it. Yanga and his followers also proved that if a runaway slave or maroon was able to hold out long enough, even the Spaniards could not keep them in bondage.

Spiritual forms of resistance like divination, curing, and blasphemy were not as outwardly contentious as maroonage but they still stood as powerful symbols that slaves could find niches where they could express their dignity and fight for just treatment. Even if spiritual forms of resistance did not guarantee freedom (neither did maroonage), these forms of resistance showed that slaves did not comply with slavery, they looked for any situation or opportunity to escape the humiliation and the daily beatings of the mind, soul, and body, that Spaniards tried to impose on them. “Talking through the chest” was a type of vocal distortion that Afro-descendant women engaged in. This practice was performed through *séances* where women would respond to questions from the community who wanted to try to figure out the whereabouts of lost items, robberies, or other causes of small scale problems in the area. Many of the practices associated with talking through the chest can be traced to Africa, thus showing areas of cultural retention and creolization that the slaves engaged in. Even slaves who used Christian words in prayers syncretized practices, combining Catholic words with new and original takes on Christianity. Many people who were not Black came to these women for guidance or knowledge. This totally reversed some of the master-slave relationship because it placed enslaved *bozal* women in positions of authority. Sometimes women even were known in different regions of Mexico for their special gifts. Although masters did collect dividends from women’s practices, thus gaining a financial upper hand, women were still the only ones with this specialized knowledge. Afro- descendant healers also used herbs, natural medicines, and African curing practices to heal people of all races. In Colonial New Spain, formally trained doctors were in short supply and there were communities where Africans were the closest thing to it. Thus, healers secured their pockets of freedom by filling social niches left vacant by Spaniards or higher caste people.

Of course, both women diviners and healers were threats to Spaniards were very concerned with controlling the disposition of their slaves and watching their every move. After all, slaves were not only unable to prove their genealogical lineage to prove their “*limpieza de sangre*” and this led them to be sources of great suspicion and questioning. In addition, their active challenging of Spanish systems of authority, namely slavery but also religious orthodoxy led Blacks toward the road of torture from their masters and the Inquisition. This was because the Church had a lot of power and it was unacceptable for anyone to question them, especially Black people who, unlike indigenous people, were believed to be evil and mischievous. Instead of being viewed with pity and paternalism like indigenous people, Africans were systematically repressed by various methods of social control, including the Inquisition. As noted before, the main concern of the Spaniards was fear. They feared Africans because they did not understand them, their religious practices, or the way they boldly challenged Spanish authority. However, lack of understanding did not justify the excessive whippings and cruel and unusual punishment that Black slaves had to endure. Although these encounters happened centuries ago, it is still important to remember the tensions between the systems of belief and power that encouraged these dynamics because it is often forgotten that Blacks were brought as slaves to Mexico during the colonial era. Blacks are an important part of Mexican history and they shed light on a part of history that was erased during the creation of Mexico as a mestizo identity. Mestizo nationalism has marginalized people in Mexico who still identify as Afro-descendant or with African culture. The soul of those strong, bold slaves still lives in the soul and heart of Mexico, waiting for more people to embrace their song and dance to the music.

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Special Section: Movie reviews from CLS 419 Latina/os and U.S. Entertainment Media

“Think of assimilation as a blob gobbling up everyone in its path. When you reach into the blob to rescue someone you know who had been gobbled up by the blob, you keep pulling up people that look like the blob--you can't tell them apart from the blob. Acculturation, on the other hand, is when you reach into the blob and pull up the very person you were looking for. Having been part of the blob, that person perforce has gained some familiarity with the blob but has not lost who he/she is.” Felipe de Ortego y Gasca (2011 personal conversation).

Introduction:

Movies tell us about history, but whose history? The movie industry has been very good in creating imaginary images of Latina/os in the USA. We are usually the Bandido, the Harlot, the male Buffoon, the Female Clown, the Latin Lover and of course the Dark Lady (Ramirez-Berg, 2002). We are the underrepresented peoples in movies and television, but if a Latina or Latino happens to be the token one in the movie/series, be aware that it will fall in one of those afore mentioned stereotypes! We have seen them all, from Carmen Miranda to Desi Arnos, to Rita Moreno. Latina/os are so absent from movies, the movie industry must find others to play the roles of Latina/os; Natalie Wood in West Side Story, Al Pacino in Scar Face, and so on. Have we come a long way? Sofia Vergara in Modern Family seems to have mastered her accent to sound as if she just landed on USA soil. Is that what has to be done in order to have a part in the entertainment industry? Maybe, maybe not.

Students in my CLS CA 419 class have done a great job in analyzing some of the movies we either saw in class or movies they felt were important to talk about. This is a group of students who are either sophomores or senior. To many of them this class was their introduction into the false imaginary images of “Latinidad.” To have had conversation in class about this “Latinidad” and to see their understanding of what was discussed, led to this papers analyzing movies and television sitcoms. Sit back and enjoy ... or maybe not, depends on how aware you are about these issues!

The “Other” on *I Love Lucy*: The Experience of Desi Arnaz in American Media

Jen Bloesch

The show *I Love Lucy* was a show that was unique in multiple aspects. One of these aspects was the inclusion of Desi Arnaz, a Cuban-born actor that played the role of Ricky Ricardo, the husband of Lucy Ricardo. Arnaz’s presence on the show is a mixed bag when it comes to the representation for Latinos in the media. In some ways, his role was a triumph, a positive portrayal of a Latino person in a very widely admired show. In other ways, his role highlighted the ongoing stereotypes Latino people face in the media, as well as the struggles that confront Latino/a actors and actresses in their attempt to make a career of acting. With little doubt, Arnaz’s experience as a part of the show *I Love Lucy* was very contingent upon his race and his ethnicity.

In some respects, Arnaz’s role was actually a very progressive depiction of a Latino person for the time. Instead of his role being associated with violence, gangs, or poverty, Ricky Ricardo played the role of a loving family man who was upstanding and committed to his wife (Beltrán, 2009). This diversion from a more typical male role, which usually consists of *el bandido* and the *male buffoon*, characterizes Latinos outside of the stereotypical frame.

The show was progressive in other ways, like the fact that Arnaz owned the production company. In the 1950s, a non-white owner was rare if not unheard of, and the ownership provided Arnaz with a lot of flexibility in the production. He was able to control the depiction of his character, curtailing or softening some of the racial or ethnic jokes that may have otherwise been much more degrading. Although he did make jokes using his ethnicity, he was able to maintain integrity as a character (Beltrán, 2009). Arnaz’s and Ball’s ownership of the production also enabled them to push other social boundaries, such as representing an interracial, intercultural marriage, as well as show a pregnancy on television. In these respects, Arnaz was successful in his attempts to make a career and also further the stance of Latinos in the media.

Despite Arnaz’s accomplishments, he was often still cornered into the role of “the other” and was inescapably disadvantaged by his “otherness.” During the show, Ricky and Lucy often poked fun at Arnaz’s accent (Beltrán, 2009) and used his exasperated rants in Spanish to add humor to the show (Sanchez, 1999). The episode about Ricky’s birthday in which Lucy attempts to recreate his “homeland” in order to make him feel special is a prominent example that Ricky did not fit into the traditional white-American mold. Ricky needs to “prove himself” as an American, reassuring Lucy that if he wanted a woman from Cuba, he would have stayed there. As Ricky, Arnaz also performed his rendition of Babalú, which highlighted his exoticism (Sanchez, 1999). It is significant that Ricky’s son shares a performance of Babalú with Ricky, a suggestion that being of mixed culture makes Little Ricky just as exotic as his father.

Ricky’s exoticism and “otherness” was something on which Arnaz capitalized, but it was also something that became a challenge for Arnaz. It seemed as if Arnaz had to over-compensate his perceived otherness by characterizing his character very strongly as a family man. Ricky was a well-liked character because he was such a forgiving and

loving husband to Lucy, and he needed to repeatedly display his forgiveness and his commitment to his wife. It is worth pondering that if Arnaz had not made Ricky such a family man whether he would have been so well perceived by the public audience. It was alone a large step to have a multiracial couple displayed on television. It is thus conceivable that negative stereotypes would have overshadowed the character of Ricky had Ricky not kept the clean image that he maintained.

In this sense, Arnaz's otherness pigeonholed him into a narrower role and restricted him from receiving credit for his acting. Beltrán (2009) points out that Ricky's flatter family man character meant that Arnaz did not get as much recognition as his co-stars received for their roles. Of the four main actors in *I Love Lucy*, Arnaz was the only one not to receive an Emmy for his acting. The press was also much slower to give him praise as an actor. Because of his otherness, it was apparent that although Arnaz was allowed on television and was beloved by many, he still was not considered as seriously as his counterparts.

The *I Love Lucy's 50th Anniversary Special* (2001), a television special designed to reminisce about the long run of *I Love Lucy*, contained a telling statement made before a commercial break in reference to Arnaz's childhood. The narrator said, "And next we will hear about Desi's proud cultural heritage." This is a significant statement in regards to Arnaz's perceived otherness because the prior segment in the special had given attention to Ball's childhood and the house in which she grew up. Ball's children, the hosts of the special, goggled over Ball's family's house as they walked through it, silently glorifying her upbringing into the American Dream. The narrator of the documentary made no reference to Ball's "proud cultural heritage," yet there was such a reference for Arnaz. This comment highlights the perpetual perception of Arnaz as the "cultural other." In an essay by Richard Dyer, Dyer explains the nature of white privilege by which whiteness remains invisible, and white people tend to think of race only in terms of the "other" (Rothenburg, 2002). This would explain the reference to Arnaz's cultural heritage, but not to Ball's, and further highlights the persona of "the other" casted on Arnaz. Arnaz's presence on *I Love Lucy* did in some ways mark a changing societal norm in regards to Latinos on television. However, his presence underscored many of the challenges that Latino/as have faced. Arnaz's career was defined by his Latino background, which ultimately meant extra struggles with which his white acting counterparts did not need to face.

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Latino Gangster Stereotypes as Portrayed by White Actors

Jane Roberts

In his six Latino stereotypes, Ramirez Berg (2002) says, “el bandido lives on in contemporary Hollywood films in two incarnations...the Latin American gangster/drug runner...[and] the inner-city gang member” (pg 68). Two films that portray the first incarnation of el bandido are *Scarface* (1983) and *Carlito's Way* (1993). The el bandido character is the central character in each of these films, but Tony Montana in *Scarface* is much closer to Ramirez-Berg's description of the stereotype. He is already a convicted criminal when the movie begins, but his fresh start in America gives him a chance to change that. Instead his greed drives him to ruthlessly make his way up the chain of command in the Miami drug scene.

I would like to point out that the ‘rise to power’ theme is typical of gangster movies, as is the theme of ‘greed’, as noted by Fran Mason (2002, pg 141). One could even argue that the el bandido who “ruthlessly pursues his vulgar cravings—for money, power, and sexual pleasure” (Berg-Ramirez, 2002, pg 68) is just following the gangster way. This is exemplified in *Scarface* when Tony sits in his large jacuzzi surrounded by riches and talking vulgarly to his wife, yet the thing that makes Tony another el bandido stereotype is that he is “psychologically irrational, overly emotional, and quick to resort to violence” (Ramirez-Berg, 2002, pg 68). Tony is prone to extreme jealousy, especially when it comes to his sister for whom his love seems border-line incestuous. Throughout the film Tony becomes more and more paranoid and suffers delusions of grandeur, culminating in the scene in which he shoots his best friend for having sex with his sister, after which he learns that the two were in fact married.

Scarface raises a number of interesting issues for Latinos characters in film, reinforcing some stereotypes while breaking others. Tony, for the most part, represents el bandido—as stated before he is greedy and vulgar, and title worthy trademark is his scar on his visage (hence scar face), and of course, speaks with a heavy accent. At the same time, he is well dressed and attractive, and shows a great deal of business savvy (even if it is the cocaine business) which allows him to overthrow his boss. Additionally his role as the protagonist goes against what one might expect. As we discussed in class though, his Cuban nationality makes it more acceptable to have a Latino character in a leading role, as does the fact that he dies in the end, unable to find true love and a happy ending the way that WASP male leads typically do in Hollywood.

Carlito's Way (1993) is fundamentally different than *Scarface* in that it is about a Puerto Rican who is trying to overcome his past. With the use of his clean start out of prison to become a better person, he essentially is trying to escape the stereotypes. Both *Scarface* and *Carlito's Way* are directed by Brian De Palma so *Carlito's Way* reinforces some stereotypes while ignoring others in much the same way that *Scarface* does. In this case, the protagonist and title character is not fueled by greed and vulgarity (although he presumably was as a young man since he was sent to prison), he is a more mature and complex version of el bandido. Though he is scruffy and bears an accent, he shows that he is a good soul—killing not out of a psychological need for violence but to help out his

friend. However, Carlito is Puerto Rican, just as Tony was Cuban, reveals that these are the Latino nationalities that are admissible as leading Latino characters. This being said, this film is heavy with the more typical *el bandido* characters—Benny Blanco played by John Leguizamo, and Pachanga played by Luis Guzmán, both of whom entirely lack ethics and portray greed and a lust for power. Mason (2002) mentions that “an unquenchable thirst for riches” (pg 146) a reoccurring point in gangster film.

The most obvious similarity between the two films is Al Pacino, Italian-American actor who plays Latino gangsters. While he is widely acclaimed for his roles in both movies, both touted on lists of best gangster films. It should be noted that it is not Latino actors portraying these Latino characters. Al Pacino could be considered a member of the WASP society, so a complex paradox is created when a WASP actor plays a Latino character that is stereotypical of *el bandido* in many ways, oppressed in the dietetic world of the film by the WASP characters. From my Latino friends I have heard that Al Pacino’s accents in both films are absolutely abominable, so to a true Cuban the character of Tony is hardly realistic or genuine, the same can be said for Carlito.

These two films could be considered groundbreaking in having a more complex Latino character in the lead role, but when young Latinos are looking for heroes on-screen, they find that the Latinos only hold the spotlight in gangster films. Furthermore, they see and hear that the actor playing the role is not Latino himself, instead he a member of white society. Though a talented actor, Al Pacino only further engrained *el bandido* stereotypes by mangling Tony’s accent, and allowing overwhelming greed and violence characterize the primary Latino in the film. It is not only the actor, but the writers, directors, and producers in Hollywood, who may feel they are breaking stereotypes by putting forth revolutionary scripts and characters but in reality, further reinforce them.

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A Critical Analysis of Hollywood's Relationship with Latinos

Lucio Reyes Jr.

It is no secret that Hollywood films have depicted Latinos in degrading and dehumanizing roles, which often times translates to the negative stereotypes of Latinos in the public eye. Films such as *Blood In, Blood Out: Bound By Honor* (Hackford, 1993) and *Scarface* (Bregman, 1983), have served as examples of the misrepresentation and misconstrued cultural identity of Latinos in the film industry, and society at large. In a Latino Studies class that I am currently enrolled in, a classmate had stated, "Movies that have positioned Latinos in stereotypical and demeaning roles would have been better off never being made [due to the hateful messages that they contain]" (CA 419 Lecture, March 2012). While I agree that messages within Hollywood films have created very damaging images of Latinos, I also feel they have captured the ignorant perspective that has always been socially accepted in the United States of people from non-white cultures and ethnicities. As a counterbalance to these negative sentiments, films that have portrayed Latinos in controversial roles (i.e. as oversexed and violent members of society) have been met with much disdain during their releases and have spurred many protests, which in turn, has brought to light many of the issues plaguing the Latino community and created a platform for an open discussion and change (Bouzereau, 2003). From this position, I argue that we can look at Hollywood movies that stereotype Latinos and begin to think more critically about the conditions of production of such films, understand their opportunity for prompting significant issues, and acknowledge the efforts of an entire community as a result.

While I argue that there are positive aspects to the existence of films that portray Latinos as inferior beings, there is no ignoring the fact that these types of films perpetuate harmful images and ideas of an entire community of people. Films often times have lasting effects beyond their releases and can carry their insensitive messages from one generation to the next. One such example, which was mentioned in the same lecture as my classmate's statement, was the continued use of the derogatory term "Paddy Wagon" in today's society, referring to Irish and Irish Americans (CA 419 Lecture, March 2012). The history of this term stems as far back as the early 1900s, when many new Irish immigrants came to the United States to start a new life. To break it down systematically, "Paddy" is the name that many Americans coined to reference the Irish simply because they worshipped the patron saint, Saint Patrick. "Wagon" refers to the police vehicles that hauled many Irish away for alcohol related incidents, and for the simple reason that they were Irish (Conover, 1994). Many Irish immigrants, along with other new wave immigrants of the time, were heavily discriminated against because of their accents, language, and cultural differences (Conover, 1994). The term has found its way into Hollywood films of the 1930s and 1940s, and is still used today. I admit, the main reason that I know of this term is from watching these very Hollywood films that have cast the Irish in an unfavorable light. The derogatory terms and perceptions found in films not only pertain to the Irish, but Latinos as well. The term "Dirty Mexican," which was notably featured in Rita Moreno's movie poster of *The Ring* (King, 1952) as 'Dirty Mex,' has had a long lasting and damaging effect on the image of Mexicans and

Mexican Americans over decades (Beltran, 2009). The term alone conjures up feelings of resentment and implies misconceived notions about a collective group of people.

From a social analytical perspective, however, a better understanding of the conditions of production can be drawn out of the distasteful portrayals of Latinos in film if looked at more critically. The fact that movies like *West Side Story* (Wise, 1961) and *Scarface* (Bregman, 1983) are accessible to the public today, even though they portray Latinos in American society as savages, overly sexualized beings, and criminals, they still can tell us so much more than what is at the surface. If we choose to look at films more critically, and bear in mind all the elements that go into making a Hollywood film, we can begin to understand the process and the mindset of the society surrounding that atmosphere and work space. Actors are not the only pieces that fit into the puzzle of making a movie. Producers, screenwriters, directors, and so many more people go into that very process. They each bring with them their own creative ideas, and even their own personal beliefs, which, very likely, seeps into the films they make. If we conclude that movies have always and typically depicted Latinos in negative stereotypical roles, we should be asking why? Why does this occur so often in films? Is it an imagined thought from the writers? Or, is this the accepted mentality among the creators behind these films, and among society as a whole, concerning who Latinos actually are as individuals and as a community? All the films that I have discussed in this article allow us the opportunity to peer into the production world, and relate what we see on screen to what we do not see behind the camera. With what we gain from those on-screen stereotypes and insight from authors like Richie Perez, who dissected and provided the controversies surrounding many Latino themed films, we can begin to understand a world where societal views often find their way into our films (Perez, 1998). The ignorance of the Latino identity and blatant racism of some creators of film, unfortunately, coincides with their work and seeps into the entertainment we look towards as an escape from those exact attitudes.

Not only do films that subject Latinos to inferior roles help society understand the background and people who made those films, but they also act as a catalyst to discussions on race and gender roles in movies and in America during their release into theaters. *Scarface* (Bergman, 1983), for example, was a movie about a Cuban refugee that decides to achieve his idea of the American Dream (i.e. mansions, fast cars, and women) through means of selling drugs, murder, and deceit. The character Tony Montana, played by Al Pacino, was characterized as a ruthless and violent Latino with a very thick accent, who would stop at nothing to achieve his every desire (Bergman, 1983). Before its release, some critics and Latino activists wrote scathing reviews and news editorials about the production of this film. They were concerned over the image of Cuban immigrants and Cuban Americans in the movie, and felt that their culture and ethnicity were being severely misrepresented, and feared that those who watched the film would internalize the messages and associate all Cubans with violence and criminal activity (Chute, 1984). Due to widespread coverage of this issue, many protests took place outside of movie theaters that continued to show the movie, especially around the Miami area where some of the movie was shot and takes place (Chute, 1984). In fact, the film's producer Martin Bregman explains that contempt for the subject matter of the movie was so severe that filming had to be relocated to California for the majority of the scenes due to the high volume of protests around Miami (Bouzereau, 2003). While

protesters were unable to stop the entire production of this film, they were successful in making their voices heard as a community and had a minor effect in delaying the filming process. Because of the film's portrayal of Cuban immigrants and the issues that it raised, it invoked a voice for a community that has struggled to be heard, for one reason or another. When they protested this film, they were not just protesting the characters or its message; they were asking the rest of the country to stop viewing them as a stereotype; to stop categorizing them as "savages" or "*bandidos*." Latinos have always fought for and desired to be considered equals, and movies, in some cases, act as a platform for that much needed discussion to seek change in our society around us.

I openly recognize the flaws that derive from films that deal with Latino characters and issues within their plot lines. They are very often steeped in racism, and come from an ignorant perspective on the culture and the people they try to depict. If we, as educated and motivated members of society, can look past the glitz and the glam of Hollywood films, we can move towards a path of learning from, rather than just being entertained by, the movies that we admire and consider works of art for their cinematic achievements. The educational value that these films possess greatly outweigh the negative aspects related to them, simply because they can teach a whole new generation, given the right circumstances and knowledge, about an aspect of our society that is often not covered in high school text books. The more critical analysis that we take into account regarding Hollywood films and their portrayals of non-white cultures, the wider the door opens towards a broader discussion of what is socially acceptable entertainment in all forms of the media.

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Latina Representation: Harlot Stereotype in *Desperate Housewives*

Sophia Barnes

In the early 19th century, Latina actresses such as Rita Moreno and Delores Del Rio were often relegated to stereotypical acting roles by the gate keepers of early 19th century television. Objectification, stereotyping and racist implications were often underlying discriminatory practices that became essential to many of the roles these women had to pick from. With more than half a century having passed since Del Rio's and Moreno's first acting roles, one might wonder if the current state for Latina actresses is similarly enveloped with such injustice. With reference to the life of Rita Moreno in the 1950s, I have chosen to compare and contrast a modern day acting role for the Mexican American actress Eva Longoria in the popular television series *Desperate Housewives* (2004). In addition to this show's popularity, *Desperate Housewives* (2004) is a mainstream television sitcom and unlike television shows that have been branded as "Latino based" such as *The George Lopez Show*, *Desperate Housewives* (2004) is seemingly marketed to a primarily White audience. In order to analyze Longoria's role as Gabrielle Solis, I will address the conceptualization of the Latina stereotype of the "Harlot" as outlined by Charles Ramirez-Berg (2002). This analysis will work to unveil the stereotypical implications embedded in Longoria's onscreen character.

To begin the analysis, an operational definition of the "Harlot" stereotype as defined by Ramirez-Berg (2004) is provided. Ramirez-Berg defined the term "harlot" as a hot-tempered Latina-seductress stereotype which was first found in early film, particularly in old silent American Westerns (2002, p. 71). Ramirez-Berg (2002) refers to the Harlot's sexuality with, "in true stereotypical fashion, we are never provided with any deeper motivation behind her actions—she is basically a sex machine innately lustful for a white male (p.71)." This stereotypical depiction of Latina women was carried throughout Hollywood films and television. The result of such stereotyping affected how individuals hold judgments, prejudices, and misrepresentations about Latinas. Words like "fiery," "spicy," and "lustful" have become synonymous with *Latinidad* and Latina actresses in particular have subsequently been type-casted as characters that are promiscuous and/or have deceitful motives. One of the first well-known Latinas in Hollywood was the Puerto Rican actress Rita Moreno who was subjected to this stereotypical "Harlot" role in which she was portrayed as the fiery and sexy Latina. This Latina stereotype will be used as a concept to assess the progression of Latina characterization in Longoria's role in *Desperate Housewives* (2002) and the roles and branding of Rita Moreno during her Hollywood career.

The character of Gabrielle, as portrayed by Eva Longoria, is first introduced at a friend's funeral service. She enters the scene dressed in a little black form-fitting dress, with the camera zoomed in first on her bare legs and then move upward towards the rest of her body, setting the stage and context for objectification of the character. Meanwhile, the narrator of the show, the recently-deceased friend Mary Alice, describes the dish Gabrielle is bringing to the wake as "spicy" as she states, "Gabrielle Solis who lives down the block, brought a spicy paella" (Cherry & McDougall, 2002). Mary Alice's commentary on the "spicy paella," conditions the television audience to perceive

Gabrielle as a spicy Latina. This juxtaposition of the dish and Gabrielle's personality is a clear objectification of Gabrielle's character and deepens the audience's subconscious interpretation of her as Ramirez-Berg's Harlot.

As we are introduced to Gabrielle, the camera angles and the dialogue are interspersed with "Latin themed" background music. As if this first encounter has not already painted the depiction of the stereotypical harlot, the background story of Gabrielle's role in the show proves to be even more blatantly discriminatory. Unlike the description of the other "desperate housewives" which include a divorced mother, a perfect mother, and a top-advertising-exec-turned-mother, Gabrielle's character is given a back story of a child-less gold digger with the narrator describing her as: "Since her modeling days in New York, Gabrielle developed a taste for rich food, and rich men." The introduction of Gabrielle in and of itself portrays to the audience a version of the Latina stereotype television viewers have been watching for decades, only these stereotypical references are masked by the narrator's dialogue and can go unnoticed.

In applying Ramirez-Berg's (2002) description of a Harlot as a "sex machine innately lusting for a white male," Gabrielle's character unsurprisingly and unfortunately fits the description all too well. Of all the main characters in the show's pilot episode, Gabrielle is the first to undress. Gabrielle seduces her gardener, a young White male, in order to have sex with him on her husband's \$23,000 table. The affair is depicted as a consistently reoccurring event, and even so, as the gardener repeatedly refuses her offer to have sex, Gabrielle effectively seduces him through the removal of her clothes. After the gardener pries Gabrielle about her motive behind cheating on her husband, she coldly alludes to Mary Alice's recent suicide, "because I don't want to wake up one morning with the sudden urge to blow my brains out" (Cherry & McDougall, 2002). Gabrielle's cold reference to Mary Alice's death portrays her as merciless, which suggests that her sexuality takes precedence over other emotions such as her grief over her friend's suicide. Overall, with the collection of this scene and other aspects of Gabrielle's behavior, the audience is given an accurate characterization of the Harlot stereotype, which has similarly plagued the acting roles of Latina actress Rita Moreno.

Beltran (2009) outlined several films in which Rita Moreno starred in that subjected her to similar roles like that of Eva Longoria's character. Beltran briefly describes a role in the film *Summer and Smoke* where like Gabrielle, Moreno is type casted as the wild daughter of a Casino owner. Very similar to Gabrielle in the sex scene with her gardener, Moreno's character Rosa shares similar traits to the desperate housewife as, "Rosa wears black, drinks, gambles, speaks her mind and flirts (2009, 80)." Like Moreno, the sexually frivolous and outspoken demeanor underlies much of Gabrielle's behavior in *Desperate Housewives* (2002) as well. Aside from particular Hollywood roles, as an actress Moreno received much of her publicity for being "sexy." For example, for nearly all of her Hollywood movies, the publicity ignored the content of the films themselves but instead focused on, 'tropicalism,' which characterizes Latinas as particularly passionate, hot, sensual and sexual" (Beltran, 2009, 74). Much of Moreno's career, including her publicity and acting roles, revolved around this notion of eroticism and heightened sexuality, which not only limited her versatility as an actress but resulted in a degrading depiction of Latinidad to viewers.

When positioning Rita Moreno's postwar situation against the current stereotypical and degrading portrayal of Eva Longoria in *Desperate Housewives* (2002),

it is unfortunate to say that the depiction of Latinas is not getting better. If anything, Latina roles have become increasingly more racy and revealing than they were previously. It is clear that such negative depictions and objectifications of Latinas are detrimental to the sense of self worth for Latina girls and women in the U.S. Images of Latinas that surface in the media prohibit Latinas from developing their own acting identities which then continues the cycle of repackaged portrayals of the Latina ethnic other. With this type of ignorance prevailing over Latinas' right to portray themselves without prejudice, television audiences should be encouraged to educate themselves about this injustice before indulging in such television shows. If self-education about the prevalence of these prejudices in the media doesn't prevail, Latina women like myself may forever be burdened with these stereotypes.

As I reflect on how the perpetuation of the Harlot characterization of Latinas by the media affects every day processes, I do not need to look farther than my own experiences. Growing with a Mexican mother and an African-American father, whenever anyone took notice of my Latina side, I consistently heard references to my "spiciness" or my "sexiness." Such interactions make me question how others define who and how I am as a Latina. The dangers of such media-influenced and pervasive stereotyping occurs when women like me feel that in order to be accepted I must conform to the expectations of others as sexy and spicy rather than to self-define my own identity of what it means.. With the history of Latina portrayals resembling the current state of Latinas today, it pains me to think that this history continues to be perpetuated.

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Miss America Beauty Pageant

Danielle Larson

The Miss America pageant has recently brought a sense of pride to the state of Wisconsin, as a representative of the state, Laura Kaeppler was crowned the 2012 winner (Miss America Organization, 2012), but the protesting and racism that cloud the pageant's history suggest that pride has not always been the strongest feeling associated with the contest (Curtiss, 1968). I remember watching *Miss America* on television with my mother when I was younger, and although I realized that swimsuit competition influences the "ideal body image", I never stopped to think about the other aspects of "ideal beauty" it reinforced. Personally, I think beauty pageants are an exaggeration of beauty and are also indicative of the overt sexualization of women in our society. In addition, the Miss America pageant is an indicator of the standards of beauty we place on women today, or how we think the ideal woman should look and act. It was not until I read "Dignity & Integrity" by Mary Beltrán (2009), who writes about the pageant's bias against Latina women (p. 66) that I realized how discriminatory the pageant really is. The fact that the Latino community created its own separate pageant to showcase its own ideas of beauty simply draws more light to the glaring faults with the current competition, including both the way in which it objectifies women and the racist ideals it has supported.

On the Miss America pageant website it uses the following quote from over seventy-five years ago to describe itself: "Miss America represents the highest ideals. She is a real combination of beauty, grace, and intelligence, artistic and refined. She is a type which the American Girl might well emulate" (2012). It makes sense that when the competition was started, its competitors were pretty Anglo women because clearly no one of other ethnicities could properly represent the specific type of beauty that the contest emphasized. The better-known areas in which the contestants compete are a swimsuit competition, where women's bodies are judged on their fitness, and a "formal wear" section, where the competitors dress in ball gowns and high heels to display their grace. This "ideal beauty" must not apply to Latinas, even though the media has portrayed Latinas as attractive: typically, Latina characters on the television and in movies are lusty and hot-tempered objects of desire (Ramírez-Berg, 2002). The term beautiful, then, was reserved for the white women, like Margaret Gorman, who is petite, brunette and was the first crowned Miss America in 1921 (Miss America Organization, 2012). For the first thirty-five years, the pageant banned non-whites from participating in it. In the fifty years that followed the removal of the ban, there were a handful of African American and Asian women who were winners, but a Latina has yet to wear the crown (Watson, 2009). With this blatant racism, it is no surprise that the Latino community found their own way to promote their seemingly less "refined" standards of beauty.

The states with the highest population of Latinos sent representatives to compete in the Miss Latina America pageant in 1983, as stated on the Miss US Latina website, to "be showcased in a program that would recognize their personal attributes beyond their physical beauty" (Organización Miss America Latina, Inc, 2012). This comes across as completely different from the Miss America pageant, whose mission statement includes

an emphasis on being “beautiful” and “refined”. I think the Latina version has a better, more admirable direction by stating that their goal is to focus on inner beauty. A pageant based primarily on physical beauty is not only more inherently racist in that a contestant can be deemed unsatisfactory based on the color of her skin, but it can also be damaging to the country as a whole, including the majority group of white Anglos, as it suggests that beauty is only skin deep.

The mere existence of beauty pageants is an indicator of the sexist direction in which our society has been traveling, mainly because they impose the idea that there are specific qualities that need to be present in order for someone to be considered “beautiful” and these qualities can inherently exclude entire races on the basis that they do not fit the typical model of a beautiful woman. It is troubling that we live in a world where we are being constantly bombarded by sex on the television and in the movies, yet we need to further exploit women by telling them to put on bathing suits and high heels and walk across a stage to prove that they are physically fit enough to represent their country (Miss America Organization, 2012). Although all women are objectified to a certain degree, there are differences based on race. Latina women are seen as “exotic”, and their appeal is primarily that their appearances are different from that of a typical white woman (Media portrayals of girls and women). In television shows and movies, the Latina women may seduce men into having affairs, or they briefly date them, but the men usually end up with the white woman (Ramírez-Berg, 2002), whose beauty has to do with a slender frame and light skin. She is generally submissive to the male, and is seen more as the prize waiting for him, and not another person with whom he will be sharing his life (Media portrayals of girls and women).

Despite Latinas being seen primarily as sex symbols, they have been unable to find their place in a contest that definitely plays upon sex appeal with its portions involving participants’ appearances in bikinis and ball gowns. The establishment of a different pageant for only Latinas was an attempt at being inclusive to Latinas and providing a space to demonstrate their own definition of beauty, which did not quite fit with the image-focused, outdated ideals of the Miss America pageant, but having a “Miss Latina US” pageant sounds ridiculous. As the “United” States of America, two separate contests should not exist. America is becoming a more diverse country, and when we crown a young woman as a representative of our country, she should represent everyone. In addition, I believe the competition should be redesigned to be more racially inclusive and less physically based. If the competition were changed and focused more on inner beauty, it would be far easier to forget racial problems and stop overtly sexualizing women.

In sum, both the standards Miss America pageant and the Latina pageant display the troubling emphasis placed upon women’s appearances. While the originally all-Anglo contest comes from a racist past, the Miss US Latina pageant was started in an attempt to give different women a chance to show their beauty. Both pageants attempt to emphasize something other than contestants’ appearances through interview portions, but something else needs to be done. To stop the racism, there should be only one beauty pageant for the US; women of all races would be able to participate, as long as they are American citizens. The pageant itself would be based more upon the character of the contestants than their bodies; the women who were showcased would be community leaders and intelligent scholars. Their fitness would have to play a part, as it is important

to emphasize taking care of one's body, but there would be an understanding that different women are built differently, and the pageant would be a celebration of these differences. Instead of analyzing the women's appearances, it would showcase the diverse women of the US and give the little girls who watch the pageant with their mothers an attainable standard of beauty.

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Authenticity of “Latinidad”

Norma Gallegos

The contribution of Desi Arnaz and Carmen Miranda was critical for the construction of today’s stereotypical characterization of the so-called “Latinidad” (Sandoval, 1999). During the 1940’s and 1950’s, the portrayal of Latinos within the film and television industry was mainly shaped by U.S. political and socioeconomic grounds. Latin America and Mexico became the providers of supplies and raw materials for the U.S., and in order to keep products coming in, the U.S. had to maintain good affairs with their neighbors in the South (Sandoval, 1999). There was no better way to keep close relations than ‘embracing’ the Latin culture, and that is where Arnaz and Miranda came into play and fit perfectly. Americans shaped the way Latinos were portrayed according to their supremacy and views. The white supremacy diminished the rich culture, the capacity, and the prestige of Latinos to a mockery, center of ethnic entertainment, exoticism, and sexual figures. They either did not know how to deal with the ‘exotic unknown,’ or were simply afraid of the ‘unknown’ (Sandoval, 1999). Arnaz and Miranda were identified as the “Latin foreign other” (Sandoval, 1999), both immigrants, inhabited and validated the Anglo-American culture imaginary.

Such is the case of Sofia Vergara’s role as Gloria Delgado-Pritchett in the ABC series *Modern Family* series. Gloria is clearly the “Latin foreign other,” (Sandoval, 1999) she is the exotic Colombian immigrant, erotic, passionate, young single mother who marries Jay Pritchett, an old, divorced, white businessman. As we can note in Gloria’s character, the ‘Latinidad’ imaginary remains in today’s media. Gloria is the typical trophy wife, besides being the exotic, sexualized Latina, which is highly reinforced with her attire. She wears tight jeans, tight shirts, and tight dresses. Moreover, her attire is characterized for using low-cut blouses and dresses. Her voluptuousness is always showing, very provocative and eye-catching. Gloria also speaks broken English with a heavy accent. Undoubtedly, she is a clearly representation that fulfills the Anglo-American expectation of entertainment and objectification of Latin women.

Gloria also portrays the “spitfire” (Ramirez-Berg, 2002) role by constantly screaming, and speaking in Spanish when she gets fed up. Being loud is one of the main characteristics of Gloria, to the point where it seems just to be her natural way of speaking. There is a misconception that if she does not yell, she will not be heard. In one of the episodes, everyone is mocking Gloria’s accent and mispronunciations. She tries to stop them several times by asking them politely and quietly to stop making fun her, but no one seems to listen to her and completely ignore her. Even Manny, her son, mocks her vanishes all respect towards her background. Gloria finally gets fed up and starts screaming at everyone asking them to leave her house.

At the same time she is the center of attention, making it very noticeable when Gloria is around, or when she is coming into a scene. Moreover, there is a sense that we should watch out when madness provokes Gloria to scream; in that case the ‘spitfire’ ‘Latinidad’ she carries emerges as a volcano in plenty eruption. It is very chaotic. In this sense, Gloria’s voice becomes a sort or noise or “sound” as described in Sandoval’s article (1999). The article asserts that lyrics in Latin music during Arnaz’s time

disappeared because Americans did not understand it; they just enjoyed the rhythms and the movements that the music incited. This is exactly what happens with Gloria's character, it is very hard to understand her heavy accent, thus the character has to give the audience something else to laugh about, and keep them entertained. Gloria screams in a very particular and foreign way that makes her very unique. As a result of this shouting uniqueness, it works perfectly fine for the entertainment of the white-American audiences.

The constant screaming of Gloria is not the only problematic stereotype of Latinas being 'spitfire.' Strong accent and mispronunciations are a constant cause of misunderstandings leading to conflicts, which in result leads Gloria to scream, thus the situation becomes an amusing moment. Her accent and mispronunciations are just some of the reminders that Gloria is foreign. The other characters, specially Jay (husband), are continuously reinstating that she came from Colombia, that things are done differently in the U.S. hence she needs to understand that fact, and that she needs to be clear when speaking so misunderstandings do not happen as often. According to Sandoval, "reenacting and reaffirming their foreignness, nationality, and ethnicity" (199) are some of the strongest implements to reinforce stereotypes. Beltrán (2009) argues in *The Good Neighbor on Prime Time*, that Latin accents overwhelmingly marked roles as comic or villainous. In Gloria's case, her accent is being utilized as a comic construction of stereotypes; her voice becomes more like sounds rather than constructive conversations. All of these stereotypes belittle Gloria's culture, the authenticity of the Colombian community, and at the same time, reinforces the sexualizing stereotype of Latinas.

Modern Family also concretely introduced the Latino male stereotypes into the series by presenting Manny's father. In the episode *Up All Night*, Manny's father was introduced for the first and last time in the series, at least up to this point. He was the exotic, adventurous, irresponsible, unreliable father who could never keep a promise to Manny. He was a lot younger than Jay, and had the sculpted Latin body giving him the smooth look of a stereotypical "Latin lover" (Ramirez, 2002). Overall, Manny's father was portrayed as a bad role model to follow. But regardless of the absence of Manny's father, Manny has 'inherited' the 'Latin lover' side of his father. Even though, Manny's behavior is presented as a charming, innocent way of looking at women at that age, he is constantly trying to seduce to get his teacher to be his girlfriend, and behaves gentle in front of women, just as 'Latin lover' would do to get what he wants.

Despite decades that have past, all of these stereotypes are still viewed by the Anglo audiences as an 'authentic' part of the Latino community. But who draws the line of authenticity? The characters? The audiences? Or the film and television industry? Obviously not the community being 'represented,' but the audience being entertained. Sofia Vergara has been criticized for exaggerating her accent in *Modern Family*, but she claims that she is being herself, and that she speaks with that accent everywhere and all the time. In fact, she does speak with an accent in interviews, however, comparing her actual accent to some of her old commercials or films, her accent is not as heavy as it is in *Modern Family*. I would attempt to say that Sofia has embraced, to some extent, Gloria's accent so strongly that has become a part of her. It has become some sort of trademark that gives her fame and recognition.

Sofia's situation reminds me of Miranda's controversial situation during the 1930's and 1940's. Miranda was brought to the United States from Brazil as a form and

sign that the U.S. was interested in creating good relationships with their neighbors in the South (Sandoval, 1999). Miranda's roles were always exotic, sexualized, and did go beyond singing and dancing. She soon became a product of her personification, her "exhibitionism was restricted to the spectacular staging of a cornucopia of agricultural commodities" (Sandoval, 1999). She became a trademark, a product used by the United States to get commodities from the South. Gloria's case and character is different. She is not being used as a source to get commodities or to create good relations with other countries, although her character still is a source of entertainment, mockery, and exoticness. Miranda's and Vergara's frame times are very far apart, times have changed, but the stereotypes have remained. It is distressful, but not surprising, to see Miranda's experiences still reflected in today's society and as part of our culture. Sofia Vergara is one of the examples. She seems to have embraced so much her accent that it has become her trademark. For as long as stereotypes are reinforced and celebrated through television and film industry, stereotypes will not be replaced with the real authenticity of the Latino community.

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Standing and Delivering Latin@ Portrayal

Edith Flores

Stand and Deliver, directed by Ramon Menendez, dates back to the year 1988. Although it is argued that the film is frequently used for educational purposes I argue that it is an outlet to display Latin@ stereotypes (Jesness, 2002). The film deals with the challenge teacher Jaime Escalante encounters when he decides to teach math in a high poverty and crime activity neighborhood school in East Los Angeles. *Stand and Deliver* is a film that clearly establishes stereotypes about Latin@s through the limited portrayal of women, the undermining of student academic success, and their distortion of respect.

One of the first scenes of the movie presents a Latina in a sexual context. Actress Ingrid Oliu wears provocative clothing during one of Jaime's first classes, and this scene calls for special attention. Ingrid wears a tiny dress that reveals a considerable amount of skin, and she sits on one of her male classmate's lap. Not only does Ingrid wear a short dress, sits on her classmate's lap, but she also asks Jaime to discuss a sex related topic while being in math class. The scene was very short and the primary goal was to reveal Ingrid's sexual image and behavior by distinctly focusing the camera on her full body figure in the dress. Why did the female who was related to a sexual context have to be Latina? In fact, why was the scene even included? This scene did not contribute to any of the background themes of the movie and it was used to depict a Latin@ stereotype of women being directly associated as sexual objects.

Another instance where Latina female representation is limited to a stereotype is with another student in Escalante's math class. Anita was a student who had a lot of potential to succeed, and in fact was one of the brightest students in math class. The only problem was that Anita's father made her temporarily quit school to work at the family's restaurant as a waitress. The father simply did not believe Anita had potential to succeed. Ana's father discredited her intelligence by limiting her to a traditional Latina female role as one who serves a better purpose as a waitress or being of service to others. Anita's father wanted to impose his power by making her drop school even if she did like being studious. Anita's father gives off this *machista* attitude by making it clear that he would do as he pleased with his daughter because he had the ability or the right to do so. I believe it was a double Latin@ stereotype very well crafted. On the one side it was a Latina serving others, and on the other side was her father imposing his role as the man of the family by clearly stating that whatever he said was what had to be done (*Stand and Deliver*, 1988).

There is a sense of empowerment with Anita's father and also within the school administration which add to the stereotypes of Latin@s. Anita's father and school administrators believed they were in the position of power to either decide or know what people are capable of. An incident happens when an administrative entity at Garfield High School expresses her belief that the students are "illiterate" (*Stand and Deliver*, 1988), and that they basically cannot learn calculus. Escalante tells his student "There are some people in this world who assume you know less than you do because of your name and your complexion" (Maslin, 1988). In this sense Jaime is correct because people tend to have low expectations or no expectations at all just because students are Latin@s. So

by being Latin@ one basically becomes part of a group of people who is seen as having no potential and our ability to succeed academically is undermined. This is another stereotype commonly seen towards the Latin@ community to degrade Latin@ ability.

Further support for undermining Latin@s academic success is offered when the Calculus test administrators doubt the accuracy and honesty with which students in Escalante's class passed the exam. After the student's and Jaime's hard work, dedication, and frustration spent trying to prepare for the exam the student's scores were questioned. Why was it so hard for the test administrators to believe in the legitimacy of Garfield's high school students' exam scores? Their doubts came in because they did not think Latin@s were able to successfully pass an exam without cheating. Fourteen of Jaime's students in total passed the Calculus AB exam on the first try, and this fact was too much for test administrators to accept. Therefore, they allowed their racist bias interfere with the fair treatment of the students when they displayed their belief of Latin@s not being capable of succeeding academically. The test administrators doubts were so pressing that they made twelve of the students retake the calculus exam, and to the surprise of the administrators the students scored the same or better than the last AP exam. This is a perfect example of how the integrity of a group of people is questioned because they are Latin@s and it further supports the stereotype of their undermined academic success.

Last but not least, there was also the stereotypical representation of Latin@s not having a sense of what respect is. The most impacting image is when the students are throwing paper balls to and at Mr. Escalante on the first days of school. Mr. Escalante was an authority figure in the school, but the students chose to disrespect him. The students threw paper balls all over the room, they talked about Jaime, were not really engaged in class, often complained about work and ultimately did not have respect for one another. When Mr. Escalante asks if there is anybody in class who does not speak English two students raise their hands and are then moved to the front of the room. While this happens the students are on the background giggling, still throwing paper balls, and complaining because they had to give up their seat-being plain disrespectful. The classroom could have easily been full of Latin@s whose academic success was already undermined, but instead there was an additional stereotype depicted.

The question, yet again, is why this movie had such a stereotypical perception of Latin@s? The general U.S. audience is used to seeing movies on stereotypical roles about Latin@s, so when the movies part from the "norm" the target groups start altering the rating of these movies. When the rating of these movies are altered producers are prone to have their movies fail, and it is not convenient for their economic standing. The media and its audience constantly manipulate one another to provide income or entertainment and that is one of the reasons why there are so many Latin@ stereotypes.

It is clear that Latinos in *Stand and Deliver* are portrayed as a group who is always doubted and needs constant guidance in order to succeed. This statement, in a way, says something about Latin@s not being able to reach success or outperform others solely relying on their own will. Although the troublesome exam scores situation eventually improved there will always be that memory of Latin@s being "cheaters." No matter how many movies are made to redeem the stereotypes *Stand and Deliver* showed about Latin@s the preconception will always be in the mind of the audience.

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