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Pop Goes La Cultura: American Pop Culture's Perpetuation of Latino Paradigms and Stereotypes

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The purpose of this article is to examine and analyze the perpetuation of Latino stereotypes and paradigms within American Pop Culture. Throughout the history of America, pop culture seems to have its place both in our communities and in our individual lifestyles alike. This encompassing conduit of everyday ideals is a constant in the minds of many Americans. Since America has blossomed and flourished into the "Great Melting Pot" of the world, it is safe to say that American Pop Culture ideals have had an immense effect on America's inhabitants and their lives. Specifically, Latino Americans have been one of the minority groups affected by the overpowering atmosphere of American Pop Culture. Within the context of modern day realism, Latinos are currently the "U.S.'s largest minority group, and have become the latest main target of racism" (Guo & Harlow, 2014, p. 286).

From having biased and stereotypical paradigms of Latino Americans perpetuated throughout pop culture to distorting the family social interaction within many Latino households, American Pop Culture plays a more important role in the portrayal of Latino Americans than previously thought. Within different venues of American Pop Culture, Latinos stereotypes are common and within films and television, actors negatively portray them as unintelligent. Specific caricatures such as the overly sexual character, gangster, snazzy entertainer, and the illegal immigrant are examples of negative stereotypes that constitute the image of Latinos within the community (Roman, 2000). La Pierre (1999) agrees that the media has illustrated Latinos as "poor, coming from low-socioeconomic status, and lazy" (p. 3).

With regard to defining pop culture as a social construct, Murphy (2009) argues that pop culture as a whole encompasses "the beliefs and practices that make up a society," ones that we collectively deem as being "cool," attractive, and that allow us to feel like we belong (para. 2). Cohesively, Alkalay-Gut's (2005) scholarly review of Anne Sexton's literary works in reference

to pop culture presents the idea that pop culture's meaning resides within society's "contemporary concepts of art and identity" (p. 51). A more concrete and in depth definition that unifies these generalized and abstract definitions is explained thoroughly in Maudlin and Sandlin's (2015) analytical approach to pop culture's pedagogies. Specifically, Maudlin and Sandlin define the construct of pop culture as "the broad range of texts that constitute the cultural landscape of a particular time and or place," taking into consideration that a "text is any artifact or experience that can be read to produce meaning" (p. 369). In addition, within the latter definition the array of pop culture venues included are radio, music, theatre, fashion, television, social media, art, and literature. In reference to this paper's foundational arguments, Maudlin and Sandlin's definition of pop culture will be used to evaluate and analyze media content.

Conceptual Definitions

In order to understand the concept of Latino subordination within American Pop Culture, several key terms are defined. First is the idea of white culture: Gulati-Partee and Potapchuk (2014) define white culture as the "dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning" (p. 27), apparent today within most, if not all, institutions in the United States. In addition, they add that white culture defines to the majority in America what is "normal, professional, and even good" (p. 27). Another term defined is the overarching idea of a stereotype. Although there are many scholarly definitions of stereotypes, Judd and Park's (1993) definition seems to fit the best in the context of this paper. According to these authors, "a stereotype is an individual's set of beliefs about the characteristics or attributes of a group" (p.110). In this case, the negative Latino stereotype within the United States is the representative

belief of what the majority of America has characterized Latinos to be due to the negative depictions shown through the array of pop culture venues.

Selection Criteria for Materials

My own impressions and personal experiences were the criteria for selecting the specific media presented within this paper. As a young Latino student within the twenty-first century, I am immersed within the realm of pop culture, experiencing new media sources.   I observed firsthand all the selected media (film, television, and web videos) discussed in this paper. The specific media sources discussed made such an impression on me that each independent example became a source to further discuss and connect to the paper's main idea of Latino subordination within American Pop Culture. The movies and primetime TV shows discussed within this paper include *Scarface*, *Mi Vida Loca*, *The George Lopez Show*, *Jane the Virgin*, *Gilmore Girls*, and a couple of YouTube web series. By no means does this sample of media cover the entire pop culture spectrum pertaining to Latino stereotypes.

Moreover, the media examples presented in this paper help demonstrate Latino misrepresentation and subordination within American Pop Culture. For example, in the primetime television show, *Gilmore Girls*, the protagonist (Rory, who is white) encounters a lot of obstacles but not to the extent as the Latina female characters later discussed in this paper. Consequently, I compared the portrayal of Rory's story against that of Jane and Carmen (i.e., *Jane the Virgin* and *The George Lopez Show*). By comparing Rory's struggles with other Latino characters from different television shows, one may be able to see the distinctions on how white privilege seems to be an important differentiating factor. Finally, the selected television shows in this paper were used due to their pop culture popularity. Some of the media sources presented

have a cult following, are considered classics (i.e., *Scarface*), or have become mainstream television shows (i.e., *Jane the Virgin*). In the case of the YouTube channels created by Shane Dawson and Eric Ochoa, their web series have millions of followers.

Literature Review

People of Hispanic background appear to be portrayed on the lower end of the social and economic spectrum in whatever media context they are referenced. In a study conducted by Rivadeneyra (2006) in the J*ournal of Adolescent Research* (p. 37) Latino high school student participants were asked to watch an array of clips from primetime television shows such as *NYPD*, *George Lopez*, *Will & Grace*, and several others. The students rated whether they perceived the portrayal of Latinos as accurate or stereotypical. Rivadeneyra took several students' comments into account and many when addressing the Latino fictional characters on screen, referred to them as "they" (p. 407). The participants watched a video clip of *Will & Grace* that contained a conversation between Rosario (house cleaner) and her employer Karen (rich white woman). The scene where Karen tells Rosario that she is just here to "wash her bras," demonstrates how Latinos are subordinated within mainstream American television (p. 411). After watching the *Will & Grace* video clip, a female participant commented, "They come over here and cut grass, but that isn't everyone so they shouldn't just use that. They all have different jobs and go to college and stuff" (Rivadeneyra, 2006, p. 405). From this participant's language and overall evaluation of the video clip, the predominant effects of negative stereotypes are clear among Latino youth. The results among the Latino participants in correspondence to the overall study, display the effects of assimilation. Golash-Boza (2006) states that assimilation is best understood "as the process by which immigrants are incorporated into host society" (p. 29). In

sum, it would seem that the white culture defines what is normal or standardized in American society. If one does not fit this description, then the only alternative that many young Latinos see is to accept the stereotypes perpetuated by white Americans.

Additionally, Blacks as another minority group, have also been affected by the negative images of them portrayed in television. By having frequent exposure to stereotypical portrayals as unintelligent, lazy, and criminals, these depictions have led many youths within the Black community to have both a lower sense of "self-esteem and racial self-esteem" (Ward, 2004, p. 285). This also is true in regards to Latino culture as the same bias is in effect.

Moreover, Hispanics are grouped together as one coherent group without taking into consideration differing cultures. According to Bayley (2014), the term "Hispanic is used constantly in government documents to describe all persons who identify as such, with origins from Latin America." This "blanket term" masks a "great deal of diversity" within the Latino community (p. 537). In a study by the Pew Hispanic Center, Motel and Patten (2012) recognized these Hispanic cultural groups, "Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Salvadorans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Hondurans, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians," as the ten largest Hispanic origin groups in the United States (p. 3). Consequently, throughout this paper the term Latinos/Latinas is referenced to describe the aforementioned ethnic cultural groups.

Hollywood's Negative Characterization of Latinos

Historically, Hollywood movies have negatively characterized Latinos. Guo and Harlow (2014) believe that within the film industry, "Hispanic people are universally depicted as criminals, invaders, a threat to national security, culturally different, and job thieves" (p. 286). Accordingly, big screen movie productions such as *Scarface* and *Mi Vida Loca* (my crazy life)

highlight Latinos as criminals. The movie *Scarface*, created by Oliver Stone in 1983, filled with action-oriented content, drastically affirms the Latino stereotype within American society. The Italian American actor, Al Pacino, plays the main character Scarface, who along with the main supporting characters, depict the roles of Cuban-Americans who are drug dealers. The fictional characters, for the most part, are uneducated, live a life of violence, and portray the view that this is the only possible "Latin American Dream" (Roman, 2000, p. 42). The "Latin American Dream" refers to the idea of Latinos reaching a higher socioeconomic status through alternative pathways which Scarface achieved by becoming a drug lord. In addition, the film characters in Scarface live lavish lifestyles at the cost of both moral degradation and disregard for ethical standards due to the corruption affiliated with the drug industry. The focus of Scarface's actions is to become rich and to choose money versus morality, a theme that the film seems to emphasize in the characterization of Scarface.

Overall, the movie conveys that success within the Latino community is only available to those who defy all human and law-abiding characteristics. The characters in *Scarface* attained their lavish lifestyles through illegal actions. Indeed, "Murder, blood, gore, and drug dealing" are their pathways for social progress; as opposed to obtaining a higher educational degree in order to receive the same kind of upper class life as whites (Roman, 2000, p. 43).

Similarly, the 1993 film *Mi Vida Loca*, created by Allison Anders, does injustice to Latinos. This film revolves around the life of Mexican-Americans growing up in Echo Park, a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood in Los Angeles with low socioeconomic status (Mapping Central L.A., 2016). The main character, Sad Girl, spends her time with her group of Latina *cholas*. Harris (1994) explains that a chola is "considered to be the female version of a gang member or the gang girl" (p. 290). As represented by racially constructed paradigms, Sad Girl

and her best friend Mousey, "fight over the affection of Ernesto, the father of both of their unborn babies" (Roman, 2000, p. 44). The dramatized urban gang life shown in this film undermines and portrays Latinas as "ghetto mothers" rather than being successful women.

In *Mi Vida Loca*, the Latina characters throughout the film act as sexual partners instead of powerful women. Rodriguez (1997) states that in media, Latinas are typically portrayed as "passive, dependent, and with an unreserved sexual appetite," ultimately reinforcing a negative Latina image overall (p. 2). Roman (2000) further explains that Latina female power is assumed to only come from "sexual prowess or promise" instead of personal achievements and self-confidence (p. 39). In hindsight, the media rarely portrays Latinos as working professionals; limiting their roles such as a "business leader or ranking government official" (Roman, 2000, p. 42). Furthermore, the overall context of the film *Mi Vida Loca* displays "the crazy life" young Latinos are supposedly living without taking into account actual Latino reality within the United States (Roman, 2000, p. 43).

As a whole, Latino youth may perceive their own culture negatively due to the projected subordination in media. Consequently, they do not see themselves as people of worth and value, but instead as constituents of a subordinate group within American society. The idea of Latino youth separating themselves from their own culture and believing the negative views on Latino identity, as portrayed by media, becomes justified and standardized.

Primetime Television Show Analysis

Television has been one of the foremost mediums used to display Latino misrepresentation and subordination within the context of American Pop Culture. Since its inception in the 1950s, television has evolved from only a few channels to the thousands

currently available to consumers, and the popularity of the medium plays an important role in the

perceptions of Latinos. For years, television show creators have imposed negative traits on

Latino characters, including being uneducated, unmotivated, poverty-stricken, lazy, criminals,

and as people who appear only to work jobs such as maids, janitors, or gardeners. Latinos, just

like other American racial minority groups, have a stereotyped clone of themselves perpetuated

throughout television.

Two primetime television shows that perpetuate the Latino bias include *The George*

Lopez Show and *Jane the Virgin*. In contrast, in the show *Gilmore Girls,* there is a distinct

portrayal of the status quo that upholds white privilege and presents hegemonic ideologies.

The George Lopez Show

The first episode of *The George Lopez Show* aired on March 27, 2002 and the show's

opening song titled "Low Rider," performed by War, is about low-rider cars popular during the

1970s in certain Los Angeles Latino communities. Most of the show's story line draws from

Lopez's personal life experiences. The supporting characters in the show include George's wife

Angie, who is Cuban American, 15-year-old daughter Carmen, 12-year-old son Max, and

George's mother Benny, who is an alcoholic and lives with the family. The show depicts Benny

as careless and unloving, and who, as a single mother, raised George. Analysis for this show is

limited because the series references Lopez's actual life, however, one key difference between

Lopez's real life and "stage life" is the portrayal of the character Maximilian "Max" Lopez

(George's fictional son), possibly added to the show to create depth and dimension. In the show,

Max is dyslexic and enrolled in a special education program. Primarily, the negative depictions

of Max and Carmen reflect the bias against Latinos within American television since both

promote naivety and ignorance. Additionally, throughout the series, both posed behavior problems and criminal activity making it difficult for them to make the school honor roll. As minorities in their schools, they are often ridiculed and look down on by their peers because they are less well off financially.

The show's main character, George Lopez, a Latino who plays the father figure, works as a manager for a factory that makes airplane parts. He has dyslexia (which Lopez does not have in real life), and is constantly making condescending, crude, and obnoxious statements in what many would consider a parody of contemporary "Spanglish." With this in mind, it is easy to see the biases within the plot line of the show, begging the questions: Why not have both parents be educated? Why not have Carmen and Max as college bound students? Why not have Max be a positive ethical role model for others? It would seem that a possible answer to these questions is that the white culture continues to develop roles that stereotype Latinos in media. The George Lopez Show characters display traits that do not allow for any aspirations to higher education, a high sense of intelligence, or characteristics of leadership. Instead, the characters are placed within the confines of stereotypes that condone educational complacency, subjugate Latino leadership, and do not allow for positive progression. More concerning is that non-Latino media viewers may actually believe the negative depictions of Latinos to be true of this group.

Jane the Virgin

Jane the Virgin, created by Jenni Synder Urman, is a satirical romantic comedy-drama that originally aired on October 13, 2014. The show's protagonist, Jane Villanueva, is a super-achieving Venezuelan woman who earned straight A's throughout high school, was her high school's valedictorian, and graduated from the University of Miami with a teaching degree. The

show's holistic framework goes on to emphasize the naivety that continues to exist in America in regards to the Latino community. Jane's story is a perfect example of how American television marginalizes Latinos. Jane's ultimate goal is to be a writer; she continually submits her short stories to several publications in order to get her name established in the published community. Eventually she gets one of her short stories published by *The Cleveland Times* and successfully applies to graduate school in order to further her intellectual capacity as a creative writer. Everything seems to be going extremely well for Jane until the stigma of being a Latina in America surfaces. During a routine visit to her to her gynecologist, Jane is accidentally artificially inseminated and thus the paradigm persists. The show perpetuates the view that Latina women grow up only to get pregnant and bear children at a relatively young age, making the possibility of success more difficult to achieve. Currently, within American television, rarely is a Latina represented in a high profile position such as a CEO of a highly successful company. Instead, American television seems to portray characters of Latina women whose sole purpose in life is motherhood. This brings to mind the question, "Why not have Latina characters in roles where they gain personal success or become triumphant in their career achievements?"

In *Jane the Virgin,* the main character, Jane, seems to have the characteristics of a future success story until an unforeseen event alters the course of her life. These subliminal portrayals of racial subordination may give the impression to the Latino community that "yes you can achieve but not too much" and "yes you can prosper but make sure you do not forget where your place is in society." Although there is no arguing that the American Dream is possible for every individual within the United States to achieve, for Jane, an educated Latina, the path to success seems to be more rigorous. As a result, Jane in comparison to Rory, the white female character in *Gilmore Girls* discussed in this paper, seems to remain subordinated.

Additionally, the title *Jane the Virgin*, references a religious figure and speaks for itself both explicitly and figuratively. In the show, after word gets out that Jane has become pregnant without losing her virginity, she suddenly becomes the transcendent being of the present day Virgin de Guadalupe (i.e., Virgin Mary). Jane's name is recognized everywhere and people come from all over come to see and hug the "*holy*" mother who can perform miracles. The show's plot line may seem to be innocent among viewers to the extent that one can believe Latino power and culture are strengthened due to universal admiration and captivation. However, the outward representation acts as a façade, hiding that which is actually portrayed. Viewers may not know that within the Latino culture, not everyone is a practicing Roman Catholic and that the Virgin de Guadalupe is a religious icon revered mostly by the citizens of Mexico. Among non-Latino viewers, the idea of a religious icon universally adhered to a Latin television character in a premier role, may create a false affirmation that could be associated with every member of the Latino culture. This further gives the impression that as a Latina, Jane's destiny is to overcome mishaps and life challenges. In addition, the use of religion in Jane's story creates a false sense of security and appears to act as a source of rationalization towards Latino subordination. Even though Jane is going through hard times in her life, the hopefulness associated with Catholicism displays to viewers that it does not matter what she is going through because eventually she will be saved. Rather, Jane should expect to have a successful life, given her education, without having to endure such challenging obstacles.

Gilmore Girls

One crucial example of a television series in which representation of white privilege is visible is the *Gilmore Girls*, which first aired in October 2000 on Warner Brothers Television

and created by Amy Sherman-Palladino. The show revolves around two white main female characters, Lorelai and her daughter Rory. The premise of the show is about a single mother raising her daughter. The mother, Lorelai, gives birth to her daughter Rory during her teenage years and raises her alone under very humble and modest terms. Rory's father also wants to remain a part of his daughter's life. Lorelai runs away from her mansion home, leaving behind her Ivy-League educated parents and giving up her private school education. Her daughter, Rory, grows up to be an intellectual and brilliant young woman to the extent that she becomes valedictorian of her private school (which her wealthy grandparents pay for as a loan to Lorelai) and earns acceptance letters from Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. With this in mind, the contrasting ideals between *Gilmore Girls* and the storylines of *The George Lopez Show* and *Jane the Virgin* is obvious to see. Despite the fact that Rory was not raised by both of her parents and being predominantly poor, she goes on to achieve academic success. On the other end of the character spectrum, George Lopez's family is constantly bombarded by life struggles. Moreover, George Lopez's children do not succeed to Rory's level. In fact, in the show, Lopez's daughter, Carmen, receives rejection letters from Northwestern and Columbia, universities that would have admitted Rory. In addition, the character in *Jane the Virgin* is the Latina mirror reflection of Rory (valedictorian, bright, etc.), yet she still falls under the subordinate paradigm of what Latinas are "supposed" to be. Jane's grades and positive characteristics do not matter; it would seem only her race stands in the way of becoming a successful role model that non-Latino viewers would view as acceptable. In sum, one can conclude there seems to be a double standard among television storylines created by white individuals in regards to how they represent Latino characters.

YouTube Channel Web Series

Social media platforms of popular consumption have revolutionized the contemporary social atmosphere and mindsets of many individuals throughout the United States. In view of this, the popular social media video sharing website YouTube has become a daily interaction of leisure within the lives of Americans. Lavaveshkul (2012) substantiates this claim with statistics for YouTube social media viewers. On average, "Two million videos per minute are viewed on YouTube" worldwide and "2.9 billion hours a month watching YouTube videos" (p. 370). The appeal of YouTube and its transformative nature of self-progression is widely recognized as a platform for stardom. Not only does YouTube provide users a forum, but also an opportunity to showcase personal talent and to "become famous all on a 'shoe-string' budget" (Lavaveshkul, 2012, p. 371). Individuals from diverging cultures and perspectives from all over the world can create YouTube "channels" hoping their web series become the next popular cultural phenomenon. Gaining international fame and wealth through YouTube video channels is not something new, as several notable YouTube celebrities can attest. For example, famous YouTubers Michelle Phan and PewDiePie (Felix Kjellberg) , both ordinary people, are two of the most widely recognized YouTube stars. Their YouTube channels have eight million and forty-two million plus subscribers, respectively, and for their contributions towards the web community, they are paid substantially (Phan, n.d.; Ulf-Kjellberg, n.d.). Forbes ranks Michelle Phan at number seven on their list of the "World's Top Earning YouTube 2015 Stars" with earnings of 3 million dollars. PewDiePie was ranked number one on the list with earnings of over \$12 million (Berg, 2015). As the appeal is apparent, many "star struck" individuals will do whatever it takes to reach a one in a million chance lifestyle.

Producers of YouTube web series videos "showcasing mainstream racial ideologies have attracted the largest audiences on YouTube," therefore indicating intentional racial subordination (Guo & Harlow, 2014, p. 282). Guo and Harlow (2014) shed light on these abundant video depictions of racial subordination, which suggests the apparent use of racial stereotypes in order to attract viewers. Two famous video YouTubers, who depict stereotypes of racial groups, including Latinos, are Shane Dawson and Eric Ochoa. Dawson, who is white, is one of the world's most recognized web media stars with over seven million YouTube channel subscribers (Dawson, n.d.). He has acquired his pinnacle pop culture status by depicting racist clones of several ethnicities. Some of Dawson's famous video fictitious characters include Shanaynay, a Black foul-mouthed diva and Fruit Lupe, a ditzy Hispanic *chola* who never has anything intelligent to say. An interesting fact is that Shane Dawson plays the roles of all his video characters. These characters are humorous in content and overall exaggeration, and that is where the fault within Dawson's foundation lies. Dawson may not want to cause any harm or degrade minorities, but in the end, the idea of using race in his videos inevitably does cause harm. He has a large audience, and he is aware that his web videos make people laugh at the expense of stereotyping Latinos and Blacks. His videos have even achieved international acclaim because of the level of crudeness and misrepresented behavior of minorities. The intentional use of these harmful and ignorant character depictions negatively effects the image of Latinos and Blacks beyond the United States.

Historically, Blacks have been portrayed as "sexually preoccupied, lazy, shiftless, and even buffoon like" while Hispanics are viewed as having a "zoo appeal" and considered "problem people" based on their overall interactions in society (Bloomquist, 2015, p. 413; La Pierre, 1999, p. 3). In comparison, the image and overall illustration that society has painted

within the social landscape, with regard to both Black and Latino representation, resonates well within Dawson's fictional characters. As an example, Dawson's character Shanaynay, constantly says what is on her mind using very explicit sexual innuendos and racist comments, while Fruit Lupe iterates *chola*-like statements that exaggerate the *Chola* stereotype.

In comparison, Eric Ochoa (who created his Supereego YouTube channel) knows the path to success; his channel series has over two million subscribers and millions more in the number of total views (Ochoa, n.d.). Though it may not be Ochoa's intent to cause malice or harm through his videos by negatively portraying different minorities as a means to appeal to the masses, he inevitably causes damage to their image. Similar to Dawson, Ochoa creates and plays most of the roles of his video characters. One ironic element to Ochoa's racial depictions of Latinos is that he happens to be Latino. Themes such as *"Cholo Adventures, Mexican Moms, and Latinas Be Like…"* are abundant within Ochoa's YouTube videos. He confidently makes the most efficient use of these negative paradigms for his own popularity gain. For example, in the video episode titled "Cholo Adventures 1: The Cholos," Ochoa and a friend portray a Cholo caricature, thus perpetuating the Latino stereotype. They also use excessive profanity, sexual innuendos, and behave immaturely (Ochoa, 2008). According to Trujillo and Lopez (2011), Ochoa's portrayal of the *Cholo* stereotype, "violates the limits of accepted meaning" therefore making the "portrayal completely unbelievable" (p.154). The danger here is that Ochoa's video characters may be believable to his web audience. His over-exaggerated depiction of *Cholos* creates a façade for his viewers that contradicts the true reality of Latinos.   In another video titled "Mexican Moms," Ochoa presents the viewers with what he believes to be typical behavior of a Mexican mother. In this video, Ochoa has a male friend dress up as a Latina woman by putting on an apron and a wig. As the video proceeds, the Latina character asks her son to

translate some papers she received in the mail (as if this is the behavior of all Latina mothers). The mother in this story frequently yells loudly to her children. From here, it is fair to note that one cannot generalize that all Latina mothers speak only Spanish and treat their children in the same manner. There is a part in this video when the Latina mom is gossiping with a friend about another woman. Suddenly, to save face, she acts surprised and happy when the woman she is gossiping about enters her home (Ochoa, 2012). This specific scene promotes the idea that Latina mothers love to gossip; however, non-Latino viewers may generalize that this is true of all Latina mothers. Lastly, in a different video episode titled, "Latinas be Like," another male friend of Ochoa's plays the role of a Latina woman. He dances wildly and in an over-sexualized manner, uses profanity and inappropriate language, and even starts fighting with another Latina woman who is also portrayed by a male (Ochoa, 2015). Here again Ochoa perpetuates Latino stereotypes.

Ochoa, as a young leader in the YouTube video community, should consider representing progressive Latino characters that would positively affect the image of the Latino community. Although YouTube can create social divides and further racist views, it can also serve as a medium for Latinos to combat social stigmas and overall Latino misrepresentation (Trujillo & Lopez, 2011). Therefore, Ochoa's use of Latino stereotypes, created to gain popularity, further fuels the emergent pop culture fad of Latino subordination for both personal and economic gain.

Latinos in Media across the Span of Time

One important observation with regard to the selected media within this paper is the misrepresentation of Latinos across the span of time. The list of media sources date back as early as 1983 (i.e., *Scarface*) to 2014 (i.e., *Jane the Virgin*). One key difference is that the earlier

sources depict a full array of Latino stereotypes, subordination, and overall representation in an overt manner. For example, in *Scarface*, the characters overtly engage in drug deals and commit acts of violence, with no attempt made to hide their illegal activities. Additionally, in the 1993 film *Mi Vida Loca*, negative Latino stereotypes are over dramatized (i.e., gang activity). In comparing these older movies to the previously discussed *The George Lopez Show (*aired in 2002), a much subtle representation and subordination of Latinos is presented. For example, in *The George Lopez Show*, the characters live a middle class lifestyle, the family has a nice home, the children attend school, the parents work decent paying jobs, and for the most part, they appear to be happy. However, in analyzing this television show, one can see they are not represented in a way that corresponds positively to that of the picturesque white American television family.

Similar to the movie and television selections already addressed in this paper, negative representations of Latino stereotypes are also visible in Shane Dawson and Eric Ochoa's YouTube videos (2008-2015 timeframe). As stated earlier, Dawson seems to focus on an array of minority stereotypes including Latinos, through the portrayal of his characters (i.e., Shanaynay and Fruit Lupe). Like Dawson, Ochoa does not hold back in using Latino stereotypes in his videos (i.e., Cholos, Mexican Moms, and Latinas) and these stereotypes seem to be the focal points in many of his videos with descriptive, Latino-based titles such as *Cholo Adventures, Mexican Moms, and Latinas Be Like.* In fact, it is safe to say that in order to appeal specifically to their respective channel followers, negative Latino stereotypes are over-exaggerated. In contrast, Dawson and Ochoa also share a subliminal approach of Latino subordination as represented in the modern selections (i.e., *The George Lopez Show* and *Jane the Virgin*). The interesting thing here is that Dawson and Ochoa dress up as their characters as they made find it

easier to follow their own scripts behind a costume than in their own real-life persona. As YouTubers, it seems that Dawson and Ochoa are not restricted as to what they can say in their web series unlike actors, who read the script written by someone else. Therefore, hiding behind their dramatized characters seems to act as a source of rationalization for both Dawson and Ochoa; in this way, they can justify "playing out" the stereotype views of Latinos already held in the minds of Americans.

Conclusion

Within the parameters of the United States, pop culture and the media entertainment industry have a designated place to flourish and become vital. What needs to be changed are the negative reflections throughout pop culture mediums that we collectively use every day. Cracking jokes about race or ethnicity may harmlessly fuel universal laughter and overall ratings for television shows and video views. However, where do we draw the line between teasing and habitual degradation of a group of American people who only want the best for themselves and their families? The simplest answer to this question is that we draw the line when these condescending depictions of Latinos start to negatively affect the way they live their lives. Being discriminated against based on one's race causes feelings of confusion, anger, and depression, all of which negatively affect the way a person lives their life. Latino people should not have to feel this way but, unfortunately, that is what these harmful depictions of Latino stereotypes are causing within our communities today.

Speaking as a Latino American, having optimistic and successful images of Latino Americans portrayed throughout panoramic pop culture venues is important to my social identity. Success and optimism derive from outward representations of achievement, which

positively drives a group of subordinated individuals' overall personal stability and persistence. Therefore, America, with its everlasting declarations of independence, liberty, and its encompassing democratic principles should reflect on practicing equality for all. Time has clearly demonstrated that we have come a long way from the abhorrent history of slavery, condemnation, and racial violence that for so long stained the image of "equality" within the United States. The cycle is ongoing with small occurrences of racial stereotyping and negative portrayals of Latinos in media, which is oblivious to the social issue at hand. In the case of *The George Lopez Show*, through humor, the stereotypes of the Latino culture seem to be justified. Such acts, even if they are unintentional, include elements of racism and continue to instill a negative image of Latinos among non-Latino viewers. Pop culture perpetuates negative images and ideas of an entire ethnic minority group of American people. The American media industry and social media contain a myriad of negative misrepresentations of Latino Americans, a problem that should be addressed by presenting Latinos "fairly, honestly, and accurately" (Rodriguez, 1997, p. 5).

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