

# The Gendered Face of Latinidad

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# Overarching Themes:

1. Latinas in Hollywood
2. Effect of Skin Color
3. Race and Ethnicity
4. Transnationalism
5. Fighting the Stereotype

“*Latinidad*, the process of being, becoming, and/or performing belonging within a Latina/o diaspora, challenges many popular and academic categories of ethnicity, location, and culture.” -

Gendered Face of Latinidad, Angharad Valdivia

# The Typical Hollywood Latina

- 1) Sexy, Sassy Latina
- 2) Immigrant, working class Latina
- 3) Colorism

# Typical Latina in Hollywood is...

- Light skinned
- Straight
- Cisgendered
- Able-bodied
- Sexy, hypersexualized
- Working Class, usually a maid/housekeeper/nanny
- Unintelligent and/or used for comic relief
- Has a noticeable accent

# Carmen Miranda the Brazilian Bombshell

- <https://youtu.be/TLsTUN1wVrc?t=50s>
- The Chiquita Banana Girl
- Her fame and image were essential to the trade relations between the U.S. and Latin America
- Actress, Samba Singer, Broadway Star
- Known for her eccentric personality, exotic clothing, and accent
- “Part of what Carmen Miranda did was diplomacy. It was pedagogical, teaching the U.S. public to consume this fruit that was so weird and so tropical. That was crucial” (Valdivia)



**Where are these stereotypes in the  
media today?**

# Modern Family

## Sofia Vergara as Gloria

- Stereotypical sexy, sassy Latina
- There is a focus on her accent and the way her accent makes her less intelligent and funny
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g68KgoHWupg>
- Vergara responds to criticism about playing into this “spicy” Latina stereotype



# Orange Is The New Black

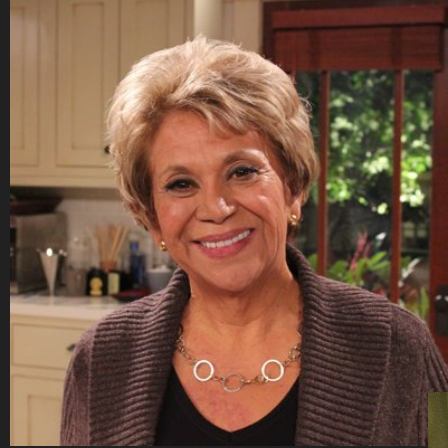
- Praised for a diverse, Latina cast with multidimensional roles
- However, still reproduces stereotypes
  - Latinas with criminal men
  - Focused on their looks
  - Having too many babies
  - Being criminal themselves
  - Promiscuous or hypersexualized





# Maids, Nannies, and Abuelas

- Many Latinas are typecast and forced to play the same secondary, submissive roles
- “The entertainment industry seemed stuck on the image of Hispanics as mostly poor, Spanish-speaking or of recent immigrant origin” (Navarro, New York Times)
- Lupe Ontiveros has played a maid over 150 times
- Jennifer Lopez in Maid in Manhattan
- Penelope Cruz in Spanglish

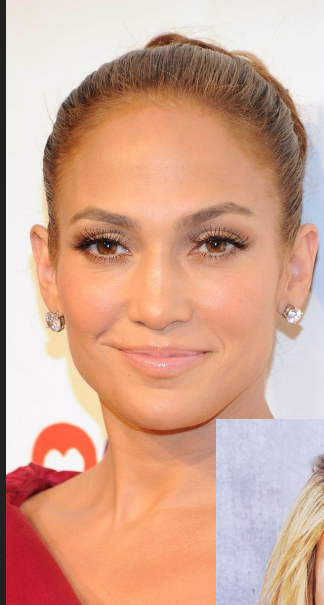


## On Being Latina Enough

"Another controversy came up in the Latin press about the fact that I didn't speak very good Spanish -- which Selena [Quintanilla] didn't either,"

- Jennifer Lopez

# Light Skinned Privilege and White Latinas



Light  
skinned vs.  
Afro-Latina



- The preference for lighter skin over darker skin is ubiquitous and is certainly common among Latinas
- Dark/Tan Skin of Latinas are Exotic, but light skinned Latinas are always the focus
- Especially in Hollywood, not representative of the population
- ex) Most Beautiful Latinx Artists
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2q6iHdPywU&feature=youtu.be>

# Most Beautiful Latinx Artists



# On Being Afro-Latina in Hollywood



"I would get really positive reactions at auditions for both African-American and Latino parts. But, I didn't look Latino enough because of the curly hair, and the freckles, and the nose and all that stuff."

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Judy Reyes



"I couldn't get an audition as a Latina. People didn't know what that was, they just said, 'Well our vision of a Latina looks more Mexican, or Central American, or Spanish.' And that was an interesting journey to take and something that I had to struggle with initially."

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Lauren Vélez

# Mejorar la Raza/Skin Whitening - Sammy Sosa

- Was a baseball player for the Cubs
- Dominican heritage
- In 2009, Sosa appeared at a music awards show looking much lighter in complexion
- He uses a bleaching cream before going to bed and it whitens his skin
- A 2009 report from Global Industry Analysts declared skin-lightening a \$10 billion industry
- A product known as White Secret encouraged darker-skinned Mexican women to lighten their skin - an interruption of the body's natural melatonin production, so their skin color could change and they could claim a white identity.



Sammy Sosa

# Conflation of Race and Ethnicity

- In 2012, the L'Oréal Group launched an unorthodox marketing campaign for their “True Match” foundation
- Clearly tailored toward a non-white audience by using Beyonce as its model, listing her mixed ethnic heritage, and promising a makeup that captured tones “beyond light to dark”
- Stated that every person’s skin tone has an ethnic “story” that needs to be matched by makeup
- Contributes to the misrepresentation of Latinas/lack of understanding about race/ethnicity

**JENNIFER LOPEZ' STORY**  
Puerto Rican. 100% True Match W6 Sun Beige.  
Jennifer's skin has warm undertones, so it's flattered by shades on the sizzling end of the spectrum, like bronze, gold and fiery red.  
WATCH JENNIFER'S AD

**AIMEE MULLINS' STORY**  
Irish, Austrian and Italian.  
100% True Match W3 Nude Beige.  
Aimee's skin has cool undertones, so she'll shine in cooler shades like violet, icy pastels and blue black.  
WATCH AIMEE'S AD  
GO BEHIND THE SCENES

# Transnationalism

*“Transnational cultural practices of Latina/o communities are rapidly redefining the lived realities of transnational Latina/o hybrid cultures on the ground.” (Valdivia 55)*

- Transnational Latina diaspora is identified through gender and sexuality that is established through consumer culture and transported by mediated images
- Certain bodies, skin tones, accents, and shapes are more visible or desirable than others
- Shakira as part of the “Latin explosion”
- Shakira assimilating to appeal to the American audience (blonde hair & English album)
- Product of globalization
- Ugly Betty (Colombian telenovela) adapted to 33 languages
  - appearance, family, and food choices determine her ethnicity and class difference
  - Represents gendered Latinidad





# Transnationalism

- Latinas with different transnational crossovers: JLo, Salma Hayek, Shakira, & Celia Cruz
- Jennifer Lopez (easiest)
  - light skin allows her to play ambiguous roles
  - New Yorker & native English speaker
- Shakira & Salma Hayek
  - Light skinned but heavy accents
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4trgSz2Tc20>



## -Celia Cruz

- most racialized of the four
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81H06W9hnuu>



# Fighting the Stereotype

-Latinas who don't fall under the stereotypes/don't comply to the norms of sexuality expected from Latinas

- Gina Rodriguez and America Ferrera

- Jane the Virgin: shows a multifaceted Latino identity

- English name, no heavy accents, educated Latina, jobs other than being maids, educates audience about structural barriers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agZKMjgRs-w&t=11s>

-America Ferrera's web series Gente-fied

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=85&v=TJN3qTBBiK4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=85&v=TJN3qTBBiK4)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTP\\_Cyl\\_35E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTP_Cyl_35E)

- More attention on Afro-Latinidad & broader color spectrum

# Discussion Questions

1. Given what we read in the Valdivia and Fuchs articles discussing hybridity, transnationalism and coding, how do you think that these issues have either contributed to or hindered the success of Latinas in Hollywood?
2. What can/should be done in the future to address these issues to move away from the stereotypes brought about by Latinidad in Hollywood and media outlets at large?