

The Marginalized Other: Distortions and Limitations in the Representations of Latina Women in American Media

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Abstract In an era where there are Latina Congresswomen, professors, astronauts, CEOs, and other highly regarded career titles, the American media still portrays Latinas as sexual objects for the White Gaze to control and contain as desirable, exotic, consumable, and other. As a result, this study explores how and why Latina bodies are exploited commercially by American media through Latina celebrities, such as Jennifer Lopez (J. Lo) and Salma Hayek who foreground this critical discourse analysis because of the overwhelming publicity that is centered on their bodies. Through detailed rhetorical analysis of J. Lo's performance at the 2020 Super Bowl Halftime Show and Salma Hayek's Mexican American character in the film *Fools Rush In* (1997), the author explores the theories of Karma Chavez's validation of bodies, Lisa Flores's raced bodies, and the American tropes of tropicalism and Latinidad that both burdens and empowers these Latina celebrities and Latina Americans. Additionally, the author argues that the (limited) Latina role models [Lopez and Hayek specifically], Latina Americans have been designated by the media, is potentially problematic as the media creates a standardized Latina body (rooted in Latinidad) that marks other Latina body shapes as invalid. The author's analysis indicates Latina celebrities are marketed as *other* and *exotic* to sell beauty, sex, and diversity, and the limited and lack of authentic Latina representation in American media leaves Latina Americans feeling invisible.

Keywords Latino • Representation • American Media • Latinidad • Tropicalism