University of Kent

Kent Academic Repository

Romero, Norma L. Perez (2006) *Transformation and authenticity in contemporary Latina stardom.* Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) thesis, University of Kent.

Downloaded from
https://kar.kent.ac.uk/86342/ The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from
https://doi.org/10.22024/UniKent/01.02.86342

This document version
UNSPECIFIED

DOI for this version

Licence for this version
CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives)

Additional information
This thesis has been digitised by EThOS, the British Library digitisation service, for purposes of preservation and dissemination. It was uploaded to KAR on 09 February 2021 in order to hold its content and record within University of Kent systems. It is available Open Access using a Creative Commons Attribution, Non-commercial, No Derivatives (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) licence so that the thesis and its author, can benefit from opportunities for increased readership and citation. This was done in line with University of Kent policies (https://www.kent.ac.uk/is/strategy/docs/Kent%20Open%20Access%20policy.pdf). If y...

Versions of research works

Versions of Record
If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts
If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in *Title of Journal* , Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries
If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies).

Transformation and Authenticity in Contemporary Latina Stardom
Norma L. Pérez Romero
PhD: Film Studies

Abstract

This thesis is an examination of ethnic female stardom and the recent phenomenon of Latina stars. The aim of this dissertation is to concentrate on discourses of transformation and authenticity in the stardom of three contemporary Latina actresses. The first two chapters look at the discourse of ethnic studies and stardom, and the history of Latinas/os in Hollywood since early cinema. The chapter following concentrates on the stardom Rosie Perez and challenges stereotypical discourses which have been quick to label the outspoken Latina as a hysterical ethnic figure. This section looks at the actress's persona and image as a resisting agent, vocally and physically, the transformation of Perez from dancer to actress, and the modification of scripts to suit *her* ethnic identity. The fourth chapter is a look at the stardom of fellow Puerto Rican actress Jennifer Lopez. This discussion focuses on the crossover success of Lopez into mainstream films and music, as well as analyses the physical transformation of the Latina star to a 'more white' image throughout her career. The final actress to be discussed in this thesis is Cameron Diaz. The only contemporary Latina with natural 'ideal' features, Diaz' ethnic status provokes much controversy since she has yet to portray a Latina role. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the construction of whiteness, and fabrication of ethnicity and transformation in the actress's films and star texts, as well as explore the continual establishment of Diaz as an authentic Latina/Cuban-American in her publicity. Overall the thesis deals with the changing nature of Latina stardom by focusing on three actresses with distinct images and personas to understand how ethnicity is being represented in contemporary cinema.

AGRADECIMIENTOS

Hay varias personas a las que quiero dar las gracias por haberme inspirado y apoyado durante la elaboración de esta tesis. Primero, quiero dar las gracias a la Dr. Catherine Grant, que me dirigió estos últimos años y quien no perdió fe en este trabajo. Ella me abrió una puerta nueva para comprender y analizar el mundo del cine. También es inevitable que dé las gracias a mi compañera y amiga Josephine Botting. Su amistad y apoyo durante estos años me han ayudado tanto que jamás podré devolver su tiempo y pagar su generosidad. Por su generosidad, quiero nombrar a Timothy P. Sherry que me dio la oportunidad más bonita de mi vida para seguir con mis estudios.

En este momento quiero dar las gracias a Profesor Roger Cardinal, Ian O'Sullivan, Susan Quarrell, y Noelia Rodríguez-Mongé, coordinadora de producción en la revista *Latina,* por haberme enviado artículos que eran necesarios para esta investigación. A Tsung-Ping Chung agradezco su ayuda durante el año que compartimos en Farthings, y aún más agradezco su amistad. También quiero agradecer a mis amigas Marga y Cristina los ánimos que me han dado en este ùltimo año.

A mis queridas amigas, Traci Wright y su familia, Maxi Rivera y Lynn Milano también les debo mucho por su apoyo e inspiración. Son mujeres fuertes de quienes he aprendido mucho y siempre me han hecho sentir que durante el camino de esta tesis estábamos todas juntas en la lucha, en particular Traci, y Maxi quien me dijo 'vete y representa a tu gente.'

Sobre mi gente, quiero primero dar las gracias a las mujeres en mi familia, a mi madre, Provi, y a hermana Myrna. Su fuerza y resistencia también me han inspirado y ayudado para ser lo que soy: una latina muy orgullosa de sus raíces. A otras latinas orgullosas de serlo en mi familia: mis sobrinas, Janine, Jasmine, Jerri-Lynn y Wilmar. Quiero reconocer especialmente su interés en este trabajo a Jasmine.

A mi familia de España, que me han apoyado mucho: la familia Sánchez Garrido, en particular Ana Garrido.

Por fin, quiero dar las gracias a mi marido Antonio J. Sánchez Garrido que me ha apoyado en los momentos más difíciles durante esta tesis. No hay muchos hombres que comprendan la necesidad de que su pareja viva en el extranjero para perseguir sus sueños. No sólo me dio su bendición, sino que me dijo que pasara lo que pasara estaría orgulloso de mí. Sólo esas palabras me dieron la fuerza para superar todo que se presentaba. Gracias a ti y a todos.

A mi padre José, quien me introdujo en el mundo del cine

CONTENTS

1

Introduction: Star Studies and Ethnic Femininity

Part of the motivation for this dissertation is a desire to understand the recent phenomenon of Latina stardom. Rather than elaborating upon stereotypical discourses surrounding ethnic stars, I argue that there is a continuing need to understand *what role* 'ethnic minority' has taken in Latina stardom, as well as *how* ethnicity is being represented, -'manufactured,' 'created,' 'commodified'-[1] in the image and persona of Latina stars. Therefore, this research will not concentrate solely on film performances and roles, but, more broadly, on the discourses of 'transformation' and 'authenticity' of each actress in relation to ethnicity in their films and other cultural texts. While the nature of transformation may vary for each actress, its importance to my study lies in the opportunities it offers for analysing ethnic 'transformation' in film culture in general. Thus, the need to approach the 'Latina boom' in cinema must go beyond stereotypical discourses and studies which have not always been sensitive enough to the cinematic medium, or to the wider field of film discourse, or even the need to account for the changing nature of ethnic representation. What I hope to develop and employ is a different approach by which ethnic figures may be 'read' in discourses surrounding the phenomenon of stardom.

Case Studies: Rosie Perez, Jennifer Lopez, Cameron Diaz

The Latina actresses to be examined in detail in this dissertation include Puerto Ricans Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez and Cuban-American Cameron Diaz. I have limited my selection to these three stars for several reasons, although I could have included other Latina actresses such as Rosario Dawson, Michele Rodriguez, Lauren Velez, Talisa Soto, Eva Mendez, and, most importantly, Salma Hayek. It should be noted at this point that the original framework of this research included a chapter on the Mexican star, but my decision to not include Hayek is with respect to her ethnic

[1] Adrienne L. McLean, "'I'm a Cansino': Transformation, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in the Construction of Rita Hayworth, American Love Goddess,' *Journal of Film and Video*, Vol. 44, Numbers 3 & 4, Fall 1992 and Winter 1993 (University of Films and Video Association, 1993), p 21.

identity as 'foreign'. In other words, because I use the term Latina[2] - as defined by Angharad N. Valdivia in her book *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood and Other Essays in Media Culture* - to 'refer *to U.S. women* [my emphasis] of Latin American descent [...] although not necessarily recent, descent,'[3] Hayek's Mexican nationality precludes her from the ethnic term/'American label' although much of the star's publicity promotes her as an *authentic* Latina. It must be emphasised that while I employ the term Latino instead of Hispanic, they are considered interchangeable, as *hispanos* (meaning 'direct descendants of the Spaniards')[4] are native US citizens whose ancestors migrated from Spanish-speaking countries.[5]

First and foremost, my study of these actresses draws attention to their distinct physiognomy, challenging stereotypical conceptions of the 'Latina look,' as well as offering a wider analysis of how ethnicity may be read within contemporary Hollywood narratives.[6] (Consequently, this research directs much attention to the 'uniquely white' features of Cameron Diaz and how the actress's distinct appearance provokes discourse within the notion of 'Latinaness.') Moreover, since Latina women in films, as David R. Maciel argued in 1993, 'have been reduced to playing secondary roles such as prostitutes, servants or altruistic mothers,' it would seem somewhat inconceivable that *three Latinas* should feature in leading (even Oscar winning) roles within a five-year period (1993-1998), sparking debate about the sudden explosion of Latina actresses in the film industry.[7] What would also appear unrealistic by Hollywood's standards is Cameron Diaz' 'extraordinary' burst into stardom, going straight from model to landing the starring female role in the film *The Mask* (Charles Russell, 1994, US); Lopez and Perez 'paid their dues', both appearing in minor parts before attaining starring roles.[8]

---

[2] Throughout this research I employ the term Latino instead of Hispanic as the latter is 'a US government census term that was institutionalised by the Nixon administration. The term is considered problematic (1) because it was chosen as name for a group by non-members instead of by group members [...].' In *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity*,' Christine Clark and James O'Donnell (eds.) (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1999), p 9.

[3] Angharad N. Valdivia, *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood, and Other Essays in Media Culture*' (Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 2000), p 178.

[4] Frank D. Bean and Marta Tienda, *The Hispanic Population of The United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1987), p 3.

[5] Pastora San Juan Cafferty and David W. Engstrom, eds., *Hispanics in the U.S.: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Pubishers: 2000), p xiii.

[6] In her book *Latin Looks: The Images of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. Media* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press: 1997), Clara E. Rodriguez discusses the stereotypical notion surrounding Latina physiognomy.

[7] David R. Maciel, 'Latino Cinema,' in *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the United States: Literature and Art*, Francisco Lomeli, Alfredo Jimenez, et.al (eds.) (Houston: Arte Publico Press and Instituto de Cooperación IberoAmericana, 1993), p 314.

[8] Rosie Perez' stardom evolved from playing supporting roles in mainstream Hollywood films. In 1996 and 2000, the actress starred in two independent films.

Second, because each of the cases of the stars to be examined personifies physical attributes which have been foregrounded as ethnic, I examine Hollywood's exaggeration of bodily performances executed by the three actresses. In weighing their performances I not only look to the way Perez' mouth, Lopez' 'butt' and Diaz' dancing figure have functioned to support the film industry's representation of Hispanic identity but I also set out to investigate the way their bodies disturb notions of gender and ethnic femininity. I will demonstrate that while Hollywood seeks to tell 'the truth' of ethnic and racial figures as erotic (the dancing figure) and/or 'grotesque' (the big mouth and oversized bottom), the star persona of Diaz, Perez and Lopez challenges conventions of dominant culture in that they consciously claim ownership of their body and image on-screen as well as off.

Whereas only two major U.S. Latino populations (Puerto Ricans and Cubans) will be referred to in this context, the importance of these groups and the actresses 'representing' each in the discourse above reveals the influential force of Latinos in American mainstream. The fastest growing ethnic group in the country, the Latino population outnumbered the African American population in January 2003.[9] In the following chapter I give a brief analysis of the historical, political and economic influence Latinos have had in the United States (and on the film industry), over the last quarter century. For this reason, my thesis spans from the late 1980's (a period commemorated as 'la década de los Hispanos' (the Hispanic decade), up until the present, when all three actresses have achieved stardom.[10] I will discuss the 'Latino boom' in the United States and the impact Latino audiences have had on the three stars to be examined in this research. I also briefly explore developments within the Hispanic community during the three actresses' emergence that may have motivated (and/or economically affected) Hollywood's marketing and promotion of Latino/a stars. In considering, while only briefly, the historical and economic aspects of this research, I will draw attention to Jennifer Lopez' influence on mass culture and female consumption, as well as discussing her impact on Hollywood, as no other Latina has been as acclaimed and as powerful in this past century. In the following section, I examine stardom and the discourses constructed around this popular phenomenon.

---

[9] The U.S. Census cited Latino figures at 37 million compared to 36.2 million African Americans in the nation. Nicolás C. Vaca, *The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict between Latinos and Blacks and what it means for America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2004) p 193.

[10] Rubén Blades, 'The Politics Behind the Latino Legacy,' *The New York Times*, 19 April (New York, 1992), Section H31.

Reading Stardom

It is more than two decades since Richard Dyer's ground-breaking book *Stars* first approached the phenomenon of stardom within film studies.[11] Dyer's work on stardom focuses on stars as a social phenomenon thus dealing with the manner in which ordinary individuals attain notoriety. His discourse on the ideology of stardom considers the role of the famous as 'real people' and why they exist, as well as the relationship between the star and society, including how their images function in media and film texts. This notion of 'realness' in stardom is contradictory in that actors do not completely reveal themselves in the media, holding back certain information from the public; 'masking', as Dyer calls it. It is when the star is actually 'exposed' off guard that we are offered a more authentic and often contradictory image to that put forward by the press.

Agreeing with Dyer, Charles L. Ponce de Leon also notes that:

> To glimpse a real person's real self it was necessary to see her in private, when she dropped her front and refrained from the contrived, mannered self-presentation that she adopted in the public sphere – understood to be not just the workplace and the world of business but formal social gatherings outside the home where people interacted among strangers and mere acquaintances. [...] but even then one could never be entirely sure that the mask had been completely removed, that the self exposed was authentic.'[12]

From this perspective we can analyse certain elements of stardom to get an understanding of what can be considered as 'real' and what representation. In short, stars become a contradiction or a 'negation', to use Dyer's term, which reveals the star as they really are instead of what they should be.[13]

In this thesis I will show how stars can function as a site of synthesis which serves to reconcile the contradictory yet complex nature of stardom. At times, this process of 'synthesis' involves: the constant re-packaging of stars, as in the case of Jennifer Lopez; the 'reconciliation' of physical features to ethnic identity as in Cameron Diaz' stardom, or the continual (stereotypical) reproduction of persona and image as in the career of Rosie Perez.[14] Thus, in theorising ethnic female stardom it is necessary to understand how these three particular actresses of Latino descent

---

[11] Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: London British Film Institute, 1979).

[12] Charles L. Ponce de Leon, *Self Exposure: Human Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp 30-31.

[13] Dyer discuses how stars reinforce ideologies by 'simply repeating, reproducing or reconciling them.' Dyer defines the term ideology as 'the set of ideas and representations in which people collectively make sense of the world and the society in which they live.' pp 30, 2. (1979), p 30.

[14] Dyer (1979), p 25.

became public personalities in spite of the distinct mechanisms employed to promote each as a 'goddess, hero or model.'[15]

Exploring the emergence and historical phenomenon of stardom in America, de Leon offers another historical perspective of fame. In his book *Self Exposure: Human Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1990*, de Leon concentrates on the star system since its beginnings and notes that by the mid-nineteenth century articles began to appear as evidence endorsing stars.[16] Gossip columns, interviews and feature on stars developed into public interest stories for an audience that, significantly, was primarily working-class. Editors targeted their audience according to the 'prestige' of the newspapers and as such, the more respectable papers like the *Herald Tribune* was aimed at a more elite reader while the tabloids reached out to the urban and ethnic working class.[17] Moreover, De Leon points out how journalists concerned with the division amongst the classes in the early twentieth century sought to link its readers by 'constructing a common "whiteness" that placed nonwhites outside the "imagined community" of America.'[18] While my analysis of the stars to be looked at also considers the type of printed texts promoting Latina stars, as well as the audience the texts are geared to, I will point out the construction of whiteness (and its relationship to *latinidad*), in particular in the publicity of Diaz and Lopez. I hope to also address the question of how class is linked to stardom as the three actresses to be analysed claim to be working class, thus creating some level of 'commonness' amongst their fans.

Notably, press coverage not only posits stars as subjects of 'human interest' stories to attract different classes and ethnic groups, but they also reinforce stardom, as de Leon argues, as an extension of popular culture since they 'reflected broader nationalizing trends in American society as a whole.'[19] This is significant as I set out to show that the Latino boom in the United States provoked the media to put forward themes of Latino interest which clearly included the rise of Latino stars. As we shall see, when the media began to package Latino stardom, Hispanic celebrities began to play a role in modern America.

---

[15] Dyer (1979), p 24.
[16] de Leon, p 43.
[17] Ibid., p 47.
[18] Ibid., pp 69-70.
[19] Ibid., pp 69, 81.

Christine Gledhill's *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, will also be useful to my work as it offers a collection of essays on how stardom may be defined, construed and analysed.[20] Explaining the versatile manner in which the stardom may be read, Gledhill writes:

> The star challenges analysis in the way it crosses disciplinary boundaries: a product of mass culture, but retaining theoretical concerns with acting, performance and art; an industrial marketing device, but a signifying element in films; a social sign, carrying cultural meanings and ideological values, which expresses the intimacies of individual personality, inviting desire and identification; an emblem of national celebrity, founded on the body, fashion and personal style; a product of capitalism and the ideology of individualism, yet a site of contest by marginalized groups; a figure, consumed for his or her personal life, who competes for allegiance with statesmen and politicians.[21]

My method of analysing stardom focuses on the body as a site of cultural meanings and its complex relationship to gender and ethnicity. I look at the construction of the star persona to examine how the actress's performances may be read in relation to race and nationality. In the work of Andrew Britton, the persona is defined 'by the films and the image constructed by the vast apparatus of publicity [...],'[22] whereas Jane Gaines sums up the term as a 'marketable character'. [23] What I focus on in this research is how the Latina image in film and other texts has transformed over the past three decades as well as how Latino stardom has been able to draw attention to and influence mass culture (including on an economic scale). Thus, I consider how stars are products of mediated texts and how Latinness has become a synthesised aspect of post-modern American culture.

In discussing the creation of a star persona, Ian C. Jarvie in his essay 'Stars and Ethnicity: Hollywood and the United States, 1932-1951,' observes that, 'a star was a persona created, with or without the cooperation of the actor concerned, by the publicity machine of the studio collaborating with the press, other media such as radio, fan clubs, and word of mouth.'[24] As Jarvie explains, studios created a star's biography from 'fact and fiction (fictoid)[...] in a manner calculated to match [...] *the looks* [my emphasis], the publicity campaign, the activities, and, perhaps, the roles, the star played or was to play.'[25] In his essay 'The Building of Popular Images: Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe', Thomas Harris discusses the 'image-making process' of the two former screen stars by concentrating on the media texts (fan magazines and newspapers) surrounding the

---

[20] Christine Gledhill (ed.), *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (London: Routledge, 1991).
[21] Ibid., p xiii.
[22] Andrew Britton, *Katherine Hepburn: Star as Feminist*, (London: Studio Vista, 1995), p 15.
[23] Jane Gaines, *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*,' Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds.) (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p 199.
[24] Ian C. Jarvie, 'Stars and Ethnicity: Hollywood and the United States, 1932-1951,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 98.
[25] Ibid.

actresses.[26] Like Britton and Jarvie, Harris considers how publicity has defined stars via magazines, press releases, publicity photos, and the type of vocabulary linked to celebrities. Furthermore, the efforts of the press in promoting stardom emphasis an actor's background and upbringing in such a fashion that their persona is reinforced. Harris' reading, however, not only establishes the time consuming process necessary in 'building-up' stars, but also describes the circumstances leading to the establishment and transformation of the actress as a certain type and image: sexual or genteel. Thus, his discussion of the star persona as possessing a trait (e.g., sex symbol) which is carried across the films of the star is relevant to my reading of Latina stardom, as the actresses to be discussed perpetuate *and* contest ethnic stereotypes. It is my intention to extend Harris' insights on stardom to 'reconstruct' the images of Jennifer Lopez, Cameron Diaz and Rosie Perez using the following information:

1 The transformation of the actresses since their early career
2 The publicity promoting each (e.g., film reviews, interviews)
3 The publicity promoting each as authentic Latina representatives
4 The type of media texts promoting the actresses, for example both Lopez and Diaz have appeared in *GQ* magazine, which is aimed at a male audience
5 Magazine cover features and captions
6 The repeated emphases in their publicity such as the type of vocabulary used to describe the actresses
7 Their biographies.

By so doing I can link the way these actresses were created and manipulated as well as promoted and projected by the film industry; a comparison of my findings on each actress will be included in my final chapter. Moreover, I will be able to establish exactly when each was 'promoted' from actress to star and the circumstances surrounding her 'elevation'.

It should be noted that during my reading of the stardom of Perez, Lopez and Diaz I set out to establish the level of fame acquired by each star. The purpose of grading their stardom is to compare the celebrity status of each and understand what level of notoriety the three actresses have acquired thus far. This will provide information on how each actress shifted to and from stardom, their influence in Hollywood, and in Lopez' case, how the star became 'an object (and agent) of consumption'.[27] This discussion will also lead to a look at Latinos' influence in American popular

[26] Thomas Harris, 'The Building of Popular Images: Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe,' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), pp 40- 44.
[27] I refer to Marsha Orgeron's description of Clara Bow as a commodity in Hollywood during the 1920s. In 'Making *It* in Hollywood: Clara Bow, Fandom, and Consumer Culture,' *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Texas: Texas University Press, 2003), p 79.

culture. I am also interested in noting how Perez, Lopez and Diaz are perceived in the media in order to understand the racial construction of their image as well as how their features have had a direct relationship to the level of their stardom. Furthermore, I wish to explore how the media depicted Lopez in her move from dancer to actress and superstar pop singer, and how her superstardom coincides with the demise of Rosie Perez' Hollywood fame. Also to be looked at is how Diaz and Lopez' white features may have served to increase the popularity of each actress in American popular culture.

Construction of Stardom

The actresses to be discussed in this thesis have received a great deal of publicity surrounding their 'looks,' providing Hollywood with the tools necessary to match, create and define their 'picture personality.'[28] According to Richard deCordova, 'picture personality' may be outlined in three ways: 'the circulation of the name; the "image," taken in the broad sense to denote both the actor's physical image and the personality that is represented as existing within or behind it; and a discourse on the actor's professional experience.'[29] In analysing celebrities, Dyer argues that 'a star's image is made out of media texts that can be grouped together as *promotion, publicity, films* and *commentaries/criticism.*'[30] Exploring the important role media texts have played in stardom, Dyer has clarified that the printed materials acceptable and necessary to analysing a star's image include: '(i) studio announcements, press hand outs (including potted biographies), fan club publications (which were largely controlled by the studios), pin-ups, fashion pictures, ads in which stars endorse a given merchandise, public appearances (e.g. at premieres, as recorded on film or in the press); and (ii) material promoting the star in a particular film – hoardings, magazines, ads trailers, etc.'[31] Once these materials have been gathered, we can come to understand how a star's image may be read across media texts as well as in their films.

Because the focus of this dissertation is on transformation in Latina stardom, the materials to be analysed in this work will include newspaper articles/reviews, entertainment and fashion magazines, photographs and selected films. Publicity will be essential in this research to analyse how each of the three actresses is presented and promoted in the media, *how* and *when* their Latina

---

[28] Paul McDonald, *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities* (London: Wallflower, 2000), p 30. McDonald cites Richard de Cordova to define personality as 'the representation of character across a number of films,' p 31.

[29] Richard de Cordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), p 73.

[30] Dyer (1979), p 68.

[31] Ibid.

background becomes part of the publicity and of a film's narrative, as well as to explore how Lopez, Diaz and Perez have 'become' Latina 'representatives' within the Hollywood industry. Further, the materials gathered for this investigation may be examined in terms of the construction and/or breakdown of ethnicity in relation to stars.

Photos

In documenting how ethnicity is presented in publicity the photo becomes a crucial source of evidence to 'expose' the fabrication and promotion of stars; Dyer states, 'the camera never lies.'[32] Joshua Gamson affirms: 'Because photographic images are widely assumed to "tell the truth," the camera widely assumed to never "lie," there is little need or incentive for the entertainment-news industry to fight the manipulation of visual images.'[33] Reading across photographs, Dyer focuses on Judy Garland's complex star image to confirm the notion of authenticity.[34] Yet Charles Wolfe in his article, 'The Return of Jimmy Stewart: The Publicity Photograph as Text,' offers an interpretation of the importance of the photo:

> The function of these photographs in the first instance is usually publicity; they publicise films, and the stars who help sell film. Within the Hollywood studio system, still photography departments were an important component of the public relations machinery buttressing the star system and the marketing campaigns for individual films.[35]

Through photocopied stills, it is my intention to compare images of the actresses from before they became stars to the present. In my chapter on Jennifer Lopez, I hope to show that the actress's early photos reveal how her dark features and voluptuous figure have changed noticeably over the years. On the other hand, when analysing Cameron Diaz, her photos often present a clashing mélange of images thus promoting her as either the '*exotic*' sexual and sensual figure, or the celestial 'golden girl'; both are echoed in some of the film narratives the actress appears in. Because photographs of Diaz offer more insight into transformation and ethnicity in her stardom, the chapter focusing on the actress will look mainly at photographic images of the star while referring to a limited number of films. Conversely, more emphasis will be placed on Rosie Perez' films than on publicity images of the Puerto Rican actress.

---

[32] Richard Dyer, 'A Star is Born and the Construction of Authenticity,' *Stardom Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill, ed. (New York and London: Routledge, (1991), p 135.
[33] Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994) p 100.
[34] Op.cit.
[35] Charles Wolfe, 'The Return of Jimmy Stewart: The Publicity Photograph as Text,' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), p 92.

Fan Magazines

In early cinema, fans were able to distinguish actors by their faces and names due to the circulation of the fan magazine. The identification of the face then became synonymous with a particular film and the more 'information' a fan sought to learn about a star, the greater their popularity, success and stardom.[36] Hence, the fan magazine became, as deCordova notes, one of 'the closest links to the cinematic institution.'[37] Charles Wolfe's work on James Stewart's stardom also considered the fan magazine as an important source, as he states:

> News magazines are a particularly rich medium to focus on here, for the very purpose of these weekly periodicals is to bring unity to a flow of disparate events, to juxtapose fragments in such a way that they are given coherent social meaning in a familiar package. Their general practice of not specifying sources – where and how images were obtained, who or what is transmitting the news – aims at homogenous style whereby potentially cacophonous voices are flattened out into a single 'voice' which speaks with authority. Motion pictures are one of the 'voices' to be tamed, and one of the many contexts within which magazine images must be read.[38]

Commenting upon the importance of fan magazines and other sources of the press McDonald writes,

> Magazine articles will profile stars in their on and off-screen lives constructing for their readership an idea of the star's public and private identity.' Interviews appear in the press and on the radio and television [...]. All these types of output raise stars to public awareness as part of the ongoing matters of contemporary pop culture.[39]

Still, there were, and remain, other arenas of the construction of the star persona besides that of fan magazines, as deCordova lists: 'the trade press, [...], the popular press, and newspapers [as] all constitut[ing] specific positions from which to speak the star.'[40]

In examining the media texts surrounding the actresses, I will reconstruct/deconstruct what is said about each actress (including performance reviews), and consider how their ethnicity is 'framed' within the context of the text focusing on the star. Concerning the actual source of publicity to be used in this research, a list of publications and audience targets will be included in the appendix. Three sources referred to in this analysis have been commented on in other studies on stardom: *The Los Angeles Times, People* and *Rolling Stone.* Joshua Gamson in his book *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* examines the history of stardom, how ordinary people seek, maintain and exploit their star status, as well as the manner in which audiences interpret

---

[36] de Cordova, p 85.
[37] Ibid., 12.
[38] Wolfe, p 105.
[39] McDonald, p 1.
[40] de Cordova, p 12.

celebrities.[41] On an interesting note his composite of stardom via publicity recognizes the *Los Angeles Times* 'as especially important, thus retain[ing] an upper hand facing publicists' demand,'[42] and considers *People* magazine at 'the head of the pack' of 'infotainment' (his term), since the magazine 'focuse[s] entirely on the active personalities of our time.'[43] To some degree, the inclusion of diverse materials will hopefully enable me to identify a continual pattern of descriptions across texts as well as document the type of publications interested in promoting the Latina actresses.

Also, while much of the publicity collected has been English language material, I have also integrated work on a total of five Spanish language newspapers from New York, California, Mexico and Puerto Rico.[44] Since 'foreign' publicity has not been analysed in any of the studies surrounding Latina stars which I have consulted, I hope to offer a unique construction of how the Spanish-speaking press within Latino communities project the images of three actresses.[45] I also consider these materials to help elucidate Cameron Diaz' status as a Latina, not only in Hollywood, but also among Latinos in the United States as well as in Spanish speaking territories.

Much of the publicity gathered has been collected by visiting several websites on the Internet. The immediate access to stars' publicity on the World Wide Web is a new development in 'film stardom' and what this resource will facilitate is access to a vast array of publicity such as interviews and film reviews from several sources, including a star's website.[46] As Paul McDonald observes, 'On-line star profiles serve to continue the discourses of the picture personality that emerged in 1909. [...] The name of a star becomes a link that traverses sites, creating connections between many and various forms of content [...], further expand[ing, continuing and promoting] the existing discourses of stardom.'[47] Furthermore McDonald asserts that, when examining stars in case studies, as in my own work, there is more of a possibility 'to explore in more detail instances of how particular stars or organisations became representative of conditions in the system at that time.'[48] As a result, the publicity and images collected in a star's profiles on the web may be

---

[41] Gamson, p 5.
[42] Gamson, p 95.
[43] Ibid., p 43.
[44] I have limited the number of Spanish newspapers to the most widely read specifically in New York and California as those two states have the largest Latino communities. Also, because of the difficulty retrieving Cuban newspapers from the web, I have only included newspapers from Puerto Rico and Mexico.
[45] It should be noted that Angharad N. Valdivia and Ramona Curry's study of the Brazilian pop star Xuxa, includes academic and media references from the star's native country. 'Xuxa!: Can Latin Americans be Blonde or Can the United States Tolerate a Latin American?,' in *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood, and Other Essays in Media Culture*, pp 125-147.
[46] McDonald, p 113.
[47] Ibid., p 114.
[48] Ibid., p 3.

utilised for analysing, according to McDonald, 'how those images can be seen to relate to the social and historical conditions in which they emerge.'[49]

Cultural Discourses and Stardom

In the field of cultural studies there are several scholars whose work I look to for an examination of stardom and the role of racial pedagogies in society. De Leon's writing on the treatment of racial minorities, in particular African Americans, reveals how black entertainers in the early 1900s were given a certain level of distinction in the press which contributed to the coverage and fame of non-white performers. He notes how the treatment of blacks in the press improved after the 1930s, reflecting the move towards portraying celebrities as 'human beings.'[50] My interest in the realisation of African American stardom underscores the achievement of blacks in popular culture thus directing us to the manner in which Latinos have been treated in the press and how Latino stardom has become standard even in 'prestigious' newspapers such as the *New York* and *Los Angeles Times*. Also important to consider is the presentation of Latina stars during the past twenty-five years, their recurring presence in media texts (and why they are being promoted) as well as their popularity amongst both mainstream and non-mainstream audiences. While, exploring a number of newspaper and magazine publications I also offer a more detailed account of Latino stardom in the next chapter, tracing the construction of Latino entertainers since early cinema in the same manner as de Leon and Dyer. Like de Leon, I look to the manner in which (contemporary Latina) female celebrities are shaped and how they are promoted to a largely gender and ethnic-biased audience.[51] By doing this, it is possible to outline the stardom of the actresses in this work and investigate the type of texts which feature Latina stars as well as how often these stars appear in the news media. In the same manner as Dyer, I analyse the meanings of stars in publicity and film with hopes of offering an explanation as to why Perez, Lopez and Diaz have been packaged and valued as stars over these past two decades.

Dyer and de Leon have both suggested ways to look at the racial construction of performers. In *White*, Dyer examines the representation of white people and the 'making of whiteness within Western culture.'[52] Whiteness then becomes defined in terms as colourless, pure, 'nothing,' invisible, yet visible enough to be recognised as a powerful privilege. As Dyer explains: 'Whites must be seen to be white, yet whiteness as race resides in invisible properties and whiteness

[49] Ibid., p 2.
[50] de Leon, p 6.
[51] de Leon offers a brief account of the treatment of several prominent female and ethnic figures on pp 65-73.
[52] Richard Dyer, *White*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p xiii.

as power is maintained by being unseen.'[53] Discussing race issues, Barbara Fields argues 'that race cannot be seen as a biological or physical fact (a "thing") but must be seen as a notion that is profoundly and in its very essence ideological.'[54] In this thesis I address how the categories of whiteness reconcile the image of Latina stars whose natural or 'fabricated' features have seemed to secure their status as privileged ethnic stars. Diane Negra has stated that 'ethnicity can serve as a marker of disruption, drawing attention to the precarious cultural power associated with whiteness,' [55] yet ethnicity can also be exploited to gain cultural notoriety and acceptance. In considering the notion of whiteness in Latina stardom I intend to direct attention to recent performers who have been able to manage and control their image of whiteness in the media, including films. By doing so, I will be able to document when whiteness, as well as ethnicity, has been underscored in the careers of Latina stars and establish at what stages this 'ideal' image has been heightened and 'overlapped' with their stardom.

Investigating the construction of race and whiteness in cinema, Daniel Bernardi similarly emphasises the defining of the 'American' figure in the form of Eurocentrism. The narrative form of whiteness in cinema focuses much attention on the blonde and fair-skinned as representative of an Aryan/Nordic (and American) type. Anything else is a mere threat to ideological image of white superiority 'thereby requiring civilising or brutal punishment, or fetishised objects of exotic beauty, icons for a racist scopophilia.'[56] Thus, the racial practices found in early cinema (which continue today) concentrate on whiteness and constantly draw attention to 'Others' as less privileged, inferior and impure/sexual. The essays in Bernardi's book offer a prolific interpretation of race and racial formation which have functioned in cinema to position whites –or European Americans, as Bernardi claims - as the model of Americanness and the depiction of privilege and beauty.[57] As a way of focusing on the complexity of race and whiteness in my work, I consider Bernardi's writing by exploring how gender, race and ethnicity are represented in film.

Valerie Babb's study on the ideology of whiteness in American literature and culture is also useful to this study, in particular her discussion on the impact of whiteness in relation to Americanness. Her investigation of whiteness, like Ruth Frankenberg's, examines the privileges acquired because of having ideal features thus analysing the influence of race and 'the conceptions

---

[53] Ibid., p 45.

[54] Barbara Field's work Ideology and Race in American History David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and The Making of the American Working Class* (Revised Edition), (London and New York: Verso, 1999. First Edition 1991), p 7.

[55] Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p 5.

[56] Daniel Bernardi, ed., *The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p 5.

[57] Ibid., p 104.

of American whiteness.'[58] Frankenberg's provocative work on whiteness offers a revealing narrative of a group of women discussing their own background, thus exploring how race has shaped their lives. In a similar manner to Dyer's research, Frankenberg considers whiteness as a 'site of racial privilege'[59] thus forming part of the social construction of whiteness. My own work looks at facets of whiteness to draw a conclusion about how the notions of race have shaped the persona and image of contemporary Latina performers, and how (some) Latinas have been able to transform into 'American' and/or cultural icons. This will direct attention to the construction of white and American identities in ethnic female stardom and the circumstances leading to the acceptance of Latino performers in US society, e.g., the Latino boom. Significantly, discourses of whiteness and its association to Americanness run contrary to the representation of ethnicity and femininity in the media and onscreen, thus offering a complex analysis of how Latina stars acquire those privileges associated to whiteness. What I hope to show is that although Latinas continue to depict images of sexuality, marked otherness and inferiority (all of which are contrary to depictions of whiteness), signs of ethnic femininity is somewhat transformed in films and publicity in order to promote an American image which can be linked to whiteness.

It is essential to note that since the 19th century, whiteness has become synonymous with notions of Americanness vis-à-vis the formation of the working class in the United States. Exploring the concept of whiteness from a racial, economic and political stance, David Roediger examines the formation of the working class in American history in relation to race. As Roediger contends, white workers, in particular the Irish, were anxious to improve their social position in the early 19th century. The desire to define themselves as white working class members and not 'white slaves' provoked ethnic groups to insist on their whiteness; the branding of 'white slavery' has been linked to immigrants who escaped slavery in Ireland, as well as to the number of Irish women who turned to prostitution in the U.S.[60] Thus the association of Irish immigrants with blacks calls attention to how white workers saw themselves in the same social and political situation: unable to vote and racially inferior. Obliged to compete for unskilled labour with blacks, Irish-Americans joined the Democratic Party (along with other white immigrants) in order to vote for proslavery

[58] Valerie Babb, *Whiteness Visible: The Making of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture* (New York and London: NYU Press, 1998), p 2.

[59] Henry A. Giroux, 'Rewriting the Discourse of Racial Identity: Toward a Pedagogy and Politics of Whiteness,' in *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity*, Christine Clark and James O'Donnell, eds. (Westport, CT: Bergen and Garvey, 1999), p 229.

[60] David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and The Making of the American Working Class* (Revised Edition), (London and New York: Verso, 1999. First Edition 1991), p 149.

with hopes of defining jobs for whites only.[61] As a result, 'the pleasures of whiteness [..] function[ed] as a 'wage' for white workers.'[62]

Part of this study looks at the history of Hispanics in the United States and the relationship between this ethnic group and whites and blacks. The im/migration of Latinos to the US in the early 20th century not only provoked racial hostility towards Hispanics by whites, but also caused concern and frustration amongst blacks forced to compete with Latinos for menial and cheap labour. Similar to the Irish, Latinos have not only been racially ascribed as being 'black' but also identified as poor and working class. Roediger's work provides a framework for the relationship between working class Latinos and African Americans who compete for equal rights on a political and social scheme. My interest in his work however, is twofold as it draws attention to the construction of how whites identify and represent themselves, as well as their treatment of racial others.

The treatment of racial others is evident in minstrel shows where whites depicted what constituted blackness. According to W.C. Green:

> [...] the trajectory of the minstrelsy was to create an ersatz whiteness and then succumb to a mere emphasis on the "vulgarity, grotesqueness and stupidity" of the black characters it created. [63]

William F. Stowe and David Grimsted further claim that 'Minstrelsy thus featured "complexity in comic portrayal" of blacks and "questioned, teased and contradicted, as well as confirmed" white supremacist attitudes.'[64] To analyse the construction of whiteness, one has to read the representation of blacks in popular culture, in particular in film. David Bogle's work *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks* is perhaps the most well documented narration on black representation since early cinema.[65] Bogle indicates that first few years of the 1900s offered stereotypical portrayals of blacks such as Uncle Tom, but as the 20th century came to an end the image of African Americans had radically evolved. They were not only appearing on screen as action and romantic heroes but also behind the camera as notable directors, as in the case of Spike Lee. Yet, it is Bogle's focus on early film characters which identifies five stereotypical figures that continued to be present on celluloid even into the 1970s. The tom, the coon, the tragic mulatto, the

---

[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., p 13.
[63] W.C. Green, "Jim Crow", "Zip Coon": The Northern Origins of Negro Minstrelsy,' *Massachusetts Review 11* (1970), p 395. Roediger, p 118.
[64] William F. Stowe and David Grimsted, 'White-Blacks Humour,' *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 3 (Summer, 1975), p 81; Joseph Boskin, *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester* (New York: 1986), pp 80-81. Roediger, p 123.
[65] Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies & Bucks: An Interpretative History of Blacks in American Films,'* Third Edition (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1996).

mammy and the buck were the five most popular black 'types' portrayed in early films. [66] As the author notes:

> All were character types used for the same effect: to entertain by stressing Negro inferiority. Fun was poked at the American Negro by presenting him as either a nitwit or a childlike lackey. None of the types was meant to do great harm, although at various times individual ones did. All were merely filmic reproductions of black stereotypes that had existed since the days of slavery and were already popularized in American life and arts. [67]

Similarly to African Americans, Latinos have also been treated in an inferior and sexual manner, being presented as the buffoon, the bandit, the Half-Breed Harlot and the Latin Lover. For this reason, Charles Ramirez-Berg's analysis of Latino characters in film will be discussed further in the next chapter.

In addition to Bogle's book, I look to the writings of Vincent F. Roccio, Wahneema Lubiano and Ed Guerro as they offer considerable insight into the depiction of African Americans in cinema. I am most interested in Guerro's analysis of the political and socio-economic conditions of blacks in the United States which led to the rise of black filmgoers, black films and black directors. The author neatly balances the conditions of American society with the political position of blacks and their force against the demands for a more authentic and cultural experience of blacks on film. Like Guerro, I examine the position of Latinos in the US as well as highlight the recent demographic influence of Hispanics as voters and consumers. What I hope to establish is that by the end of the twentieth century Latinos were clearly acknowledged as a lucrative market which could no longer be ignored, hence their demand for authentic representatives and the presentation of their culture in more recent films.

A number of scholars have looked at the way Latinos have become a profitable source for the economy in the United States. Frances Negrón-Muntaner in her book *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture* examines the globalising of Puerto Rican stars as American commodities. She explores discourses around *boricuaness* and questions the contradictory identity of Puerto Ricans as both Latino and American. This contradiction serves to foreground Muntaner's discussion of the trope of shame and pride in Puerto Rican themes; themes include the black and white Puerto Rican, *boricua* stardom, the Puerto Rican version of the Barbie doll, and token film *West Side Story*; the comparison of blackness and *latinidad* is a central aspect of my work as I explore the physical similarities shared by Puerto Ricans and blacks. Muntaner

---

[66] According to Bogle, the five character types of Blacks in film were depicted as follows: the tom is always harassed and keeps the faith, never disrespecting his White owner despite being abused by his 'master'; the coon serves as 'as amusement object and black buffoon'; the tragic mulatto is a likeable but victimized female character; the Mammy is usually fat and 'fiercely independent;' and the buck, an oversexed, frenzied and violent character desiring white women. Pp 4, 6, 9, 13.

[67] Ibid., p 4.

asserts that while the Puerto Rican identity is often linked to the body as a cultural feature of otherness, cultural marks are rendered as positive despite the contradictory notion that the ideal body is white, blonde and slender. This is not to say that white Puerto Ricans are not idealized, as in the case of pop singer Ricky Martin. Rather, that Puerto Rican identity consequently provides a platform to which *boricuas* applaud 'their' bodies despite being recognised as having white or black features.

Muntaner's work is key to my research in that she also emphasises Jennifer Lopez' promotion as a Puerto Rican commodity and body around the time her film *Selena* (Gregory Nava, Warner Brothers, 1996, US) debuted. However, while I discuss the concentration of publicity on Lopez's physical features I also point out the dialectical shifting of the actress between a very Latina and 'White' image. Muntaner's exploration of Lopez during her scandalous relationship with Puff Daddy (aka Sean Combs) as an 'oversexed, vulgar femme fatale who was out of control and outside the law'[68] will also be examined in my chapter on the star, yet I look at the positive effects of Lopez' relationship with the rap mogul and the manner in which he influenced the actress' singing career.

Latino Stardom

With the emergence of Hispanic actors in Hollywood, many scholars have analysed Latino/a representation within American cinema, such as Gary D. Keller,[69] Chon Noriega,[70] and Clara E. Rodriguez.[71] Keller and Noriega are most notable for their analyses and extensive deconstruction of stereotypical images and portrayal of Hispanics in Hollywood since early cinema, while Rodriguez offers a similar study mentioning contemporary Latina stars such as Rosie Perez. Their scholarly consensus concludes that Hollywood's work as a 'Latin ethnographer' has often been achieved through the promotion of stereotypical images of female 'Hispanicness': the 'hot-blooded

---

[68] Frances Negrón-Muntaner, *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2004), p 244.

[69] Gary D. Keller has produced extensive research texts on Latinos in Hollywood. His books *Hispanics and United States Film: An Overview & Handbook* (Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press, 1994), as well as *Chicano Cinema: Research, Reviews and Resources* (Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press, 1984), dedicate at least one chapter to that of stereotypical depictions.

[70] Chon Noriega's book *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1992) is an anthology examining Chicano and Latino participation Hollywood as well as in Mexican cinema. His highly regarded essay, 'Internal "Others": Hollywood Narratives 'about' Mexican-Americans,' discusses the derogatory Mexican label 'greaser' and how Hollywood (between 1935 and 1962) applied the term to Mexican-Americans; in *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas*, John King, Ana M. López, Manuel Alvarado (eds.) (London: BFI Publishing, 1993), pp 52-67.

[71] Rodriguez.

momma,'[72] the 'cantina girl' and the 'self-sacrificing señorita,' to name a few. [73] When tracing Latina stereotypes in Hollywood, as mentioned above, the dichotomy of Madonna/whore has often been employed.

Similar to the film industry's idealisation of white bodies is the Latino community's 'hierarchical treatment' of light-skinned Latinas as being more beautiful than dark featured *hispanas*. Patricia Zafella in her essay 'Reflections on Diversity among Chicanas,' explores this dilemma and recognises that the worst type of treatment was inflicted upon dark featured women, while 'white ethnic women' were appreciated. [74] As Zafella discusses in her studies, 'regarding the preferred body image, our society still values images of women who are white – and blonde in particular [...].'[75] However, this is not to say that all Latino/a studies focus on racial traits and the stereotypes which define them, as Ana M. López illustrates in her essay 'Are All Latins from Manhattan?' Challenging stereotypical assumptions, López argues that Hollywood 'does not represent ethnic and minorities; it creates them and provides its audiences with an experience of them.'[76] Providing an analysis of three Latina stars during a period marked as the Good Neighbour Policy years (1939-47), López' study of Mexican star Dolores Del Río articulates the actress's foreign figure as, according to the author, having an 'otherness [that] was located and defined on a sexual rather than an ethnic register.'[77] Thus, the translation of Latina 'otherness' explores an understanding of how an ethnic woman may 'disturb' Hollywood's reign if she, as López notes, 'poses a double threat – sexual and racial.'

Chris Holmlund's book *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculinity at the Movies* offers another way the body may be read in media texts.[78] Focusing on a set of 'impossible bodies [...] because they exceed the parameters within which we think of "ideal" or even "normal" physiques,'[79] in relation to an array of cultures (including black, Swedish and camp), Holmlund offers a specific examination of how Latina bodies may be examined and interpreted. Although her chapter on three Latina actresses (two of whom, Perez and Lopez, I will be analysing), concentrates

---

[72] Richie Pérez, 'From Assimilation to Annihilation: Puerto Rican Images in US Films,' in *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños*, Bulletin No.2 (New York: Hunter College Press, 1990), p 13.
[73] Keller (1994), p 40. Both the cantina girl and sacrificing señorita are listed on this page.
[74] Patricia Zavella, 'Reflections on Diversity Among Chicanas,' in *Challenging Fronteras: Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the U.S.*, Mary Romero, Pierette Homdagneu, and Sotelo Ed (eds.)(New York and London: Routledge, 1997), p 190.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ana M. López, 'Are All Latins From Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 405.
[77] Ibid., p 410.
[78] Chris Holmlund, *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculinity at the Movies* (Routledge: London & New York, 2002).
[79] Ibid., p 4.

on their roles in independent films, Holmlund explores how these figures become the centre of attention in narrative and publicity. When this occurs, the actresses are categorised by one specific and unique feature (Jennifer Lopez' famous bottom and Perez' mouth) throughout all media texts. What is more, in their publicity, specific attributes of each actress become linked to the type of vocabulary used to describe her image. For example, Perez' 'aggressive' voice has been projected to mirror the actress's 'street-tough' image.

In investigating the way Latina figures are promoted and projected in publicity, as well as how their bodies are considered to be one of Hollywood's 'unique' commodities, I will employ Holmlund's construction and examination of stars. However, while Holmlund offers much insight in her analysis of Lopez, her discussion of Perez sums up the actress's persona by her character's conflict with male counterparts, rather than trying to trace why Perez is put forward as an enraged woman. Valdivia also reflects this observation in her work on Rosie Perez, analysing her body in relation to 'women of colour.'[80] In many ways her reading of Perez' star text reflects stereotypical discourses on Latinas. Nevertheless, although Valdivia and Holmlund discuss the publicity surrounding the actress's roles and verbal outbursts (a similar mode to be employed in this research), there is no attempt to go beyond the 'loud mouth syndrome' (my term). Thus, it is my intention to analyse how Perez' voice is used within film narratives and what provokes her to fight back verbally, as well as examine why and when hysteria is called into the dialogue. Furthermore, although publicity offers animated comments on Perez' voice, there remains the need to go beyond the limitations provided by stereotypical conceptions.

Ethnicity, Female Performance and Stardom

Many scholars exploring the different ways ethnicity may be examined and applied to in their work offer to define the term, as David Wellman has done in his study on whiteness as a 'racial identity':

> Ethnicity refers to a set of rules, roles, and traditions passed on from generation to generation, essentially unchanged. The emphasis is on group differentiation. In this construction, ethnicity is a matter of hyphenation. Ethnic identity, moreover, is assumed to be singular and static: only one ethnic identity is allowed per customer.[81]

Arguing that ethnicity may 'refer to a spectrum of identities and differences, all ultimately involving questions of inequalities of power,' Ella Shohat offers a critical analysis of ethnicity in American cinema. She writes:

---

[80] Angharad N. Valdivia, *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood, and Other Essays in Media Culture*' (Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 2000), pp 89-105.

[81] David Wellman, *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity*, Christine Clark and James O'Donnell (eds)., (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1999), p 87.

> Ethnographic cultural critique has significant implications for film analysis because film narrative entails not only ethos (character) but also ethnos (peoples). The assumption that only certain films are relevant for the discussion of ethnicity is based on a superficially thematic examination of the filmic text, that is, whether or not the film explicitly foregrounds ethnic conflicts or complementarities. But this formulation ignores such considerations as the body language of the actors or characters and the intonations or accents which define dominant groups as ethnic in the sense of displaying specific cultural codes. [...] Cinematic space, far from being ethnically neutral, is the subliminal site of competing ethnic and racial discourses having specific resonances for spectators, themselves constituted by and who constitute these discourses. The orchestration of speech, looks, make-up, costume, décor, music and dance, and locale implies a set of cultural codes whose "white" ethnic composition often remains invisible to those who have power over representation and can formulate the world in their terms.[82]

My method of analysing the 'bodies' of the three Latina actresses in film narratives relates to Shohat's formulation of 'cultural codes.' By looking at how the stars' figures are projected, I will focus on how their image may be read in relation to ethnicity, in particular to Latinaness. While Hollywood attempts to present and link these actresses to the Latino community, I seek to show how their ethnic femininity is emphasized in film narratives. Before doing this, it is necessary to explore what Latinas have come to represent in more contemporary Hollywood films and how ethnic themes may go beyond presenting 'local colour' within the narrative.

Ella Shohat in her essay 'Ethnicities-in-Relation: Toward a Multicultural Reading on American Cinema,' discusses the "other" in musical narrative spaces within a black and Latin American setting.[83] As Shohat explains in her analysis of foreign musical numbers, the 'locale' provided the justification for the narrative to display North American characters' exotic and/or erotic behaviour. As for Latin American characters, Shohat recognises that 'their presence is tolerable on the folkloric level of music and dance.'[84] As a consequence, and unsurprisingly, a large number of Latina images have been packaged in many films in the form of the 'native' woman provocatively dancing. While it may be true that, in the past, dance performances had a purely sexualised purpose, I would contest that contemporary narratives that include Latinas dancing are restricted to a purely one-sided traditional (and stereotypical) perception. Through readings of dance performances of all three stars, I will demonstrate that dance sequences can be interpreted as part of the 'transformation' process, as verbal expression, authenticity, and even 'exoticism'. Furthermore, when dance performances occur, they are essential to the narrative development.

Linda Mizejewski's book *Ziegfeld Girl: Image and Icon in Culture and Cinema* explores the politics of dance in American culture and the concept of the American type in Ziegfeld's follies.

---

[82] Ibid., p 218.
[83] See Shohat (1991), p 216.
[84] Ibid., p 236.

The promotion and construction of the Ziegfeld girl involved the creation of an ideal American girl emerging with model white features. Significantly, this putting forward an image of 'Americanness' camouflaged the ethnic identity of many of the Ziegfeld dancers, such as Polish Jewish showgirl Annhalin (Anna) Held. What is more, in terms of race and ethnicity it seems that Ziegfeld reinforced the notion of sexuality via non-white bodies as his dancers were compelled to use light brown body paint to offer a more stereotypical notion of 'forbidden sexuality.'[85] The showgirl was thus packaged as desirable despite the connotation of upper class or European ancestry which supposedly packaged a more respectable white image. That Cameron Diaz possesses European features (Spanish and German) is noteworthy, however, my work draws attention to the exoticised image of a racially ideal Latina body. The use of the actress's dance performance will illustrate how she is positioned as a sexual site despite her wholesome image on and off screen. The depiction of Diaz as a sexual being will allow me to examine a different Latina 'spectacle' in that the actress's whiteness and ethnicity are packaged to reinforce class and racial difference in dance performances. Ironically her body is also designated as an American girl in film narratives. It should be noted that Diaz dance performances are also of interest because she appears in musical numbers much more frequently than Perez and Lopez, despite the fact that both are former professional dancers. Nonetheless, in defining the image of Diaz as American *and* Latina, I will argue that the actress's dance performances are of importance because they represent and contest discourses of whiteness.

Adrienne L. McLean's analysis of Judy Garland's body in dance performances and the expressions conveyed will also be explored in this research as it serves to examine dance as a 'marker of authenticity.'[86] In contrast to Richard Dyer's focus on the spontaneous nervous tics of Garland during musical performances as authentic gestures which, despite not having any function in the star's persona, remain as part of her 'neurotic' image off and on screen, McLean assesses Garland's dance performance as a display of signs which evoke physical as well as psychological tension. The non-verbal gestures and movements that play a vital part in Garland's performance show how the actress's body conveys physical pain. In other words, McLean provides evidence which clearly demonstrates the actress's performance as authentically neurotic despite the continual references in the press to the actress's stardom as distressing and repressive. The point I wish to make here is that if we dismiss the publicity of Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez there is still enough

---

[85] Linda Mizejewski, *Ziegfeld Girl: Image and Icon in Culture and Cinema* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), pp 10-11.

[86] Adrienne L. McLean, 'Feeling and the filmed Body: Judy Garland and the kinesics of suffering,' *Film Quarterly*, Spring (2002).
[Online] Accessed 23 November 2004.
http:www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1070/is_3_55/ai_85465100

evidence to suggest that the choreography of movements in their dance performances reflects the image and persona of each star thereby emphasising the authentic nature of their dance number.

In the chapters dedicated to Perez and Lopez, I consider their performances as hip hop dancers and the exhibiting of their bodies as dynamic street dancers, which offers another way to analyse Latina identity. This is not to say that Perez and Lopez have not performed sensual dance numbers which have clearly established their images as erotic, rather that, in the performances of both actresses there is some level of agency which positions these two stars as empowered ethnic figures. It should be noted that while a limited number of studies on Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez have mentioned the dance performances in their careers, none have offered an examination of several dance performances across their films as I hope to do. It is clear that the positing of Perez as a 'black' Latina contributes to the actress's consideration as an authentic urban figure associated with ghettoness thus also mapping out her authentic identity as a street (hip hop) performer. With hip hop evolving from minstrelsy it will be necessary to explore the connotations of blackface performance as it contributes to the history of American cultural identity and performance. W. T. Lhamon Jr.'s study of the way in which minstrelsy developed as a popular craze and later as a site of contest against the middle and upper classes is useful in this thesis in that, Latinos and African Americans identify themselves as contenders lashing out at the social inequalities they suffer from as a working and racial group.[87] By analysing the emergence of this dance form as essential to the streets of New York we can understand the circumstances leading to the stardom of Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez, both as actresses who began their careers in New York and as hip hop performers.

There are several theoretical approaches that have helped shape this research and, in the field of star studies, Andrew Britton provides a meticulous analysis of one case study in his book *Katherine Hepburn: Star as Feminist*. Examining the screen legend's stardom by focusing on the publicity parallel to the actress's films, Britton 'exposes' and de/constructs the challenging and conflicting Hepburn persona in relation to the star's radical image.[88] Thus, Britton's work is useful as its method of star studies will form the basis for a construction and deconstruction of the contemporary Latina stars via an analysis of a corpus of film texts and publicity materials, to provide a detailed analysis of consistencies and changes across the production of the star image and persona.[89]

---

[87] W. T. Lhamon Jr., *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip-Hop*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988).
[88] Britton.
[89] Ibid., p 15.

Although Britton clarifies that, 'the importance of publicity and promotion consists in the fact that they *seek* to define an orientation of the star – not that they succeed,' his use of 'evidence' (publicity quotes) throughout his work supports his findings.[90] Since Britton's analysis establishes how the star persona may be articulated, I refer to his text in order to provide a similar framework throughout my work on all the film stars to be discussed. In particular, I hope to offer a similar examination of publicity in order to answer those questions Britton raises early on concerning publicity and promotion: 'what is she [the actress] supposed to represent, [and in what way are] specific qualities (let alone contradictions) to be defined?'[91]

Other important discourses on femininity and performance include Maria DiBattista, whose book *Fast Talking Dames* focuses on the dynamics of speech executed by comic heroines of the 1930s and 1940s. Exploring female performance and the non-traditional notions of femininity via actresses who have been able to 'speak their mind' on screen, DiBattista explains:

> [...] when film found its human voice, it simultaneously gave to the American woman, as performer and heroine, a chance to speak her mind, to have a real, not just a presumptive, say in her own destiny.'[92]

Significantly the power of 'free speech' for many female performers is often situated in comedic films which clearly ease the tension between the independent protagonist and her (more than often submissive) male counterpart. Kathleen Rowe's work is similar to DiBattista's in that the author also examines female comic performance and the notion of women who step beyond 'social practices and aesthetic forms' and are hence 'branded' as unruly.[93] The representation of unruliness in Hollywood films will be addressed in this research in order to explore how Latina stardom contests discourses on gender and ethnicity. Thus, to consider the concept of Latinas as independent women is to disrupt ethnic traditions of femininity with behaviour more easily associated with American language and conduct.[94] In the stars I analyse, all three are considered to be 'fast-talking dames' in that they are independent women who clearly do not hesitate to voice their opinion.

Part of DiBattista's work looks at the voice stars used to execute their lines; therefore, the actresses' diction, intonation, speed and manner of speech (e.g., slang) all come into play when analysing their linguistic performance. Amy Lawrence's study of the female voice in classical

---

[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., p 16.
[92] Maria DiBattista, *Fast Talking Dames*, (New Haven and London: 2001), p 11.
[93] Kathleen K. Rowe, *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p 19.
[94] The fast talking dame has often been associated with American actresses whose voices and quick dialect have contributed to making 'the American language distinct.' (DiBattista (2001), p xiii.) For this reason, this type of character can be linked to notions of Americanness.

cinema also considers 'the woman's physical voice; her relationship to language or verbal discourse, and her possession of authorial point of view.'[95] Lawrence's discussion of women's speech leads her to examine the complexity of the female voice and how it must be analysed apart from the dialogue of the film. Lawrence further asserts that the voice functions as part of the star system since the star is often recognised by her voice.[96] Because the accent draws attention to the voice and underscores the defining of groups as 'other', the voice becomes a signifier of ethnic femininity, hence my interest in Lawrence's work.[97]

In Kaja Silverman's work on the female voice in classic cinema, she extends Lacanian psychoanalytic theories and focuses on discourses of the trauma of (symbolic) castration. The identification of women is compared to how the male is 'defined' as whole, complete or superior, specifically at the moment when the male subject sees the female body for the first time and is confronted with the loss of the object/penis. Silverman uses this argument to not only contest that the female subject is reduced by the male gaze, but also that her voice is rendered as powerless since 'it' is attached to the female body. The author further emphasises that at the same time the female body is posited as an object of desire for the male gaze, woman's speech in film is created 'for her by an external agency, or uttered by her in a trancelike state.'[98] Having no opinion or power over language, a woman's voice is then often reduced to hysteria, paranoia or even silence in mainstream cinema.[99] This recognition of women as hysterical subjects is integral to my reading of Rosie Perez, for hysteria in the actress's persona contradicts the boundaries assigned to ethnic femininity in film. I argue that the establishment of agency in script and performance by the female star redirects the analysis of the woman's voice as a 'speaking subject'. By reinterpreting Luce Irigaray's description of woman as always being 'a *speaking subject* (Silverman's emphasis), even if her words have fallen on deaf ears, or if she has been excluded from certain discursive positions [...],' I look at the voice within an ethnic persona and consider a shift from exclusion to the foregrounding of her voice (or hysteria) as a dominant source of language.[100] By positing the female voice as authoritative we can question issues of male potency thereby complicating feminist discourses on gender and sexuality in film.

---

[95] Amy Lawrence, Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema (Berkeley, CA and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p 111.
[96] Ibid., p 125.
[97] Ibid., p 126.
[98] Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988) p 31.
[99] Ibid., p 65.
[100] Drawing attention to Luce Irigaray's conceptualisation of the female subject, Silverman contests Irigaray's critique that it is not during pre-Oedipal phase but rather the initial phase of the period that the mother is identified as an erotic image by the daughter (after she has been separated from the maternal figure), p 160. Luce Irigaray, *The Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1985).

Because of the exaggerated manner that Perez' mouth has been depicted in film, I return to discourses on minstrelsy to compare how the actress's mouth may be compared to notions of black bodies as 'grotesque' and 'powerful.' [101] Ironically, the body paint in minstrelsy, as Eric Lott explains, exaggerates the mouth as red or white to produce 'fat lips' which speak of 'the cultural relationship of white to black in America [...].'[102] In Perez' film debut we notice her naturally thick lips; however, we are also witnessing her as an agent of racial degradation towards the (white) elite. Thus, if the exaggerated mouth in minstrelsy served to violently and sexually belittle the black male body then Perez' first appearance had the opposite effect. I should point out, however, that while minstrelsy 'ridicules the speaker', Perez' 'voice' articulates her will to resist dominant (and black) culture despite the fact that the 'grain' of her voice produces a (humourous) high-toned accent.[103] More importantly, because of the fame of the actress's mouth, I hope to show how her voice has become a site of gender and ethnic power.

Ethnic Female Stardom: Transformation and Authenticity

In this thesis I examine the transformation of three Latina stars by considering the way popular texts and films construct their image and persona. In all three cases, 'ethnicity' is interwoven in film and publicity although not necessarily balanced out. For the Latina stars this leads to questions of whether their images project a 'more' or 'less' Latina look as compared to the stereotypical perceptions we have of the Latina image. Throughout my work, I hope to make it clear that transformation is not necessarily confined to how Hollywood 'creates and provides its audience' with an idea of Latinas but more how transformation is becoming common in Latina actresses and how the industry attempts to deal with the phenomenon of Latina stardom.

Perhaps the two bodies of work which most influence my own are Diane Negra's and Adrienne L. McLean's studies on ethnic female stardom. In her book *Off White Hollywood*, Negra investigates the ethnicity of white European actresses and analyses the relationship between, and construction of, ethnicity and whiteness in the Hollywood system. Examining actresses from early cinema through to contemporary films, Negra considers how ethnicity has been worked into the construction of female stardom, thus considering the packaging and promotion of ethnically diverse performers into successful stars in American cinema. Thus, the narratives of the films discussed in her work underscore how ethnicity is synthesised, or 're-written' into films at the same time that

[101] Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp 147, 115.
[102] Ibid., p 30.
[103] Ibid., p 122.

whiteness is called upon to guarantee a non-threatening feminine body. Also detailed are the terms of transformation in relation to American citizenry, class status, consumerism, as well as the events occurring at the time of their stardom.

My aim in this dissertation is to refer to Negra's work by examining how ethnicity and whiteness have functioned in Latina stardom. Whereas Negra expands her work to include a number of ethnically defined stars during an eight-decade span, I focus my own research on three actresses of similar ethnic background during a two-decade period and, more importantly, each with a distinct racial physiognomy, thus also exploring the role of blackness within ethnic stardom. This investigation will lead to discussions on racial issues and the crossover between Latino and black cultures, as well as to how class and region come into play in the stardom of Latinas who have emerged from diverse upbringings. Equally essential to this research is how three actresses of Latina descent have widely divergent ethnic identities.

Negra has observed that, 'ethnic women seem even more likely to be positioned as purely virtuous or innately evil.'[104] She goes further, stating: 'Ethnic femininity has been most frequently associated with unauthorized sexuality, permitting audience members the pleasures of using the foreign body to interrogate sexuality from a safe distance.'[105] While it is true that ethnic 'others' have often been categorised as sexual, much can be said about how contemporary ethnic stars utilise their difference and sexuality to underscore ethnic pride, at the same time that they exploit their celebrity privileges in American society. That Latina stars have become active agents on-screen as well as off is especially significant in challenging debates about meanings of women, ethnicity and sexuality.

It should be clarified that part of this research deals with how ethnicity can also function as a site of continual transformation by foregrounding an actress's identity as Latina/American in films or other media texts. Such investigation is key to this thesis since I will consider Cameron Diaz as an ethnic figure in a white body. By looking at the claims of *latinidad* in Diaz' publicity, we can affirm the actress's ethnic identity by exploring how authenticity guarantees her Latina stardom although she projects WASP characters. In this respect, my project is similar to Adrienne L. McLean's work in which she examines Rita Hayworth's Spanish-Irish background in relation to the star's transformation into 'an American Love Goddess.'[106] McLean observes in her work, 'Hayworth's ethnicity provides a means by which she is able to integrate wholesomeness with eroticism in her film texts, and that is why she became such a popular American star.'[107] Although

[104] Negra., p 8.
[105] Ibid., p 18.
[106] McLean (1993), p 8.
[107] Ibid., p 9.

it may not have been unusual for Hollywood to 'transform' actors into stars, Hayworth's transformation combined 'oxymoronic' labels such as 'erotic' and 'traditional,' by which her ethnicity and 'American' look 'guaranteed' both images. Hence, because this project complicates the notion that all Latina bodies are the same, what I hope to demonstrate via three diverse contemporary Latina figures, is *when* precisely transformation occurs within persona and image as well as how ethnicity is de/constructed.

Like Negra and Holmlund, McLean considers the relation between body and publicity in discourses on ethnic actresses. Her discussion of transformation proves how the fabrication of Rita Hayworth involved not only a gruelling physical make over but the star's identity/name also became anglicised. While Lopez has not anglicised her name much needs to be said on the actress's physical transformation from the curvaceous brunette to the slender, blonde and often blue-eyed star. Following a format similar to McLean, I analyse the physical transformation of Jennifer Lopez from an ethnically defined image to a more 're(de)fined' white look. My reading of Lopez will examine how the actress has conformed to the dominant notion of femininity *after* becoming a star, as well as how her ethnic identity has remained 'intact' despite such a contradictory process.

There are a number of ways in which I consider the transformation of stars besides the more obvious physical makeover. Jane Gaines' study of actresses' bodies and their wardrobe in cinema offers one interpretation of how the star's body has been realigned to emphasise or de-emphasis physical traits to produce a more proportionate on-screen figure.[108] By positioning the body with the notion of costuming, Gaines tells us that: '[...] these actresses' bodies were part of the material used to build the fantasy mise-en-scène, [...]. To tell the story, the body had to bound, thus the designers devised tricks for reconstructing the star body.'[109] The effects of creating allusions via costume aesthetics is evident in the stardom of Jennifer Lopez whose ample hips are often 'hidden' when she is characterising non-Latina roles. Thus Gaines' assertion of a parallel construction between stardom and costume may be applied in an analysis of Lopez' 'transformed' body by linking persona and image.

Dyer and Negra's work is valuable for highlighting how stars can be posited as authentic sites in text and film narratives. Whereas both analyse qualities which assure authenticity, Dyer and Negra's methods offer two unique applications to the study of stardom. In 'A Star is Born and the

[108] Jane Gaines, *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*,' Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds.) (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p 20.
[109] Ibid., p 20.

Construction of Authenticity,' Dyer reads Judy Garland's star text around the material that posits the star as 'real.' As Dyer points out:

> features on the stars which tell us that the star is *not* like he or she appears to be on screen serve to reinforce the authenticity of the star as a whole. And, very often, films made subsequent to a particular exposé will incorporate the truth revealed by the exposé as part of the authentification of the star in his/her next film.[110]

Moreover, Dyer draws our attention to how authenticity is necessary to the phenomenon of stardom since it 'guarantees [...] particular values a star embodies (such as girl-next-door-ness, etc.).[111] For the stars under examination here there is constant affirmation of Lopez, Perez and Diaz as real sites of ethnic femininity in their publicity, hence the underscoring of their Latina background in media texts. Further enhancing their image as 'true' Latina stars, in particular in the case of Rosie Perez, is the manner in which the actress's 'street' persona is written to suit her 'tough' image. Perez' case is interesting in this respect because it seems that directors use the actress as a site of authenticity.

In her discourse on Marisa Tomei, Negra considers how the actress's 'ethnicity serves as a code for authenticity,'[112] such as her spirituality and association to her neighbourhood. Additionally, Negra's study of Tomei examines how the actress's heritage surfaces in several of her films (e.g., *My Cousin Vinny*, *Oscar*). For this reason, the type of vocabulary attached to a performance can contribute to the authenticity of that performance; in Tomei's case 'natural' is cited in the actress's star text while 'sincere' has been posited as a term to refer to Garland's performance in *A Star is Born*. Thus, Dyer and Negra's argument on authenticity will allow me to establish how each of the three actresses being examined offers an authentic image of Latinness via publicity or press.

In considering the search for authenticity in a star persona, it is important to look at how the term may be defined. In his book *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegard to Camus*, Jacob Golomb addresses the construction of authenticity from several perspectives, including those of Heidegger and Nietzche. While (for the purpose of this research) I disagree with Nietzche's discussion of authenticity in opposition to 'studying concrete persons within a specific society,'[113] I do consider the philosopher's writings about the individual in search of authenticity as 'a kind of artist who freely shapes his self as a work of art,'[114] in particular with regard to my reading of

---

[110] Richard Dyer, 'A Star is Born and the Construction of Authenticity,' *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p 136.
[111] Ibid., 133.
[112] Negra, pp 145–146.
[113] Jacob Golomb, *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegard to Camus*, Chapter 5, Heidegger's Ontology of Authenticity (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p 91.
[114] Ibid., p 69.

Jennifer Lopez' rise to fame as film, pop music and fashion icon. Heidegger's recognition of authenticity informs us that:

> Authenticity does not consist solely of courageous resoluteness in the face of death, for it entails a special relationship with one's individual past and historical heritage. An authentic Being must appropriate its tradition in an authentic 'coming back' which secures its authentic looking-forward. One must accommodate one's past to have a present. [115]

In other words, to maintain individual authenticity one cannot be alienated from one's past and heritage, instead, it must be inherited; once this is achieved, Heidegger affirms that society 'will not be able to take it out of one's hands.'[116] This connection between authenticity and heritage will serve to solidify a Latina identity amongst the three actresses in my work.

Vivian Sobchack in her essay 'Postmodern Modes of Ethnicity' details how an ethnic identity can be structured as a descent and consent. Whereas descent applies to our inheritance of our ethnic roots, the construction of consent 'emphasises the "assumption of cultural identity."' [117] In this context, we choose how we are perceived as either ethnic, American, or both, by the manner we present or 're-invent' ourselves. Furthermore, as Sobchack observes: 'The sense we make of both American-ness and ethnicity is highly dependent upon the co-existence of and negotiation between cultures of descent and consent, upon the construction of such conceptual boundaries and their trespass.'[118] Thus, Sobchack's argument offers insight into the manner in which a Latina identity can also embody markers of American-ness whilst not rejecting the notion of an ethnic persona. What this means is that although the actresses to be discussed in this work can present a conflict of cultural identity because of the persistent positioning of 'American' labels in their publicity or persona, it is more than likely that there is an ongoing relationship with *latinidad*, either by descent or consent.

If, as Sobchack points out, there is an agreement between consent and descent, there is a cultural reading of ethnic identity that can also be constructed or defined as postmodern. Sobchack describes postmodernism in several ways, first referring to Frederic Jameson's notion of the term as 'a weakening of historicity that leads to the nostalgic scavenging of bits and pieces of the past in which Jameson sees as "the well-nigh universal practice today .. pastiche."' She then cites Linda Hutcheon's account of postmodernism as 'a culturally limited phenomenon that institutes a very specific "critical revisiting, an ironic dialogue with the past of both art and society, a recalling of a

---

[115] Ibid., p 114.
[116] Ibid., p 101.
[117] Vivian Sobchack, 'Postmodern Modes of Ethnicity,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman, (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 332.
[118] Ibid., p 333.

critically shared vocabulary of ... forms."[119] Yet, in *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam discuss postmodernism as 'the global ubiquity of market culture, a new stage of capitalism in which culture and information become key terrains for struggle.'[120] They also consider George Yudice's notion of the term as a 'postmodern space of the vocal (oral ethnography, a people's history, slave narratives), as a way of restoring voice to the voiceless.'[121] My analysis of ethnic female stardom will address postmodernism by briefly tracing the history of Hispanics to understand how this ethnic group has been positioned in the media and portrayed by the film establishment. By 'scavenging' the past we can explore how Hispanics have been depicted in the film industry by examining former Hollywood Latina stars, most notably Dolores del Río and Rita Hayworth. It may thus be possible to establish a link between past and present; not only can we begin to analyse the transformation of these Latina actresses to stars, but we can also, explore the circumstances in the United States which have led to the rise of so many Latino/a stars, as opposed to the social setting of Hollywood's past when del Río and Hayworth 'reigned'.

Chapter Breakdown

This thesis is divided into the following sections: Chapter 2 briefly looks at the two Latino groups (Puerto Rican and Cuban) to be discussed in this research. Also to be explored is the demographic shift, economic influence and political status of Latinos, as well as the relationship between Latinos and African Americans in the United States. A brief history of Latino representation in Hollywood will be included as well as a more detailed summary of how the Hollywood industry has, thus far, represented and projected Latina actresses; cinematic and historical moments for Latinos in general will also be discussed. This section will establish an idea of common concepts and views on Latina actresses, analyse if these views are still present within contemporary American cinema and set out my methodological approach.

Chapter 3 is on Rosie Perez and how the Latina actress's stardom is often summarised by her vocal range. In reading Perez' star text, I argue that the actress's Puerto Rican heritage and Brooklyn upbringing, as well as her accent, continuously define her as an 'unruly' Latina figure in

---

[119] Fredric James, 'Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,' and Linda Hutcheon, 'Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism,' in *A Postmodern Reader* Hutcheon, Linda and Joseph Natoli (eds.) (New York: New York State University Press, 1991). Cited in Vivian Sobchack's essay, 'Postmodern Modes of Ethnicity,' p 341.

[120] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism Multiculturalism and the Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p 338.

[121] Ibid., p 214.

films. I also focus on the actress's petite yet feisty figure, which is often framed on a parallel level to Perez' potent voice. This chapter also illustrates how the actress is often seen as 'representing' blackness thus inviting further racial and ethnic discourse on the star's body. Moreover, because Perez' stardom begins to dwindle in publicity texts at the same time that Lopez begins to conquer Hollywood, we witness a redefined image of the petite star, not physically but psychologically. It is my intention then to consider the reasons for the transformation of Rosie Perez from Hollywood 'wild (Latina) child' to mature (Broadway) star.

Chapter 4 examines the career of another Puerto Rican star elevated to Latina icon: Jennifer Lopez. In contrast to Rosie Perez' career, that of Lopez has not been limited to Latina roles although her rise to fame stemmed from her performance as Latina idol Selena Quintanilla Perez. In reading the stardom of Lopez, I examine her 'transformation' into 'Hollywood's glammest style diva'[122] hence my focus on the much-publicized features of the actress's 'world famous body.'[123] I look to how Lopez' body plays a role in consumption and cultural identity, including her creation of her 'J.Lo' fashion wear, as well as her ability to shift from haute couture to urban wear without jeopardising her star image and persona. My discussion on the chameleon-like change from ghetto to glamour will also focus on Lopez' dialectical shift between blackness, *latinidad* and whiteness. I read Lopez' singing career, since no other actress has simultaneously dominated the film and music industry. Moreover, Lopez has repeatedly confirmed that music is part of 'who she is', hence the important role her singing career will contribute to this thesis.

Chapter 5 looks at Cameron Diaz and at how the notion that Latinas have dark features draws attention to the unique physiognomy of the Cuban-American star. It is of most interest to investigate how her figure serves to fulfil Hollywood's desire to promote the idyllic 'white' feminine figure on screen, while at the same time offering the Latino community another 'type' of Latina actress. While this is not to say that Diaz has always been recognised or accepted as Latina, it is significant to read her persona as feeding stereotypical discourse on ethnic women as being limited to dancing spectacles. As the only Latina star with an 'All-American' image and persona, I evaluate how Diaz' blonde hair and blue eyes contradict the typical Latina image, particularly when she is compared to other mainstream Latina actresses such as Rosie Perez or Jennifer Lopez. I also examine Diaz' portrayal of WASP roles that have not supported the Cuban-American's status as an 'authentic' Latina, as well as the actress's publicity, which repeatedly points up her *cubana* status.

---

[122] Kate Fraser, 'Living La Vida Lopez,' *Looks*, March (UK, 2000), p 14.
[123] Louise Gannon, 'Billion Dollar Babe,' *Elle*, July (UK, 2000), p 61.

Conclusion

It seems that scholars are increasingly turning to look at some of these other matters as the work of Lester D. Friedman, Ana M. López and Adrienne L. McLean so ably indicate. Through my own research I hope to build on the valuable foundations of their recent work into ethnicity and Latin stardom; I will focus on contemporary rather than classical Hollywood, a world in which Latino star transformations seem to happen much more frequently and publicly than they once did. My decision to look at Jennifer Lopez, Rosie Perez and Cameron Diaz has been a careful choice, as the grades of their stardom seem to run in extreme contrasts much like their racial physiognomy. In considering their stardom I try to step away from the conventional assessments of ethnic starlets as just that. Indeed, the social, cultural and economic shift of Latinos in the United States has triggered the transformation of Latina stars from the notorious vamp of early cinema to pop culture icons. This study will hope to show not only that the 'make-up' of contemporary Latina actresses has evolved to include an image of, dare I say, natural 'white divinity' but more importantly that the role of ethnic female performers has transformed so that we now witness powerful female figures in Hollywood taking control of their image and stardom. What this research hopes to offer then, is a contribution to the rising demand for Latino discourses, a study which increasingly needs to understand and question how contemporary Latino/a images are being re/presented within the United States.

2

Latinos in the United States and in Hollywood Films

In this chapter I want to briefly discuss the historical background of Puerto Rico and Cuba as Spanish colonies. By doing so, I will be able to outline how both groups have been (and continue to be) influenced by Spain (in terms of language and physiognomy). I will also examine the initial relationship between these Caribbean islands and the United States and comment upon significant moments in the histories of Puerto Rico and Cuba which have caused members from both groups to emigrate/immigrate.[1] An examination of how members of both ethnic groups have been treated on the mainland will facilitate an analysis of how Cubans and Puerto Ricans have been depicted in American culture generally.

The growth of Latinos during the last quarter of a century will also be explored in this chapter as the basis for a discussion of the effects of the demographic shift and the economic influence and political status of this population. This discussion will lead to my analysis of the cultural impact Latinos have had in the United States as well as their relationship with Blacks, whom they have displaced as the nation's largest minority. I also look at how Latinos have been portrayed in film since the early days of cinema and the sudden 'Latino boom' in the United States. It is my aim to offer an understanding of Latino stardom, and, more importantly, to map out the representation of Latinas in Hollywood.

[1] Puerto Ricans are American citizens and therefore emigrate to the mainland unlike other Latino groups, who immigrate to the United States.

Cuban and Puerto Rican History

In 1898 the United States declared war on Spain and attempted to help Cubans gain independence from Spanish rule.[2] Cuba, already involved in a ten-year war with Spain, had further retaliated against the European empire by seeking assistance from the United States. When the war ended, Spain relinquished several of its territories to the United States including Cuba and Puerto Rico,[3] 'the only Spanish colonies left in the Western Hemisphere.'[4] But while Cubans gained their independence, Puerto Ricans remained in the hands of the United States because of the island's 'military importance'; Puerto Rico 'formed a strategic triangle with other American bases.'[5] Significantly, a quarter of a century later, Puerto Rico would become American territory and its people United States citizens.[6]

By the first part of the twentieth century, Cubans and Puerto Ricans began to travel to the United States in large numbers. Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers have written of the historic waves of Latino exodus to the United States, noting that the majority of Cuban immigrants were seeking political asylum, whilst Puerto Ricans, living below the poverty line, wanted economic relief. To begin with, the earliest Puerto Rican migration to the mainland began in the late 1920s and continued into the early 1930s. During this time, two hurricanes devastated the island's resources and economy, causing a great many Puerto Ricans to leave the island. But with the United States facing the depression, *puertorriqueños* had to wait until 1947 when the American government began to initiate tax concessions and low wages to companies willing to relocate to the island. The proposal, known as 'Operation Bootstrap,' not only offered native inhabitants more

---

[2] Puerto Rico led several revolutions challenging the Spanish regime. The best documented revolution on the island took place September 23, 1868, and was known as 'El Grito de Lares.'

[3] After the Spanish-American war, Spain also loses the Virgin Islands, Guam and the Philippines. Nícolas Kanellos, *Thirty Million Strong: Reclaiming the Hispanic Image in American Culture* (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishers, 1998), p 97.

[4] Himilce Novas, *Everything You Need to Know About Latino History* (New York: Plume, 1994), p 157.

[5] Jan Rogozinski, *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and The Carib to the Present* (New York: Meridian, 1992), p 250.

[6] Unlike Cubans or any other Latino group, Puerto Ricans are United States citizens. Yet native inhabitants are subject to a different set of laws that do not apply to those considered as American residents. On the one hand, *puertorriqueños* are free to travel to the mainland and are exempt from having to pay federal taxes. On the other, they are ineligible to vote in federal elections and as a result, have no representation in the Senate nor are permitted to vote for 'their' President. Significantly, up until 1952, all matters affecting Puerto Ricans on the island had been governed by federal law. At such time, the island became a commonwealth (or free associated state), which permitted the residents to elect their own governor and decide on laws concerning Puerto Ricans, such as the right to maintain the use of Spanish as their maternal language. In 1967, 1993 and 1998, Puerto Ricans voted on the political status of the island, whether it should remain an associated state, become another state or gain independence, like Cuba. In 1967, 60 percent of the votes favoured to remain as a commonwealth whilst in 1998 only a small percentage of votes swayed towards *status quo* instead of statehood. Another vote will take place in 2008.

opportunities and economic relief, but also enabled *boricuas*[7] to take advantage of the cheap airfare to the states hoping to find work. As a result, between 1946 and 1964 'some one hundred thousand workers'[8] moved to the United States thereby contributing to the second and largest wave of Puerto Rican migrants.[9]

In 1959, in the midst of 'Operation Bootstrap,' the United States was also faced with the first wave of political exiles fleeing from the Cuban revolution; Fidel Castro led the uprising and eventually became the island's dictator. Three years later, this flood of political émigrés to the United States temporarily ceased, but in 1965 another wave of refugees sparked an eight-year period of mass departure from the Cuban island. In contrast to the Puerto Rican exodus (or any other Latino immigration), Cuban exiles were prominent members of their society. Dinnerstein and Reimers explain that, 'about 70 percent (of the first wave of Cuban exiles) were professional, skilled, or white-collar workers; almost 40 percent had some college education; and 80 percent had yearly incomes above those earned by the average Cuban.'[10] Thus, with their professional skills, education and wealth, Cubans eventually established the exceptional image of model immigrants in the United States. Moreover, with the settlement of Cuban immigrants in Miami, the Floridian city not only became 'the second largest "Cuban" city after Havana,'[11] but it also transformed into 'a dynamic centre of international trade.'[12]

In 1980, the exemplary image of Cubans was to soon be threatened when the last upsurge of refugees to arrive in Florida included thousands of prisoners and mental patients (along with political refugees); the sending of corrupt immigrants became Castro's response to the United States for accepting 'traitors'. Despite sharp criticism of former President Jimmy Carter for his

---

[7] Prior to Spanish conquest, Puerto Rico was inhabited by *Taíno* Indians who named the island *Borinquén* - 'land of the brave lord.' Today, many Puerto Ricans refer to each other as *Boricuas*, 'a form of bonding that reaffirms ancient roots.' See Novas (1994), p 145.

[8] Kanellos, p 116.

[9] In all the materials gathered on Puerto Rican history there is no consistent date on the migrations of Puerto Ricans to the United States. For example, in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Stephan Thernstrom considers the first major exodus during the 1920s (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: The Belknap Press, 1980), p 860. Eugene Holley, Jr., in his article 'The New *Nueva York*,' writes that the first wave occurred at the turn of the century while the second migration was between 1945 and 1948, in *Hispanic*, September (New York, 1997), p 62. While I have referred to Thernstrom for reference on the first migration, I have here noted Mike Davis' claim of the second migration of Puerto Ricans since his book *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), offers a more recent analysis of Puerto Ricans in the United States, in particular New York, pp 123–130. However, Davis does not include a historical background of Puerto Ricans and thus does not retrace dates to the first migration, hence my noting Thernstrom.

[10] Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers, *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration*, Fourth Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p 145.

[11] L.H. Gann and Peter J. Duignan, *The Hispanics in the USA: A History* (Boulder, CO and London: Westview Press, 1986), p 104.

[12] Kanellos, p 117.

acceptance of the undesirable 'Marielitos,'[13] Cubans and Cuban-Americans could not avoid the media's 'tarnishing' of their Latino image, such as the stereotypical representation of Cubans in Brian De Palma's film *Scarface* (Universal Pictures, 1983, US). De Palma utilised the 'Marielitos' controversy as part of the narrative in his film and projected *cubanos* as Miami's most recent drug lords and gangsters.[14]

While the majority of Cubans arriving in the United States settled in the Miami district of Florida, the greater part of the Puerto Rican population 'claimed' New York City as their new home. In his book *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City*, Mike Davis points out that there are as many Puerto Ricans in New York as there are in San Juan.[15] Although the number of Puerto Ricans in the metropolis has halved since the 1960s,[16] in 2002 Puerto Ricans represented approximately 38% of the Latinos in New York City.[17] It is important to look at the demographic composition and transition of Puerto Ricans, and Latinos in general, to further analyse the substantial growth of the Latino population over the past two decades as well as to mark how the demographic shift has affected their economic and political power in the United States. What follows is a brief analysis of the demographics of Latinos, particularly of the three largest Latinos groups: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans, in the nation's highly concentrated Hispanic areas: Los Angeles, Miami and New York.

Demographics of Latinos

It is impossible to analyse the political and economic rise of the Latino population during the last two decades without discussing further the demographic impact of this group in the United States. With Latino numbers growing to 'about 11 percent of the national population,'[18] there has been a

[13] Because of their departure from the port of Mariel in Cuba, this last wave of refugees became known as the Marielitos.

[14] Another film focusing on Cuban immigrants in the United States is *The Perez Family* (1995). The film stars Marisa Tomei as a Cuban prostitute who has immigrated in search for the capitalist dream.

[15] Davis, p 8.

[16] Davis argues that Puerto Ricans living in New York City 'comprised four-fifths of the Latino population.' p 21.

[17] Seth Kugel, 'The Latino Culture Wars,' *The New York Times*, 24 February (New York, 2002). [Online] Accessed 3 December 2002. http://query.nytimes.com/search/articlepage.html?res=9E05E5DD103EF937A15751C0A9649C8B63

[18] Teresa A. Sullivan, 'A Demographic Portrait,' in *Hispanics in the U.S.: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century*, Pastora San Juan Cafferty and David W. Engstrom, eds. (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers: 2000), p 1.

demographic shift of 'more than 300 percent'[19] over the last twenty-five years. Offering two reasons for the dramatic growth of the Latino population, Frank D. Bean and Marta Tienda deduce 'high fertility in women and immigration'[20] as major causes. Nicholás C. Vaca in his book *The Presumed Alliance* confirms these factors as leading to Latinos' upsurge and their surpassing of the African American population as the largest minority group.[21] Significantly the growth of the Latino population in regions which have had a predominant concentration of Blacks or whites (as in the 'Deep South and Plain states)',[22] is also having an effect on the demographic composition of Latinos across the US. As Mike Davis explains:

> Regionally, both the Pacific Northwest and New England now have larger Spanish-surname than Black populations, and Latinos provided an incredible 50 percent of population growth in ten Central states over the last generation – thus sparking debate on the "Browning of the Midwest." A decade ago Latinos were a negligible element in the cultural landscape of the New South. Exponential growth of the Latino population in the 1990s (nearly 400 percent in North Carolina and Georgia) has changed this.[23]

This relocating to non-traditional Hispanic regions has drawn more than 40 percent of Latino presence in suburban regions (as opposed to rural zones), thereby 'provid[ing] more exposure and recognition for the group in national politics.'[24]

In the United States, the Latino struggle for political and economic equality is most challenged in the more traditionally concentrated Hispanic areas such as New York, California and Florida. The massive Latino immigration to these states has not only transformed the demographic make-up of these into the largest Hispanic settlements in the United States but has also created the highest concentration of Puerto Rican, Mexican-American and Cuban communities. The breakdown of the geographic settlements of these states is important to this thesis as it conceptualises the framework of the three largest Latino populations in the United States. My interest in these states, in particular New York and California, rests with the fact that the three stars to be examined in this thesis (Jennifer Lopez, Rosie Perez and Cameron Diaz) are native residents,

---

[19] Robert Suro and Audrey Singer, *Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations* (Washington D.C.: Centre on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and the Pew Hispanic Centre, July 2002), p 5. Cited in *The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict between Latinos and Blacks and what it means for America*, p 23.

[20] Frank D. Bean and Marta Tienda, *The Hispanic Population of The United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1987), p 59.

[21] Nicolás C. Vaca, *The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict between Latinos and Blacks and what it means for America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2004).

[22] Davis, p 4.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Christine Marie Sierra, 'Hispanics and the Political Process,' in *Hispanics in the U.S.: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century*, Pastora San Juan Cafferty and David W. Engstrom, eds. (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers: 2000), p 319.

and that Diaz' paternal family live in Florida which has the largest Cuban populated city in the United States: Miami.

In a 1998 *New York Times* article, California was recognised as 'the highest populated state with Latinos followed by Texas then New York.'[25] The demographics revealed that Mexicans not only represented the largest Hispanic population in California but also across the nation. Discussing the immigration of Mexicans, Himilce Novas claims that between 1890 and 1965 the United States faced the 'most significant demographic phenomena in the history of the Americas.'[26] The combination of workers, visitors, businessmen/people and students on a temporary and/or permanent basis accounted for the influx of such a large Mexican population to California. Despite the installation of border patrols in 1924, US immigration authorities could not control the masses of Mexican immigrants in search of work and a better life, and what emerged was the transformation of Los Angeles into the second largest Mexican metropolis after Mexico City. Thus the demographics of Los Angeles in 2000 showed that Latinos accounted for 46.5%, (non-Latino) Whites 29.7%, Blacks 11.2% and Asians 10%.

Over the last decade, the dispersing of the Mexican population to Eastern regions of the US has sparked another demographic shift in areas once 'dominated' by other Latino groups. Boroughs such as the Bronx and Brooklyn that have traditionally had the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans in New York[27] begin to show a compositional change when there is a tripling of Mexican residents. In the city where *boricuas* once led as the largest Latino group, there is also a steadily growing rate of Dominican immigrants comparable to that of the increase of the Mexican population. This invasion of 'new' Latinos into New York and the moving of many *boricuas* to the suburbs, as well as those who retire to Puerto Rico, explain the decrease in Puerto Rican figures. With Puerto Ricans reducing their presence by more than ten percent in the cosmopolitan area there is a transitional shift of the second largest Latino group in the nation. Just a decade earlier, in 1990, this Latino population accounted for 'more than half of all Hispanics'[28] in New York and 12.1 percent of the entire Hispanic population in the United States. Demographers have also shown that because of the steady growth of New York's Latino population (since the 1980s) there has been a

[25] *The New York Times*, 'California Repeats Role as Magnet for Hispanics,' *The New York Times*, 6 September (New York, 1998), p A25.
[26] Novas, p 100.
[27] Raquel Z. Rivera, *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2003), p 23.
[28] Susan Sachs, 'Hispanic New York Shifted in 1990s,' *The New York Times*, 22 May, (New York, 2001), p B8.

displacement of African Americans as the city's largest minority.[29] With a margin of 1.6%, the 2000 Census revealed that Hispanics became the largest minority in New York, but this was not the first time that Latinos had supplanted Blacks in areas African Americans once occupied in large numbers.

By the 1980's Miami, Florida had become the setting for intense relations between African Americans and Latinos. During this time Latinos represented more than 58 percent of the capital's population whereas Blacks only counted for 27 percent; 15 percent of Miami's population was white.[30] Two decades later, the Latino population increased to 65.8% while the Black and white population dropped to 22.3% and 11.8% respectively. Thus the demographic control of Cubans in Miami during the 1980s proved to be a key exchange of 'power' from Blacks to Cubans in the cultural, economic and political sector of Miami. A dramatic shift in a period which, Nicholas C. Vaca writes, 'would prove to be a decade filled with strife and conflict, pitting African Americans against the growing Latino power.'[31]

In the 1980s Latinos were recognised as the United States' most visible ethnic group on the rise demographically and economically. It is through this demographic shift during the period known as the Hispanic decade that Latinos would also prove to have an influential impact on American politics.[32] Discussing the government's reluctance to aid Spanish-speaking Latinos, Jorge Chapa asserts that 'in the early 1980s the federal government had reduced the number of counties requiring bilingual ballots. In Los Angeles County, whose population is 35 percent Latino, the ballot existed only in English.'[33] The approval of the Spanish ballot not only positioned Latinos as potential key figures during electoral debates but also 'altered' American politics in that Spanish thereafter became a necessary tool for addressing and informing non-English speaking Latinos. For instance, the translation of governmental texts from English to Spanish (e.g. driving manuals and exams), bus and train schedules, as well as employing Spanish-speaking operators at the telephone company have provided essential sources of communication for Latinos.[34] However, the use of Spanish in public arenas has sparked a political debate in the United States, in particular amongst some civil rights groups. What this means is that in supporting the English-Only Movement,

---

[29] Francisco L. Rivera-Batiz, *The Socioeconomic Status of Hispanic New Yorkers: Current Trends and Future Prospects* (Washington D.C.: Pew Hispanic Centre, January 2002), p 24, Table 2. Vaca (2004) p 23.
[30] Vaca, p 117.
[31] Ibid., p 116.
[32] Davis, p 15.
[33] Jorge Chapa, 'The Burden of Independence: Demographic, Economic and Social Prospects For Latinos in the Reconfigured U.S. Economy,' *Borderless Borders: US Latinos, Latin Americans and the Paradox of Independence*, *Frank* Bonilla, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), p 123.
[34] Rosaura Sánchez, 'Mapping the Spanish Language along a Multiethnic and Multilingual Border.' In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 121.

Blacks oppose any type of translation of public texts to Spanish, as well as the financing of bilingual services and education, the latter which has been predominantly utilised by Latino/immigrant children. If it is estimated, as Nicolás C. Vaca writes, that 'In the fall of 2006, the majority of the children entering the state's kindergarten will be Latino' then the lack of English proficiency may cause a disastrous effect in the United States.[35]

With '17 million speakers of Spanish in the United States' politicians have become very aware of the importance of this language in political campaigns.[36] It is significant then, that one of the most evident changes in American politics since the 1980s is the use of Spanish by politicians wishing to approach the nation's (soon to be) largest minority; this strategy was to prove vital during the next presidential elections. Another breakthrough to occur with the growth of the Latino population has been the 'forcing', as J. Jorge Klor de Alva argues, of local politicians in areas with a high concentration of Latinos to 'take unprecedented notice of Latino demands.'[37] Latino influence in several states including New York and California has also persuaded Presidential candidates to address the Hispanic population should they wish to seek office. In fact, when the 2000 Presidential elections began the Latino vote became recognisable as 'the holy grail, a huge swing vote that could win or lose the election.'[38]

The political transition of Latinos in the United States is of much interest, but of more importance is the political structure of Latinos in densely concentrated areas such as New York City, Miami and Los Angeles. What I will now look at is a brief breakdown of the political participation of Latinos in these areas as well as the Latino-Black relationship in the political domain. It is necessary to discuss the relationship between Blacks and Latinos, as they are the two largest minority groups seeking political advancement in a predominantly white institution.

The idea that Puerto Ricans were among the first Latinos to have and maintain a strong political force in New York is noted in Michael Jones-Correa's book *Between Two Nations: The Political*

---

[35] Vaca, p 15.
[36] Sánchez, p 109.
[37] J. Jorge Klor de Alva, 'Aztlán, Borinquen, and Hispanic Nationalism in the United States.' In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 63.
[38] Julian Borger, 'The World: America Decides: Bush boldly salsas to Latino tune,' *The Observer*, 23 January (UK, 2000), p 24.
[Online] Accessed 23 April 2002.
http://guardian.chadwyck.co.uk/noframes/quick/fulltext?ACTION=byoffset&warn=N&OFFSET=127924808&div=0&FILE=../session/1019494798_1716

Predicament of Puerto Ricans in New York.[39] As the author notes, the growing concentration of Puerto Ricans in the metropolitan area has since the 1960s established *boricuas* as key political figures. Jones-Correa writes: 'Until very recently, Puerto Ricans were the only Hispanics elected to major positions at the city, state, and national levels from the New York City area.'[40] Categories of political power in New York during the 1980s proved that Latino power actually meant Puerto Rican control of official seats in the city. While the transition of this Latino population moving away from New York City in the past decade shows newcomers like Dominicans and Mexicans slowly staking their claim in the metropolis, Puerto Ricans have established political success in the region as their own feat. This situation, nonetheless, has provoked considerable tension amongst other Latino groups who feel that Puerto Ricans maintain a tight grip on their political positions whilst 'executing' policies in the interest of Puerto Ricans.

By the 1990s African Americans in Miami faced an increasing rate of unemployment as low skilled Black workers met fierce competition from the more recent Cuban arrivals known as the Marielitos.[41] With the job market showing much more promise for Latinos, African Americans began to witness the steady economic rise of Cubans from lower to middle and upper class as Blacks predominantly remained in lower class status. Moreover, as Cubans began to participate and influence the economic growth in Miami, Blacks were also confronted with the need to learn Spanish in order to enter the work field and attain bank loans which seemed to be more readily available to Cuban businessmen.[42] In many respects the economic marginality between African Americans and Latinos reflects the declining power and political struggle of Blacks in Miami. Evidence to support the latter is indicated by the manner in which Black Miami residents 'had declined to 25 percent of registered voters while Latinos had grown to 50 percent.'[43] That the power structure between Blacks and Latinos was at extreme ends is noteworthy, but that the demographic strength of the Hispanic population allowed Cubans to 'assume' the role of whites, as Vaca contends, is of extreme importance in particular, as Latinos became the majority in Miami and their political leaders focused on their demands and needs.[44]

In complete contrast to the Latinos' influential structure in Miami is the political framework in California. The Mexican-American population clearly outnumbers Californian Blacks yet they remain politically 'invisible' in comparison to African Americans. Sociologist Jerry Yaffe has

---

[39] Michael Jones-Correa, *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Puerto Ricans in New York* (Ithica and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p 114.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., p 115.
[42] Ibid., p 125.
[43] Ibid., p 124.
[44] Ibid., p 111.

expressed his opinion on the increase of hostility towards Latinos by African Americans by pointing out the political overrepresentation of Blacks in Los Angeles despite their numbers being much smaller than Latinos. As the author continues, African Americans have maintained 'a strong political force since [1973], and in 1991 they occupied 22.4 percent of the city's workforce positions.' In *Latinos: A Biography*, Earl Shorris remarks upon Los Angeles Blacks upholding their control over municipal employment and their contesting against Latino advancement in the public sector. As he notes:

> Blacks and Latinos, who might have begun to form a faction, have been at each other's throat since the Mexican-American war. Black civil rights leaders have not welcomed Latinos for the simple reason that there are too few jobs, schools, hospitals, and so on to serve Blacks, let alone another gigantic group of victims of racial, social, cultural, and economic discrimination.[45]

Yaffe also writes that Blacks have,

> [...] aggressively worked against the enforcement of equal opportunity for Latinos in Los Angeles County, [...] openly advocated against inclusion of Latinos in the local government's implementation of federal, state and county legal equal-employment requirements, [and] viewed municipal employment as their domain and one that they protected vigorously and aggressively.'[46]

Efforts to further exclude Latinos seemed to have reached their peak in the most deprecating fashion when Blacks joined whites to put forward the anti-Latino act Proposition 187. In the 1990s, California Governor Pete Wilson put forward an anti-Latino immigration act which would ban public services including health benefits and free education to illegal immigrants residing and entering the state. With illegal Latino immigrants occupying a larger portion of the workforce, Blacks felt that the proposal would not only open employment opportunities for their population, but also create prospects for better housing and education, hence their voting for its approval.[47] Instead of creating support groups with Latinos, Blacks were forming an alliance with whites in the decision to pass Proposition 187.[48] And in pursuing their own needs, African Americans were agreeing with whites that Latino immigrants were the cause of a languid economy and growing crime.[49]

---

[45] Earl Shorris, *Latinos: A Biography* (New York: Avon Books, 1992), pp 426-427.
[46] Yaffe (2004), p 55.
[47] Vaca, p 187.
[48] Ibid., p 105.
[49] Wayne A. Cornelius, 'Neo-nativists Feed on Myopic Fears," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 July, Opinion Section (1993), p B7. In Rosaura Sánchez' chapter, 'Mapping the Spanish Language along a Multiethnic and Multilingual Border,' pp 103-104.

The Latino and Black Experience in the United States

While Vaca examines the lack of support Latinos have received from Blacks, other scholars look to the legitimacy of the shared Black and Latino experience in the United States. In comparing Blacks to Latinos (in particular to Puerto Ricans) there is a similar level of marginalisation in class, housing, and employment. Positioned as being of the lower classes and 'recognised' as the poorest ethnic residents, Blacks and Latinos have to contend with a lack of job security and unemployment in the United States. Surprisingly Latinos in general have also had a slightly higher rate of unemployment when compared to Blacks but, according to Jorge Chapa, in the mid 90s both groups were considered to be equally disadvantaged in the labour market: 'the Anglo rate [of unemployment] was 4.9 percent, while the rate for both African-Americans and Latinos was 10.2 percent.'[50]

In 'Rank and File: Historical Perspectives on Latino/a Workers in the US' Zaragosa Vargas examines the treatment of Latinos in comparison to Blacks and notes the similar experiences of racial discrimination in the work force as well as the placement of both groups in the lowest division of the working class.[51] Roberto P. Rodriguez-Morazzani shares a similar opinion and writes that 'The process of racialisation Puerto Ricans underwent was not totally unlike that of African Americas, especially in the post-Second World War era. From the late 1940s on, Africans migrated in large numbers from the agrarian south to the industrial belt of the Northeast and Midwest.'[52] The author further explores the settling of large Puerto Rican and Black groups in the North East (specifically in New York), and argues that Puerto Ricans have experienced a similar process of bigotry to African Americans. As Rodriguez-Morazzani details: 'From the late 1940s on [...] both groups experienced unemployment, housing discrimination, police brutality, racial violence, and racial devaluation via academic and popular portrayals.'[53] Suggesting that the social situation of Puerto Ricans is 'comparable to that of blacks,' Richard Gott also stresses that both groups seem to be 'stuck in a mental and physical ghetto.'[54] But with Puerto Ricans arriving in New York with limited English skills, they were probably considered to be worse off than blacks.

---

[50] Chapa, p 76.

[51] Zaragosa Vargas, 'Rank and File: Historical Perspectives on Latino/a Workers in the US.' *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 244.

[52] Roberto P. Rodriguez-Morazzani, 'Beyond the Rainbow: Mapping the Discourse on Puerto Ricans and "Race." In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 145.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Richard Gott, 'The racial price of life in the melting pot,' *The Guardian*, 11 July, Features (UK, 1992) p 25. [Online] Accessed 23 April 2002.
http://guardian.chadwyck.co.uk/noframes/quick/fulltext?ACTION=byoffset&warn=N&OFFSET=458003449&div=0&FILE=../session/1019494798_1716

In their work on ethnic immigrants in the United States, Dinnerstein and Reimers verify that the economic and social state of Puerto Ricans in New York has not changed, even decades after their migration to the mainland. As they state:

> To read the social and economic statistics of Puerto Ricans in New York City and elsewhere is to recall the plight of minorities in the past. Although they gained real income in the 1980s, the 1990 census revealed that 39 percent of their families, and more than half of the children, lived in poverty, double the rate for the city as a whole. A distressing number of families were headed by women. Most did not work but lived on welfare, which did not provide a decent standard of living. [...] In addition Puerto Ricans had a higher incidence of juvenile delinquency and drug addiction.[55]

Contrary to the depiction of Puerto Ricans in the United States, the 1990 census verifies that Cuban-Americans have 'the lowest unemployment rate' and 'the highest per capita income [...] of any Latino group.'[56] Moreover, although *cubanos* maintain their Latin roots whilst living in the United States, a large percentage are able to assimilate within mainstream culture because of their command of the English language.[57] Thus, that Puerto Ricans have been treated as 'second-class citizenry'[58] is critical, but what is also striking is that, unlike their wealthy Cuban 'neighbours,' Puerto Ricans (and other immigrant groups) have not received the economic support Cubans were granted upon their entry into the United States.[59]

It is important to bear in mind that when *puertorriqueños* arrived on the mainland they were immediately shocked at being identified 'as "white" or "black".'[60] Because a crucial part of this study lies in how physical features influence the manner in which Latinos (as well as other ethnic groups) have been received and portrayed in the United States, it is necessary to map out how the features of Cubans and Puerto Ricans can differ. Himilce Novas has argued that after four centuries of Spanish rule, natives 'eventually adopted or incorporated the Spanish language, culture, and religion and, to a large extent, intermarried or interbred with their conquerors.'[61] With the influx of African slaves to the islands (from 1511), as well as Chinese labourers in Cuba,[62] the physical appearance of the native (Amerindians) evolved over several centuries into a mélange of

---

[55] Dinnerstein and Reimers, p 144.
[56] Ilan Stavans, *The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on Culture & Identity in America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), p 51.
[57] Bean and Tienda, p 31.
[58] Ibid., p 25.
[59] Bean and Tienda have documented how Cubans were offered 'job training' as well as 'assistance in securing employment, reimbursement to public schools for costs incurred by the entrance of Spanish speaking Cuban children, and funds for special research and teaching opportunities for scholars.' Puerto Ricans, on the other hand, have been offered government assistance in the form of food stamps and housing aid. p 29.
[60] Thernstrom, p 864.
[61] Novas, p 2.
[62] Novas writes that 'between 1840 and 1870, about 125,000 Chinese men and women became indentured workers in Cuba.' p 198.

characteristics. Thus, while the settlement of many Spaniards and other Eastern European immigrants in Cuba resulted in a rising 'white population,' in Puerto Rico, the dominant African population contributed to a darker featured Latino compared to Cubans at that time.

Race and Ethnicity

Returning to 'Beyond the Rainbow: Mapping the Discourse on Puerto Ricans and "Race",' Rodriguez-Morazzani documents the identification of Puerto Ricans 'as non-whites, e.g., "spics", or as Black – in other words, the dark Other, by state ideological apparatuses and in the mass media.'[63] Other scholars to discuss the 'labelling' of Puerto Ricans by whites/Americans include Richie Pérez, who notes how *boricuas* have been depicted 'as 'just another form of 'nigger,' a 'mongrel race,' inferior to whites, and therefore unprepared for equal participation and undeserving equal treatment.'[64] In more recent readings on Puerto Ricans, this Latino population has been 'tastefully' described, 'as a lighter ('brown' or 'butta pecan') variation on Blackness given their tropicalised and exoticised *latinidad*.'[65] Themes of Blackness and Puerto Ricanness are also addressed by Frances Negrón-Muntaner in her book *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture*, where she discusses the racialisation of Puerto Ricans as Black as well as their treatment as second and third class citizens in the United States. As she writes:

> Upon arriving in New York, Puerto Ricans experienced further devaluation. All *boricuas* were collectively racialised as "nonwhite" and assigned a low rank within the city's ethno-racial hierarchy, as signs that read "No Dogs, No Negroes, and No Spanish" so brutally reminded them.[66]

Thus *Boricua* ethno-nationality was publicly constituted as shameful due to processed and public discourse that degraded Puerto Ricans as less than human. Most migrants were "treated as second-class citizens – with disdain, disrespect, discrimination, and dishonesty."[67]

The racialisation of Puerto Ricans as reflecting another type of 'Black' or dark race contrasts with the 'fabrication' of Cubans as being white. When we consider the construction of *puertorriqueños* in the media, it seems that their image has reflected their social dilemma in the

---

[63] Rodriguez-Morazzani, p 151.
[64] Richie Pérez, 'From Assimilation to Annihilation: Puerto Rican Images in U.S. Films,' *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin* 2, No. 8 (New York, 1990), p 12.
[65] Rivera (2003), p 11.
[66] Ruth Glasser, *My Music is My Flag* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p 73. Cited in Frances Negrón-Muntaner, *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2004), p 20.
[67] María Pérez y González, *Puerto Ricans in the United States* (Westport: Greenwood, 2000), p 56. Cited in *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture*, p 21.

United States as poor, uneducated (limited schooling and lack of English), and sexual (with a high birth rate). In contrast to *boricuas*, Cubans have been depicted as affluent and educated, thereby influencing their portrayal on celluloid as less stereotypical than other Latino groups. Vaca's recognition of Cubans assuming white roles is significant as it reflects the manner in which this Latino group presents itself as well as how it has generally been depicted in the US. In her work '*Encuentros y Encontronazos*: Homeland in the Politics and Identity of the Cuban Diaspora', María de los Angeles Torres offers a description of how Cubans were portrayed in America prior to the arrival of the Marielitos in 1980. She writes: 'Before Mariel, common mythology characterised the Cuban exile as mainly "white", conservative, and middle-class, as many of its members indeed were.' [68] The physical traits of Cubans composed of mainly Spanish and European features have further produced the image of a 'white' and therefore 'good' immigrant.[69] In other words, because Cubans have, as Maciel states, 'physical appearances and values' which have 'resembled those of Anglo-Americans,'[70] they have been generally constructed as a positive Latino image. Hence, if Cubans resembled and maintained the same ideals as Americans, we can begin to understand why Latino stereotypes were often attached to other groups, e.g., Puerto Ricans.

In their work 'Latinos and Society: Culture, Politics, and Class,' Antonio Darder and Rodolfo D. Torres write:

> In the sixties, the common academic practice of using "ethnicity" to refer to Latino populations declined and "race" became the term of analysis. [...] Thus, in addition to distancing Latinos from traditional assimilation theories of ethnicity used to explain the process of corporation of incorporation of other European ethnic groups, the idea of Latinos as the (brown) "race" provided a discursively powerful category of struggle and resistance upon which to build in-group identity and cross-group solidarity with African Americans.[71]

If we consider Darder and Torres' definition of the term 'race' we can understand how there had been a shift in accepting the notion by some Latino advocates wishing to be recognized as having the same social dilemma and civil rights influence as African Americans. The term 'race' speaks to other Latino groups such as Chicanos in a different way as it considers race as a collective identity

---

[68] María de los Angeles Torres, '*Encuentros y Encontronazos*: Homeland in the Politics and Identity of the Cuban Diaspora.' In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 50.
[69] Darder and Torres, p 15.
[70] David R. Maciel, 'Latino Cinema,' in *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the U.S. Literature and Art*, Francisco Lomelí, Alfredo Jimenez, et.al (eds.) (Houston: *Arte Público Press* and *Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana*, 1993) p 314.
[71] Darder and Torres, p 9.

in which all Latinos can join as 'one [brown] people.'[72] Although these conditions may be considered in a positive light, the notion of race continues to 'couple' Latinos with Blacks in terms of class structure instead of being related to other ethnic groups that have successfully assimilated into mainstream culture (e.g., Italians and Irish). The ideology of race is then used to position Latinos within a black and white dichotomy whilst ignoring their culture as part of the Hispanic identity. While Latinos may be linked to Blacks in that they both share similar histories, characteristics and experiences in the United States, Blacks themselves do not share a common religion, language, colonisation history, tradition or culture. What this means is that the racialising of Latinos and Blacks serves to enforce the notion of racism on a hierarchal basis while ethnicity explores one's traditional values and cultural authenticity.

Underscoring debatable issues of Blackness and *latinidad* in her work, Rivera points out how 'others seem to draw [Puerto Ricans] closer to African Americans and towards Blackness [including the] African influence in Puerto Rican culture.' Then again, as she asserts, Puerto Ricans are often 'omitted' from narratives of Blackness, which are exclusively set aside for African Americans in the United States.[73] One example is the birth of the hip hop movement in the 1970s which has now formed part of American history and mainstream culture. But the origin of hip hop and the establishment of this art form has led to rivalry between Blacks and Puerto Ricans who have both claimed this street phenomenon as their own creation. Therefore, in the following section I will conduct a brief analysis of this street culture since its 'birth' and the history Blacks and Latinos share when discussing this movement.

Crossover Between Latina and Black American Cultures

During the 1970s hip hop became the latest form of authentic street culture initiated by New York Puerto Ricans and African Americans. Although Blacks have been mostly credited with the creation of this American 'art form', Nuyoricans (or New York Puerto Ricans) have been, as Raquel Z. Rivera writes 'an integral part of hip hop culture since the creative movement.'[74] Rivera's book *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone* is an in-depth study of the development and participation of this Latino group in hip hop culture and the misperception of this phenomenon as solely an African American domain. Although other Latino groups such as Dominicans have had their input into hip hop, Rivera contends it is New York Puerto Ricans who are recognised (along

[72] Darder and Torres, p 9.
[73] Rivera (2003), pp 8-9.
[74] Ibid., p 1.

with African Americas) as one of the originators of this street culture.[75] Narrating the history of rap from its beginnings, Mandalit del Barco in his work 'Rap's Latino Sabor' writes:

> The story of hip hop begins in the mid-1970s, in the ghettos and barrios of New York City. Street jams and block parties in schoolyards and parks were the cradle of a new style of art, music, dance, slang, and fashions that became world famous. Along with graffiti art and b boying (breakdancing), rap was part of the new hip hop culture that Latinos helped create. [76]

Juan Flores in his essay 'Puerto Rocks: New York Ricans Stake Their Claim,' also agrees with Mandalit del Barco by observing that, New York *boricuas* have had 'a history in hip hop since its beginning as an emergent cultural practice among urban youth,'[77] particularly amongst Puerto Rican gang members. It seems that the experience of *puertorriqueño* youth during the 1970s was that of despair and discrimination, thus instigating the creation of rap and breakdancing as vehicles to express their less than ideal social conditions as well as their history and language.

The history of Puerto Ricans and Blacks in New York is important here, as well as how breakdancing evolved from an earlier art form known as minstrelsy. According to William Eric Perkins, hip hop became 'the defining cultural expression of the eighties generation,'[78] a movement that was a combination of, as Rivera states: 'dancing, acrobatics, and martial spectacle.'[79] Involving 'twists and spins, headstands, and elaborately orchestrated footwork'[80] breakdancing reflects the dance performances of mistrelsy in the way the performers 'still wheel about, jump, and tap the shingles.'[81] In looking at the history of minstrelsy, W. T. Lhamon, Jr., in his book *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip hop*, offers a discourse on the development of this type of dance performance up to more contemporary times. It seems that minstrel performance originated in the early 19th century on the docks and in the taverns of New York. The spectacle of Blacks dancing for fish and a few extra pennies drew the attention of young working class white men who later used burnt cork to blacken their faces when performing on stage. Many of the white working class were Irish immigrants who identified with the oppression and religious castration of

---

[75] Ibid., p 102.
[76] Mandalit del Barco, 'Rap's Latino Sabor,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 64.
[77] Juan Flores, 'Puerto Rocks: New York Ricans Stake Their Claim,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 86.
[78] William Eric Perkins, 'The Rap Attack: An Introduction,' *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 13.
[79] Rivera (2003), p 68.
[80] Perkins, p 13.
[81] W. T. Lhamon, Jr., *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip hop*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p 218.

the Blacks, hence their challenge to the authoritarian structure and move away from the conservative lifestyle of the nuclear family of the 'cultural elite'.[82]

If we return to Lhamon's analysis of Blackface performance we also learn that the fervent attitude of the dancers and the conflicting messages in each performance (which nevertheless all defied authoritarian power) became a quintessential characteristic of hip hop.[83] This notion of contesting conditions is what hip hop meant for Blacks and Puerto Ricans in the 1970s and 80s. Evolving as a synthesis of issues concerning Puerto Ricans and Blacks, hip hop employed confrontation as its primary premise and, because of this, has provoked a negative reaction in mainstream society towards these groups who are seen as being violent. It must be understood however, that as a street culture, hip hop related to gang violence and Puerto Rican gangs during the 1970s because of the need to secure an environment where dance performances and graffiti tagging (another art style developed in the initial stages of hip hop) could be executed. This led to Puerto Ricans and Blacks being associated primarily with violence in the ghettoes rather than as the creators of a cathartic and commercially successful musical style. It is perhaps no surprise then, that hip hop began as a 'ghetto' phenomenon.'[84]

Changing Economy

The impact that Latinos began to exercise during the 1990s and 2000s clearly stretched beyond the political arena to the economic sector. The social make-up of the Latino population as 'relatively young, urban, and very diverse' offers one explanation for its economic growth.[85] This social characteristic has become a crucial factor to marketing experts who have become very aware of the Latino consumer. In her chapter 'Mapping the Spanish Language along a Multiethnic and Multilingual Border' Rosaura Sánchez reported that the growing Latino population is visibly increasing, so much so that marketing experts have become aware of this ethnic group and its purchasing power.[86] Jeffrey Zbar notes the rise of an 'estimated 30 million Hispanic consumers [...]'[87] while Vaca relates that 'Latino consumer expenditures totalled $523 million in 2002, representing an increase of 243 percent from 1990.'[88] Marilyn Halter in her book *Shopping For*

[82] Michael Rogin, *Blackface White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1996), p 57.
[83] Lhamon, p 142.
[84] Rivera (2003), p 51.
[85] Sullivan, p 2.
[86] Sánchez, p 112.
[87] Jeffrey D. Zbar, 'Agency Execs say Marketers Want in: Globalized Marketing Brings new Business to Hispanic shops,' *Advertising Age*, 24 August (US, 1998), p S16.
[88] Vaca, p 199.

Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity states: 'Currently estimated at $380 billion, the purchasing power of Hispanics in the United States is said to exceed the GNP of any one Spanish-speaking nation in all of Latin America. This figure represents a 66 percent increase from 1990, and it is projected to nearly triple by the year 2010. Furthermore, the Hispanic population is concentrated in key cities so that targeting of this market is relatively easy to implement.'[89] These key cities, as demographics show, include California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois, home to more than three quarters of the Hispanic population.[90]

Latinos, being linked to one culture and language, tend to be targeted as a unified group. Discussing Latino advertising, Arlene Dávila in *Latinos Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* examines the merchandising of products, such as *Goya* food products, and notes how Spanish advertisements in the eastern region of the United States, including Puerto Rico, attracted its chief customers to the popular Latino cooking products in the 1970s.[91] The author further notes that it was not until the 1980s that American firms being to advertise American products to Latinos via Spanish television commercials; *Oil of Olay* beauty products, *Fab* detergent and *Campbell's Soup* were just a few of the products which were being advertised in Spanish to the Hispanic audience. Thus, except for Spanish television, Latinos seemed to be excluded or ignored from media texts prior to this period.[92]

Dávila also recognises the way class plays a role in ethnic marketing 'as a site that regulates, mediates, and positions the immigrant alien, the raced, and the underclass into their respective places within U.S. racial and ethnic hierarchies [...].'[93] What this implies is that the categorisation of Latinos into classes reinforces the status of this ethnic group as a minority, which contributes to the authenticity of the Latino population as 'other.' Discussing the 'notions of authenticity' as being linked to 'ideas about social class', particularly in relation to the lower

---

[89] Marilyn Halter, *Shopping For Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity* (New York: Schocken Books: 2000), p 141.

[90] Arlene Dávila, *Latinos Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p 65.

[91] Two of the most popular Spanish language networks *Telemundo* and *Univision* targeted the Latino viewer as their primary audience.

[92] Ilan Stavans in his book *The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on Culture and Identity in America* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1996), discusses the importance of the Spanish language and mentions the debate over whether Spanish is 'the true Latino tongue'It seems that Latinos are no longer classified as native Spanish speakers because of the number of Latino native English speakers, as well as the growing population of speakers of 'Spanglish' - a hybrid form of both languages. This is significant to note, as all three actresses discussed in this thesis are native English speakers. Moreover, because Diaz has not (thus far) spoken Spanish in her films (unlike Perez and Lopez), the Cuban American star has often faced accusations that she is not 'truly' Latina. But as we will see in the later chapter on Diaz, other factors contribute to the authenticity of the actress's *latinidad*. p 124.

[93] Ibid., p 219.

working class, considered to be 'more genuinely ethnic,'[94] Marilyn Halter contends that middle-class ethnic people are not considered models of genuine ethnic representation since 'their legitimacy often comes into question.'[95] Yet, 'white' 'longhaired, "soft featured" and beautiful' Latinas, as Dávila tells us, are the most advertised images on Spanish television.[96]

If one focuses on the racial features of figures representing Latinos in the media there is also the question of 'authentic' Hispanic representation in advertisements. Returning to Dávila we learn that during the 1980s Hispanic consumers were faced with dark skinned features but over the years the 'dark, moustached, Mexican type'[97] transformed to 'whiter-looking, Mediterranean Hispanic types.'[98] The commercialisation of a whiter looking Latino/a is not unusual if analysing the portrayal of Hispanics in the media. The dichotomy of the good-bad Latino operates within racial hierarchies of Black and white, a 'technique' not only employed in many Hollywood films but also in television commercials. In her work, Dávila found that ethnic marketing (in general) conforms to the aesthetically ideal image of mainstream society's version of the 'other,' 'cleansing the constructs of "Hispanic," "Latina," "Asian American," "Black," or "African American" from any tainted attributes leaving them polished and remade for public consumption.'[99] What this means is that that ideal image of the ethnic figure is still put forward as the good, 'All-American' type. What this also explains, as Halter writes, is why 'Black Latinas are seldom signifiers of generic *Latinidad*,'[100] and why, as Dávila examines, Latinas in adverts often portray 'a mom who is young, light-skinned [ ] and beautiful, but never shown to be [as] glamorous [...].'[101] As we will see in the chapter on Jennifer Lopez, the Puerto Rican star has been projected as a glamour queen and was used as the model to represent the upmarket products of Louis Vuitton. Furthermore, the popularity of Lopez in American culture also emerges from the steady sales of her records in the music industry. During the 1990s Lopez and fellow Puerto Rican artist Ricky Martin triumphed both in pop and Latin music. Puerto Rican thus performers became active and commercial representatives in the media as they began to attract mainstream audiences which began to promote these stars as Latino *and* American icons. Yet the status of these Puerto Ricans, as Negrón-Muntaner describes, as '"individually" wrapped cultural products [...]'[102] reinforces Dávila's

[94] Halter, pp 19-20.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Dávila, p 130.
[97] Ibid., p 111.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., p 234.
[100] Halter, p 121.
[101] Dávila, p 131.
[102] Negrón-Muntaner, p 145.

discussion of racial dynamics and how very white features come into play when representing a people in a more positive (i.e., commercial) light.

During the 1990s sales of Latino music increased by more than fifty percent and shortly after, the first Latino MTV (Music Television) station went on the air. Marilyn Halter argues that the popularity of Latino singers in the media was spread across the 1998 'magazine *People en Español* [which] came out with a special issue devoted to the music and its star performers.'[103] The following year *Latin Heat* magazine also dedicated its edition to Latino stardom as Ricky Martin graced its cover and it literally thanked the singer/actor for starting (yet) another the Latino boom.[104] One of several media texts to credit Martin as being responsible for the boom, observed: 'Americans may have been washing down their tacos and salsa with Dos Equis beer and tequila shots for generations, but the Latino boom can be traced to a specific date: the evening of February 24, 1999, when Ricky Martin [...] took the stage at the lacklustre televised Grammy awards ceremony.'[105] The Puerto Rican pop star caused such a national sensation at this ceremony that desperate search began for new Hispanic talent in the music and film industry in order to cash in on the Latino explosion. As Negrón-Muntaner notes, 'in less than a year, Martin managed to enter every home and radio in the United States, making the "Latin" presence felt every few minutes [...].'[106]

Ricky (Enrique) Martin began his career in 1984 as a child singer in the Puerto Rican musical boy band *Menudo*. The singer then turned to acting and appeared in both Mexican and American television soap operas only to combine both talents when he starred on Broadway in the musical show *Les Miserables*. By 1995, Martin had released his third album which became a sensation in the Latin American music charts, but it was the fourth album which marked the Puerto Rican star as an international success. In *Ricky Martin*, his first album sung in English, the singer reached number one in the (Billboard) charts. This was the first time a Latino had dominated the American pop charts and, as a result, Latin music sales had risen along with Martin's mainstream appeal.[107] Analysing the success of Martin in popular culture, Muntaner-Negrón comments, 'By singing American-style pop in Spanish and English, Martin locates himself (and his "people") in a

[103] Halter, p 134.
[104] No Author, *Latin Heat*, January-February (2000), pp 14-15, p 14. Cited in Frances Negrón-Muntaner, *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2004), p 253.
[105] Christopher Goodwin, 'Latin Lessons,' *The Sunday Times*, 18 July, Culture (1999, UK), p 4.
[106] Negrón-Muntaner, p 253.
[107] Diana A. Terry Azios, 'Can the Explosion Last?,' *Hispanic*, (Florida:2000), p 22.

much more advantageous position to show off and market '*nuestro* Puerto Rico" – modern, technologically advanced, white, and middle-class - to the world.'[108] The author's description of Martin as an 'honorary white'[109] and 'middle-class' can be compared to narratives of Jennifer Lopez' upbringing and recent facial features, as well as shared international success in pop music. Both artists have positioned Puerto Ricans as a national and global commodity whilst projecting images of non-threatening ethnic performers embodying traits of whiteness (such as their blondish straight hair);[110] while Lopez has dramatically modified her body, Martin has capitalised on his more 'natural features.'

Discussing contemporary Latino stardom, Christy Haubegger considers 'these young performers [e.g., Lopez and Martin] not as outsiders who have made their way into the mainstream but rather as the mainstream of America itself [...].'[111] Negrón-Muntaner underscores ways in which Puerto Rican pop stars and actors have becoming marketable commodities as well as how they are now 'valuable enough that even ("white") people want to buy it.'[112] What also needs to be stressed at this point is that if Puerto Rican stars have become global assets it is also because Latino consumers contribute to the mechanism of Latino fame. In fact there is a wide and growing market of younger Latino consumers, who generate a substantial amount of money in both Latino and American markets. What is more, with 40 percent of the Latino population 'between the ages of sixteen and thirty-four'[113] Halter confirms that the Latino population is young compared to other ethnic groups.

As large numbers of Latinos integrate and assimilate in the United States, in particular the younger generation, it seems, as Christy Haubegger claims, that 'America is simultaneously becoming more Latino.'[114] Haubegger, editor of *Latina* magazine, has expressed her views on the 'changing of America' writing: 'While our preceding generation felt pressure to assimilate, America has now generously agreed to meet us in the middle.'[115] As already discussed earlier in this chapter, the need to include Latinos in the landscape of the American image reflects mainstream

---

[108] Negrón-Muntaner, *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2004), p 268.
[109] Ibid., p 260.
[110] Negrón-Muntaner further describes Martin as possessing the 'ultimate sign of whiteness in Puerto Rican Culture –good hair'. p 261.
[111] Halter cites Christy Haubegger, publisher of *Latina* magazine in her book *Shopping For Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity*, p 134.
[112] Negrón-Muntaner, pp 28-29.
[113] Halter, p 33.
[114] Borger, p 24.
[Online] Accessed 23 April 2002.
http://guardian.chadwyck.co.uk/noframes/quick/fulltext?ACTION=byoffset&warn=N&OFFSET=127924808&div=0&FILE=../session/1019494798_1716
[115] Ibid.

society's recognition of this population as having an economic and political influence. Yet there is another observation in the 'Latinisation' of America offered by Ilan Stavans who concludes that there is dialectic shift and balance between Latinos taking pleasure in American foods versus Americans relishing Latino products and dances.[116] In other words, as Latinos become consumers of mainstream culture, Americans are embodying aspects of *latinidad* as part of their lifestyle.

This concept of '*gringos hispanicizados*' (Stavans' term) is also discussed by Peter Watrous when acknowledging the impact generations of immigration has had on the United States:

> In the United States, the change in both the way Latin culture is perceived and the way Latin culture represents itself was inevitable. Centuries of immigration, from Mexico and Central America, have altered American life, from what we eat to how we talk. The influx of Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Dominicans over the last century has profoundly changed the face of New York City and the east Coast.[117]

Hispanics have caused major media hype during a two-decade span thus gaining mainstream attention for Latino music, dance and fashion. As noted in a *New York Times* article by Ruth la Ferla: 'And now many are bemused to discover that, like hip hop influenced African Americas before them, they [Latinos] are admired as avatars of urban chic.'[118] While La Ferla ignores the participation of Latinos in hip hop, she points out Latino fashion as a trend adopted by Americans; the look includes elaborately designed nails, cross pendants, large hoop earrings, platform heels, halter tops and anything with ruffles or flounce. Coupled with the increase of their economic and political power, Latino culture has suddenly become an integral aspect of Americanness.

During the past twenty-five years Latinos have also become an influential force in the cinema industry. For this reason I want to look at the image of Latinos in the media since early cinema and discuss the transformation of the Latino image in US films. Before moving on to how Latinos have been depicted in Hollywood, I would like to emphasise that Mexicans make up the largest part of the Latino population in the United States.[119] Whereas this research will not include a Mexican case study, the Mexican population has been explored because of its great contribution to Latino history, including its participation in Hollywood during the early years of cinema (to be briefly discussed

---

[116] Stavans, pp 9, 13. Cited in Mike Davis', *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), p 23.
[117] Peter Watrous, 'A Country Now ready to Listen,' *The New York Times*, 27 June (New York 1999), p 25.
[118] Ruth La Ferla, 'Latinos Style is Cool. Oh, All Right: It's Hot.' *The New York Times*, 15 April (New York 2001), p 1.
[119] Mireya Navarro states that Mexican-Americans account for 60% of the Latino population in her article 'Latinos Gains Visibility in Cultural Life of U.S.,' *The New York Times*, 19 September (New York, 1999), p 24.

below). Surprisingly, there is continual comparison of this Latino group to Puerto Ricans, on-screen as well as off. Tienda and Bean agree that 'both (Mexican and Puerto Rican) migratory movements were fundamentally wage labour flows destined for regional labour markets [...] (and both groups) have been the victims of intense discrimination and prejudice, perhaps (Puerto Ricans in the Northeast) even greater than that experienced by Mexicans in Texas.'[120] This discriminatory treatment surfaces on the big screen, although, in contrast to Puerto Ricans, the earliest negative portrayal of Latinos in Hollywood was of Mexicans and since the earliest films, Mexicans have represented Latinos as a whole. Despite this, there seems to be a similar portrait of Mexican and Puerto Rican women in Hollywood, as noted by David R. Maciel in his essay on Latinos in the media:

> [...] there are innumerable examples of how women, specifically Chicanas and Puerto Ricans, have been reduced to playing secondary roles such as prostitutes, servants or altruistic mothers. When they have obtained starring roles, they have always played the role of either the *Latina femme fatale* or the superficial woman.[121]

While the following discussion of Latinas in Hollywood will further examine the treatment of Puerto Rican and Mexican women, I want to first to briefly discuss how Latinos, in general, have been portrayed in the film industry, before offering an account of Hollywood's Latina stars up until the present.

Hispanics in Hollywood

In his essay on Latinos during the early years in the film industry, Antonio Rios-Bustamante observes that Hispanics became central figures on-screen as well as behind the camera.[122] In discussing Latino stardom during the initial phase of the Hollywood establishment, Rios-Bustamante notes that many of the stars were light-skinned actors. As he states: 'This is an important point, when we realize that in the next six decades, light-skinned Latino actors would be routinely advised to Anglicise their surnames and hide their identity.'[123] Yet, despite efforts to further suppress their *latinidad*, such as rejecting Hispanic roles, many Latino stars were eventually forced to either portray stereotypical characters or seek work elsewhere when the silent era came to

---

[120] Bean and Tienda (1987), p 26.
[121] Maciel, (1993) p 314.
[122] Antonio Rios-Bustamante discusses the participation of Latino actors as directors and studio employees. However, the author also notes that Latinos, 'especially Mexicans, were virtually barred from the financial and technical side of production.' p 24. In his essay, 'Latino Participation in the Hollywood Film Industry, 1911 –1945,' in *Chicanos and Films: Essays on Chicano Representation and Resistance*, Chon A. Noriega, (ed.) (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1992).
[123] Ibid., p 22.

an end. But after the silent era ended in the 1920s, some of these stars were lured back to Hollywood, then only to appear in Spanish language films being exported to Latin America.

Just before entering World War II, the United States began to turn to its Latin American neighbours for political unity as well as revenue. In an account of the film industry's emphasis to gain greater profits, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam have written of Hollywood's production of films with 'Latin American heroes, stars, locales and, especially, music and dance.'[124] Rios-Bustamante also observes that during Hollywood's interest in Latin themed films, 'over one hundred Spanish-language versions of films were produced, using separate casts composed of Latin American and Spanish stars.'[125] Although these films created another market for Latino actors, they also provoked an increase in stereotypical depictions of Hispanics. As Ana M. López argues in her essay 'Are All Latins from Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism,' films prior to 'The Good Neighbour Policy' (1939-1947) years,

> [...] were notorious for linguistic blunders and regional undifferentiation. [...]. Furthermore, several Latin American nations had regularly begun to ban or censor Hollywood films deemed offensive to the national character, most notoriously, RKO's *Girl of the Rio* (1932), a film banned by a number of Latin American countries because its lecherous and trecherous central character, Sr. Tostado (Mr. "Toast," "Toasted," or "Crazed"), was considered "the most vile Mexican" ever to appear on the screen.[126]

While it is clear that Latinos had an economic impact in Hollywood – a factor to be looked at during the Latino boom of the 1980s and 1990s – it is especially striking that by the 1930s not only was racial stereotyping present, but also (to some degree), Mexicans had become targeted and reduced to the most degraded Latino character in American cinema: 'the greaser'. In a discussion of Mexican-Americans in fiction and film, Arthur G. Pettit traces the Mexican male character to 'Anglo "conquest fiction,"'[127] and reports that, 'the Mexican is defined negatively, in terms of "qualities diametrically opposed to an Anglo prototype." Petitt also declares that the morality in fiction 'is colour-coordinated; the darker the shade, the worse the character.'[128] Extending a similar analysis, David R. Maciel claims that Latino representation in Hollywood was equated to being Mexican thereby contributing to their being the most stereotyped Latino group. In addition, Maciel considers that Latinos 'on the majority of occasions were identified as Mexicans (and) were

---

[124] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism Multiculturalism and the Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p 231.
[125] Rios-Bustamante, p 25.
[126] Ana M. López, in her essay 'Are All Latins from Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism,' cites Allen L. Woll, *The Latin Image in American Film* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Centre Publication, 1977), p 33. In *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 408.
[127] Shohat and Stam, p 196.
[128] Ibid., pp 196-197.

stereotypically presented as violent people, fatalists, conformists and culturally inferior to other European emigrants.'[129] Notwithstanding, if the initial treatment of male Mexican characters in Hollywood became synonymous with 'the greaser,' then, Rios-Bustamante informs us, the female counterpart had been generally marked as the 'cantina girl who falls for the Gringo.'[130] Although these stereotypes re-appear decades later 'in gang and drug films,'[131] it needs to be mentioned, that the 'cantina girl' is just one of many Latina types to emerge from the early days of the film industry.

In his study on Hollywood's perspective on Latinos in early film, Charles Ramirez Berg lists three consistent stereotypical female characters which corresponded to the common male role: the Half-Breed Harlot/*El Bandido*; the Female clown/the Male Buffoon; the Latin Lover/ Dark Lady.[132] Whereas Mexican actresses often occupied these stereotypical roles,[133] Brazilian actress Carmen Miranda was frequently typecast as the female clown, becoming just as popular as Mexican star Lupe Vélez. Yet, because of her sexual allure, Vélez also figured as the spitfire image in a series of films at the same time that another Mexican actress, Dolores del Río, became synonymous with the 'Dark Lady' character as well as starring in several upper-class roles. More importantly, Dolores del Río became Hollywood's 'first Latina superstar.'[134]

According to Ana M. López in her discourse on the Mexican star, del Río had also been posited as 'the world's greatest dancer' in the 1935 film *Caliente* (Lloyd Bacon, US). During this period, as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam point out, the filmic world of Latinos was limited to dance performances, or 'exotic display' within the narrative.[135] Furthermore, Shohat and Stam observe that:

> The musical thus allotted its narrative "spaces" in ethnic and national terms, homologizing segregationist attitudes in the larger society. The musical numbers not only furnished the

---

[129] Maciel, p 312.

[130] Prior to these stereotypes, Rios-Bustamante observes how the 'Latino lover' stereotype had been more popular and in some manner, positively featured Latinos as attractive and beautiful. However, the Latin lover developed into the 'gigolo' and 'vamp' before evolving to the 'greaser' and 'cantina girl.' (1992), p 24.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Charles Ramirez Berg, 'Stereotyping Films in General and of the Hispanic in Particular,' in *Latin Looks: The Image of Latinas & Latinos in the United States Media*, Clara Rodriguez (ed.) (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), pp 112-116.

[133] Berg notes that the half-breed character is 'not always a half-breed.' p 113. In other words, American women were often cast as the Half-breed character types and quite often the narrative unfolded to reveal a 'genuine' Anglosaxon woman.

[134] Clara E. Rodriguez, 'Visual Retrospective: Latino Film Stars,' in *Latin Looks*, Rodriguez (ed.) (1997), p 80.

[135] Shohat and Stam, p 231.

> spectacle of differenced but also functioned narratively to unite the North American couple vis-à-vis the "Latins."[136]

Notably, one musical which focused on the division between Americans and Latinos, in particular Puerto Ricans, was the 1961 film *West Side Story* (Robert Wise, MGM/UAA, US). A modern version of William Shakespeare's tragedy Romeo and Juliet, *West Side Story* surprisingly presented the Americans in more musical numbers than the Latino group. In fact, 'America' is the only musical performance that exclusively features Puerto Ricans. But what the lyrics of 'America' suggest is that Puerto Rico is an island with 'hurricanes blowing,' 'population growing' and 'natives steaming,' whilst the film's narrative refers to Puerto Ricans as 'cockroaches,'[137] thereby contributing to their negative stereotyping.[138] Even so, the film's importance in this section lies more in the fact that Rita Moreno, (neé Rosita Alverio) became the first, and to date only, Latina actress to win the Academy Award for Best Supporting actress by playing herself: a Puerto Rican woman. Although Moreno characterises a sexually aggressive Latina, hence promoting the Madonna/Whore dichotomy with Moreno in the least virtuous role, the actress commented thus on Hollywood's decision to (minimally) project 'authentic' representation: 'Somebody in Hollywood came up with the brilliant idea of casting a Puerto Rican in a Puerto Rican part.'[139] Still, after winning the Oscar, Moreno affirmed that she continued to be offered roles as 'gypsy fortune-tellers, Mexican spitfires, Spanish spitfires, Puerto Ricans – all those "Yonkee peeg, you steal my people's money" parts.'[140]

Interestingly, by the time that Moreno received her Academy Award, another 'film dancer and musical performer' of Spanish origin had already been promoted in Hollywood as an 'American Love Goddess.'[141] Daughter to dancers of Spanish and Irish-American heritage, Brooklyn-born Margarita Carmen Cansino became Rita Hayworth after a dramatic physical transformation during her years in Hollywood. That an actress of Spanish origin had been able to

---

[136] Ibid., p 231.

[137] For a more in-depth analysis of *West Side Story*, I recommend Alberto Sandoval Sánchez's essay '*West Side Story*: A Puerto Rican Reading of "America",' in *Latin Looks*, Clara E. Rodriquez (ed.) (1997), pp 165-179.

[138] Richie Pérez in his essay 'From Assimilation to Annihilation: Puerto Rican Images in U.S. Films,' examines *West Side Story* as one of several Puerto Rican themed films and discusses how demonstrators protested outside the film. In *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin* 2, No. 8 (New York, 1990), pp 14-15.

[139] George Hadley-Garcia, *Hispanics in Hollywood: The Latins in Motion Pictures* (New York: Citadel Press Book, 1990), p 174.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Adrienne L. McLean, 'Transformation, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in the Construction of Rita Hayworth, American Love Goddess,' *Journal of Film and Video*, Fall-Winter, Vol. 44, No.3 (University and Video Association: 1992-1993), p 8.

transform into an 'American' star is key to this research, (as we will see in chapters on Jennifer Lopez and Cameron Diaz), however, it is important to bear in mind that unlike Dolores del Río, Hayworth was not limited to ethnic roles throughout her stardom. Moreover, during Hayworth's rise to stardom, del Río returned to Mexico after refusing Hollywood films which continued to promote Latino stereotypes. Ironically, Dolores del Río would achieve success and stardom as a Mexican superstar and myth, even transcending her Hollywood film career, while Hayworth would have to anglicise her name, remove more than an inch of hairline from her forehead, dye her dark hair to red, as well as take voice classes and go on a strict diet, to become Hollywood's next 'Spanish-American beauty.'[142] In this case, being successful corresponded to Hayworth's complete physical transformation.

Significantly, another 'love goddess' but this time of the 60s and 70s[143] would also change her name prior to her film debut in 1964. Considered to be, as George Hadley-Garcia writes, 'Hollywood's most visible non-blonde sex-symbol since fellow Hispana Rita Hayworth,'[144] Raquel Welch (neé Raquel Tejada) had been able to disguise her Latina background until the 1980s when signs of a 'Latino boom' began to emerge in the United States. On the one hand, during the 1970s Raquel Welch seemed to stand alone as Hollywood's current Latina representative,[145] on the other, if no one realised that Welch was of Spanish descent, could she actually be considered as a Latina star during her reign as 'love goddess'? As we will see in my analysis of Cameron Diaz, this question also challenges the Latina status of the Cuban-American star.

As the 1980s approached, it seemed that Hollywood was beginning to respond to the rising Latino population by promoting a number of Latina actresses. During the initial period of this Latino 'boom', Cuban actress Maria Conchito Alonso and Mexican-American Elizabeth Peña became familiar faces on the big screen. [146] And by the end of the eighties, Puerto Rican actress Rosie Perez would also become a popular Latina image in the media, but with much more success than Alonso or Peña. Significantly, Perez' success in the film industry marked the second time in history that another Latina star became Oscar winning material (she was nominated for *Fearless* in 1993), hence possibly marking the wave of other Latina stars such as Lopez and Diaz to come (as well as Salma Hayek, Lauren Valdez, Rosario Dawson and Eva Mendez, among others). But, more

---

[142] Ibid., p 9.
[143] Hadley-Garcia, (1990), p 13.
[144] Ibid., p 178.
[145] During the 1970s Spanish actress Charo had been a popular and frequent guest on many television shows, most notably, *The Love Boat* and *Mary Tyler Moore*.
[146] Like Carmen Miranda, Brazilian actress Sonia Braga had been classified as a leading Latina actress during the 1980s. Braga, appeared in several Latin-themed films during the period, such as *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1985) and *The Milagro Beanfield War (1982).*

importantly, with the promotion of Perez as a Latina in Hollywood, along with Lopez and Diaz, she became an image to which the Latino community could respond as being an authentic Latina figure in the film industry.

Before moving on to those chapters dedicated to Perez, Lopez and Diaz, I want to explore the impact that the Latino boom has had in the media in the United States. Moreover, I wish to continue examining how Latinos have been portrayed during the last quarter of the twentieth century and whether the Latino 'explosion' has affected their depiction in Hollywood films. Since this impact has not been limited to the promotion of Latinos in the film industry, I will also discuss how Latinos have been able to influence other media texts.

The Latino Boom and Contemporary Latina Stars

In an essay entitled 'The Latino "Boom" in American Film,' Coco Fusco attributes the 1980s 'explosion' to North American interest in the growing Latino culture within the United States. Fusco writes: 'In the United States, the Latino "boom" has coincided with the appearance of commercial films produced and directed, in many instances, by Latinos with different levels of Hollywood studio backing.'[147] During the 1980s, a number of Latin themed films[148] emerged on the big screen including *La Bamba* (1987) *Stand and Deliver* (1988), *The Border* (1982), *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988), *Crossover Dreams* (1985), *The Ballad of Gregorio Córtez* (1982), *Zoot Suit* (1982), *El Norte* (1984), *Born in East L.A.* (1988) and *The Old Gringo* (1989).[149] Surprisingly, the Mexican film *Doña Herlinda and her Son* (1986) also had moderate success in The United States.[150] While many of these films attempted to portray a genuine Latino perspective on issues ranging from education, immigration, assimilation, homosexuality, the Mexican Revolution, justice, and unfair treatment by Americans, Hollywood continued to project stereotypical portrayals of Latinos in films such as *Scarface* (1983), starring Al Pacino as Cuban drug king and crime-boss Tony Montana, and *Fort Apache: The Bronx* (1981), featuring Paul Newman as a police officer working at the 'embattled 41st Precinct station house at the South Bronx.'[151] In addition, *Scarface*, as well as *The*

---

[147] Coco Fusco, 'The Latino "Boom" in American Film,' *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños*, Bulletin 2, No. 8 (New York, 1990), p 49.

[148] Fusco declares that, 'The Latino film "boom" of the 1980s actually represents only a handful of relatively low budget movies: *La Bamba, Born in East L.A. The Ballad of Gregorio Córtez, Stand and Deliver, El Norte* and *Crossover Dreams*.' In 'The Latino "Boom" in American Film,' in *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin* 2, No. 8 (New York, 1990), p 50.

[149] See chapter 7 of Hadley Garcia's *Hispanics in Hollywood: The Latins in Motion Pictures* for a more detailed list of Latin themed films. pp 223-251.

[150] Ibid., p 240.

[151] Allen Woll, 'How Hollywood Has Portrayed Hispanics,' *The New York Times*, 1 March (New York, 1981), p 17.

Old Gringo, starred a predominantly WASP cast thus affirming Hollywood's continual decision to cast starring roles to non-Latinos. What *Fort Apache: The Bronx* and *Scarface* reinforce is that in the 1980s Latino stereotypes remained almost identical to those in early cinema. But with the profitable success of several of the Latino films previously mentioned, Hollywood began to realise that the growing population of Latinos in the United States was a new market waiting to be tapped, and if the film industry wanted to maintain this market, then their image of Latinos would have to change. But would it?

Although the Hispanic population proved to be the fastest growing consumers during the 1980s, which led to Hollywood's sudden interest in Latino films,[152] the film industry continued to promote Latinos in predominantly stereotypical fashion. Charles Ramirez Berg declared that Latino 'stereotypes, and the traits that define them, essentially have not changed over the decades,'[153] while Lewis Beale went so far as to say that 'if someone has an accent or is different or is brown, Hollywood doesn't know what to do with them, and tends to relegate them to stereotypical roles.'[154] Reflecting Beale's observation is Bel Hernandez's examination of Hollywood's continuous promotion of Latinas in 1997 and how they are often categorised into three groups '- the luscious Latina, maids or illegal immigrants.'[155] Angharad N. Valdivia also identifies Latina stereotypes in film, and has noted in her book *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood and Other Essays on Media Culture* that:

> Latinas, [...] are portrayed in a limited number of roles. Some, such as the maid and the welfare mother, overlap with African American female images. We also get the binary virgin-whore opposition that representations of women in general project in the popular culture of patriarchal societies. Thus, in contrast to the rosary-praying maids or devoted mothers, we get the sexually out of control and utterly colourful spitfire, an image quite specific to Latinas. A large component of this image is sexually suggestive dancing. Additionally, Latina women in Hollywood film almost always have thick, unshakable, often humorous, and self-deprecating accents [...], despite the fact that many Latina women in the United States speak "accentless" English as their first language. In large part, the endurance of the accent in the stereotype stems from the mistaken and recurrent characterization of all Latinos as recent and quite often illegal immigrants (Saldívar 1997).[156]

---

[152] According to Coco Fusco, the 1980 Census showed 'Latinos to be the fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States [...] spend(ing) $134 billion a year.' (1990), p 50.

[153] Ramírez Berg (1997), p 116.

[154] Lewis Beale, 'H'wood Has a Bad Accent: Book, Stars say Hispanics still Mostly Villains,' *Daily News*, 24 January (New York, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 21 January 2001.
http://www.nydailynews.com/2001-01-24/New_York_Now/Movies/a-97027.asp

[155] Bel Hernandez, publisher of Hollywood trade magazine *Latin Heat*, has been quoted in Valerie Menard's article, 'Luscious Latinas: The Pros and Cons of an Evolving Stereotype,' *Hispanic*, May (New York 1997), p 24.

[156] Angharad N. Valdivia, *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood and Other Essays on Media Culture* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2000), pp 92-93.

What Ramirez-Berg, Beale, Hernandez and Valdivia fail to observe, is that some Latina stars avoided (although not completely) stereotypical Latina roles because of their ability to play American characters (Rita Hayworth, Cameron Diaz and most recently Jennifer Lopez). What is also of importance (for this research) is how Latina stars have been able to move back and forth between Latina and non-Latina roles, as in the case of Lopez or Hayworth.

The film industry's attempts to secure the Latino market during the 1980s (attempts which are still being made today) reflected their previous attempts to take hold of Latinos' interest during the Good Neighbour Policy years (1939-47); during the eighties and Good Neighbour years there was an increase of Hispanic themed films as well as the promotion of Latino stereotypes. However, the influence of Latinos during the late thirties and forties was nowhere near as strong as their political position in the 1980s and 1990s, when politicians began to recognise Latinos as American citizens with a rising voting force.[157] As evidence of this 'courting' of Latinos as a political force, President Bush's White House address in the year 2000 was delivered in Spanish.[158]

How Changing Demographics Have Affected Film Production

In 'Latinos and the Crossover Aesthetic,' Román de la Campa 'recognizes the growing importance of Spanish language and culture in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s.'[159] At the same time that publications began to focus on the Latino population, Spanish language radio and television networks already dominated the Hispanic market. Yet, the reverse was true for the film industry which focused little on the Hispanic population despite the economic influence the Latino market was to have in Hollywood.

In a society where purchasing power counts, Latinos play a powerful role in the distribution of films across the United States. Offering an analysis of Hispanic moviegoers, Marilyn Halter sheds light on the statistics of this group's movie attendance, age and economic force in the film industry. Showing the significant patterns of Latino audiences, Halter provides the following:

> Although it has been a long time coming, Hollywood is finally beginning to court Latino moviegoers. This trend is not surprising, since, according to the Motion Picture Association of America, in just one year, from 1996 to 1997, ticket sales to Latinos increased by a formidable 22 percent, making them the fastest-growing ethnic group among domestic film audiences. Furthermore, Hispanics tend to be concentrated in the leading urban marks, where most movie tickets are sold. For example, one recent Nielson study

---

[157] Fusco (1990), p 50.
[158] Lorenzo Albacete, 'America's Hispanic Future,' *The New York Times*, 19 June (New York, 2001).
[159] Román de la Campa, 'Latinos and the Crossover Aesthetic,' foreword in Mike Davis's *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), p xvi.

showed that in Los Angeles 45 percent of the prime movie going age cohort, those from twelve to thirty-four years old, were Latino. [160]

Halter looks at the techniques of Columbia Tri-Star studios and Universal Pictures' for attracting Latino moviegoers. Both studios employed the popular method of promoting films in the Spanish press and media in order to attract Latino audiences but Columbia extended its promotional campaign to Latino events when promoting *The Mask of Zorro* (1998) while Universal Pictures 'departed from the norm and developed special trailers [of *Out of Sight*] for Spanish-language TV stations [and] distributed posters at hundreds of shops in Latino neighbourhoods [...].'[161] The success of these marketing tactics is not only evident in the box-office receipts of Latino-themed films such as a *Selena* (Gregory Nava, Warner Bros., US 1997) but also in the commercial success of non-Latino films. While Latino-themed films were extensively promoted and clearly drew larger audiences in the Hispanic community, non-Latino movies also attract this audience if they star Latino actors, as in the case of *Out of Sight* (Steven Soderbergh, Universal, 1998, US). The changing demographics of Latinos as a high-spending population thus contributes to the manner in which Hollywood distributes its films as well as confirms this population's power to transform actors into (Latino) stars.

To understand the grade of stardom of the actresses to be discussed in this thesis, I have analysed the production and distribution of the films to be examined in my work. (See attached chart).[162] In the information gathered it has been difficult to obtain whether the films have been promoted on Spanish language television, as have the films *Selena* and *Out of Sight*. It is my intention, however, to look at the gross earnings of the films (domestic and overseas) starring Perez, Lopez and Diaz, as well as the publicity of these films in newspapers or magazines geared towards Hispanics. What I hope to point out is how these films were distributed, if at all, and what this meant to the stardom of the three actresses in this research, in particular Rosie Perez. What follows is a brief analysis of the materials collected.

Of the five films to be looked at which stars Rosie Perez, there is an alarming economic gap between her independent and Hollywood films: *Somebody to Love* (Alex Rockwell, Lumiere Pictures, 1996, US) grossed eighteen thousand dollars while *White Men Can't Jump* (Ron Shelton, Fox, 1992, US), earned $76 million. Her debut film *Do The Right Thing* (Spike Lee, Universal

[160] Halter, p 131.
[161] Ibid., p 132.
[162] The information gathered has been provided by two websites: www.imdb.com and www.boxofficemojo.com. [Accessed] Online 20 May 2005.

Actress	Film	Distribution Company	Release	Gross (USA) (date last tallied)	Gross (Overseas)	Theatres Released	Notes	Company	Publicity Campaign in Spanish texts or other publicity geared towards Latinos
Rosie Perez	Do The Right Thing	MCA/Universal Pictures	Junio 30, 1989	$27,545,445	$9,750,000	534	$3,563,535 opening weekend. Released in 353 theatres. Premiere at Cannes Film Festival.	Universal/Criterion	
	Fearless	Warner Bros.	Octubre 15, 1993	$6,995,302		749	$1,973,961 opening weekend		
	White Men Can't Jump	Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.	27 March 1992	$76,253,806	$14,500,000	1.929	$14,700,000 opening weekend		
	It Could Happen To You	Tristar Pictures	Julio 29, 1994	$37,800,323		1.544	$8,112,822 opening weekend		
	Perdita Durango	Trimark Pictures	21 December 1999				Premiere in Spain. The film went straight to video in the US two years after its release		Fotogramas (Spain)
	Somebody to Love	Legacy Releasing Corporation	27 September 1996	$18,112		10 (after video dist.)	The film went straight to video		
Jennifer Lopez	My Family	New Line Cinema	Mayo 5, 1995	$11,079,373		413	$2,164,840 opening weekend	New Line Home Video	Hispanic (US)
	Blood & Wine	Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.	21 February 1997	$1,075,288 (30 March 1997)		166	$420,993 opening weekend		
	Selena	Warner Bros.	21 March 1997	$35,422,628 (29 June 1997)		1.873	$11,615,722 opening weekend	Warner Home Video	Hispanic (US), Latina (US)
	Anaconda	Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures Entertainment	11 April 1997	$65,557,989 (1 September 1997)	$71,000,000	2.456	$16,620,887 opening weekend	Columbia Home Video	
	Out of Sight	Universal Pictures	26 June 1998	$37,339,525 (30 August 1998)	$40,183,000	2.112	$12,020,435 opening weekend		
	The Wedding Planner	Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures Entertainment	26 January 2001	$60,400,856 (29 April 2001)	$34,327,673	2.785	$13,510,293 opening weekend. $20,000,000 marketing costs		Hola Hoy (Puerto Rico), Universal (Mexico), Fotogramas (Spain)
	Maid in Manhattan	Sony Pictures Entertainment	13 December 2002	$93,615,117 (30 March 2003)	$60,895,468	3.050	$18,711,407 opening weekend. $33,000,000 marketing costs		Latina (US)
Cameron Diaz	The Mask	New Line Cinema	29 July 1994	$119,938,730	$231,453,997	2.516	$23,117,068 weekend gross	New Line Home Video	
	Feeling Minnesota	Fine Line Features	13 September 1996	$3,102,672 (6 October 1996)		869	$1,598,051 opening weekend	Asso Film	Hispanic (US)
	My Best Friend Wedding	TriStar Pictures /Sony Pictures Entertainment	20 June 1997	$126,805,112 (11 January 1998)	$172,168,576	2.376	$21,678,377 opening weekend		
	There's Something About Mary	Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.	15 July 1998	$176,483,808 (21 March 1999)	$193,400,000	2.555	$13,740,644 opening weekend		Hispanic (US), Fotogramas (Spain)
	Charlie's Angels I	Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures Entertainment	22 October 2000	$125,305,545 (25 February 2001)	$138,800,000	3.037	$40,128,550 opening weekend. $28,900,000 million marketing costs	Columbia TriStar Home Video	La Opinion (US), Universal (Mexico), Fotogramas (Spain)
	Charlie's Angels II: Full Throttle	Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures Entertainment	18 June 2003	$100,685,880 (14 September 2003)	$158,345,677	3.485	$37,634,221 opening weekend. $40,000,000 marketing costs	Columbia TriStar Home Video	

Pictures, 1989, US) also enjoyed some economic success unlike four of Perez' independent films which barely totalled 10 million dollars. One of her movies (*Somebody to Love*) went straight to video in the United States thus offering some explanation as to why her other three films had little or no proceeds.

If we compare how the actress' films were promoted it is interesting to note that her debut film *Do The Right Thing* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in France thus introducing Perez to an international audience. The film, which earned approximately $14.5 million dollars in the US, tallied close to $10 million abroad. Three years later the actress' film *White Men Can't Jump* would also prove to have financial success when the picture earns close to three times as much as *Do The Right Thing* in the domestic market: $76 million. Both films were produced by Hollywood studios but it seems that *White Men Can't Jump* had been promoted by Fox on a large scale in comparison to *Do The Right Thing*. That Perez became a bona-fide star after appearing in *White Men Can't Jump* is noteworthy however, in the actress's following film *It Could Happen To You* (Andrew Bergman, Tri-Stars Pictures, 1994, US) Perez' stardom begins to wane despite its commercial success; the film earned $38 million. Following *It Could Happen To You*, the actress appeared in the independent film *Somebody to Love* at the same time Diaz starred in the low budget film *Feeling Minnesota* (Steven Baigelman, Fine Line Features, 1996, US). Diaz' film had earned $3 million while Perez' failed to get distributed thus signalling an initial decline in Perez' career. What should also be mentioned at this time is how Perez' films not only failed to receive attention from mainstream audiences but also from Latino publications (such as *Hispanic*) which surprisingly promoted Diaz' film *Feeling Minnesota*. In fact, during Diaz and Lopez' rise to fame Perez received little publicity in text geared to Latinos in Spanish or English. Considering that Perez had been the second Latina performer nominated for an Oscar, there is only one mention of the actress in a 1994 *Hispanic* publication and another appearance of the star in the 1997 magazine *Latina*. Significantly, Perez' appearance in *Latina* occurs just one year after Lopez graces the magazine's debut cover, and a number of magazines aimed at Hispanics emerge in the entertainment market. What I am suggesting is here is that, perhaps Perez did not receive as much recognition as Lopez or Diaz in Hispanic/Spanish publications because Latino audiences were in search for a new and glamorous Latina star which went beyond the loud-mouth roles Perez embodied. This explains why Lopez and Diaz' publicity not been limited to magazines such as *Hispanic* and *Latina* but instead, extended to well-known glamour magazines as *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan*; a feat Perez failed to achieve. Yet, more important than the limited publicity on Perez is the lack of support the actress received from Latino audiences. Had the actress been supported by Latino movie-goers in the same

manner as fellow Puerto Rican actress Jennifer Lopez, the petite star might have continued her career as a top Latina performer in Hollywood.

Eighty percent of *Selena*'s profits came from Hispanic audiences thereby explaining Lopez's popularity in the Latino community and Hollywood's attraction to the curvy star.[163] As a result, Lopez secured her reputation as box office material in Hollywood despite the mediocre film the actress selected as her next vehicle. *Anaconda* (Luis Llosa, Columbia Pictures, 1997, US) which has been noted by the critics as a movie flop, grossed close to $66 million in box office receipts. The film made nearly more than double the profits of Lopez's next movie *Out of Sight* and five million more than her 1999 romantic comedy *The Wedding Planner* (Adam Shankman, *Filmax*, 2001, US). Also interesting to note is how *Anaconda* earned more than *The Wedding Planner* and *Made in Manhattan* (Wayne Wang, Sony Pictures, 2002, US) in the foreign market, in spite of the $53 million spent on publicity for these last two films. What is more, *Anaconda* had not received the same time of publicity advertisement in Latino themed texts as *My Family, Selena, The Wedding Planner* or *Maid in Manhattan*, thus confirming Lopez' crossover success to 'non-Latina roles. When Lopez does returns to a Hispanic role several years later in the film *Maid in Manhattan*, the actress also reappears on the cover of *Latina* magazine thereby attracting Latino audiences which have been her fan base since *Selena*. As such, Lopez attracted a wider Latino audience which clearly contributed to the film's earning of approximately $94 million in the United States, at the same time that she re-established reputation as Hollywood success.

Compared to the box office receipts of Lopez' films are the gross earnings of Cameron Diaz' movies. Of the six films to be analysed, five earned between $100-176 million in the US while the actress's debut film *The Mask* (Charles Russell, New Line Cinema, 1994) profited by more than $225 million overseas. Diaz' immediate stardom in Hollywood emerged with *Mask* and shortly after, the actress had been claimed by Hispanics as a Latina representative therefore justifying the consistent promotion of her films in Spanish and English texts (aimed at the Latino population). As we will read in her chapter, a large percentage of Latino audiences have embraced the star as one of their own despite Diaz' garnering box office success in predominantly WASPy roles. In 1997 Diaz co-starred in the movie hit *My Best Friend's Wedding* (Paul J. Hogan, Tri-Star Pictures, 1997, US) and a year later starred in *There's Something About Mary* (Peter & Bobby Farrelly, 20th Century Fox, 1998, US). It should be mentioned that during this two year period Lopez appeared in four films which failed to earn as much as Diaz' pictures. *My Best Friend's*

---

[163] Staff and Knight-Ridder newspaper reports, 'Latinos Continue To Break Through From Carmen Miranda to Jennifer Lopez,' *Daily News*, 27 July (New York, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 22 November 2001.
http://www.nydailynews.com/1998-07-27/New_York_Now/Movies/a-885.asp

Wedding and *There's Something About Mary* earned $303 million combined whereas *Blood and Wine, Selena, Anaconda* and *Out of Sight* summed up to $139 million, less than half of Diaz' films. Nevertheless, if by 1998 Diaz became Hollywood's golden girl it was easy to see how the star of Cuban ancestry transformed into one of *Charlies's Angels* (McG, Columbia Pictures, 2000, US). The film which earned more than $125 million, promoted Diaz as the image of an ideal white figure, an image the star embodied throughout most of her career. A Hollywood box office success, Diaz (it seems) became the industry's answer to promote Latina stars in non-ethnic roles, an attempt which Lopez could not successfully pull of despite her efforts to obtain a white look, and a feat Perez could never take on because of her dark features.

Part of the reason Perez is not on the same level of stardom as Lopez and Diaz has to do with the distribution of her films. As I have discovered, Perez' debut film *Do The Right Thing* only reached 534 theatres in the United States while *Fearless* was shown on 749 screens. Her other two films, *White Men Can't Jump* and *It Could Happen To You* were distributed to approximately 1500 theatres. Of Lopez' more popular films (*Maid in Manhattan, The Wedding Planner, Out of Sight, and Anaconda*) these films were released to more than 2500 theatres. Significantly, with *Selena*, the film reached an estimated 1800 theatres while her earlier films, *Blood and Wine* and *My Family*, were distributed to less than 600 theatres in total. *Feeling Minnesota*, the first of Diaz' box-office failures, reached 869 theatres compared to the 2516 theatres which featured her first film, *The Mask*. Both *My Best Friend's Wedding* and *There's Something About Mary* reached an average of 2400 theatres while 3000 cinema complexes showed *Charlie's Angels*.

Since 1989 up until 2003, a Latina star has appeared every year in an independent or commercial film. The importance of this is the promotion of Latina performers as entertainers for Hispanic and mainstream audiences. Perez' films may have earned less than Lopez and Diaz' but the actress nonetheless attracted movie audience during a period when few Latina stars were present on the big screen. After Perez, Lopez and Diaz stardom catapulted beyond the level of fame garnered by former Hollywood Latina legends as Rita Hayworth or Dolores del Río. What this indicates is that during the past two decades Latina and Latino performers have become much more in demand than in earlier years, in particular because of growing Latino audience. More importantly, these performers have been able to perform non-Latino roles hence crossing over to mainstream stardom and the 'Latino Boom.'

Discussing the difference between the Latino Boom of the 1980s and that of the 1990s, Coco Fusco asserts that the 90s 'boom focuses on the success of individuals, a creation of the North American

press, but the advance and development of Latino culture within the U.S. will be the result of a long process, initiated by those who claim the right to produce culture in the name of the community.'[164] Affirming Fusco's observation, Puerto Rican singer Marc Anthony considers that the Latino 'explosion' is not the rise of Latino figures in the media, but instead, the emergence of 'three or four'[165] Latino stars into the limelight. And Mireya Navarro in her article 'Latinos Gain Visibility in Cultural Life of U.S.,' also confirms that the media does not offer much Latino representation, stating, 'yet for all the media attention and the rapid growth of Spanish-language media, Hispanic organizations and business leaders still express frustration, saying that Latinos seem invisible in the mainstream culture.'[166] While it is true that Latino representation in the media is minimal, it is also certain that the promotion of Latino/a 'superstars' in the late 1980s and 1990s attracted a great deal of attention to the Latino community as a whole. In the following section I wish to briefly discuss the rise of male Latino stardom before moving on to the Latina actresses in this thesis.

Rise of Latino Stardom

In a 1996 article entitled '25 Most Powerful Hispanics in Hollywood,' Alex Avila listed Edward James Olmos, Andy Garcia, Jimmy Smits and John Leguizamo as Hollywood's most influential Latino actors.[167] Since then, the careers of these actors have been moderately successful and some, notably Andy Garcia and John Leguizamo, have starred in non-Latino roles. Both the Cuban Garcia and Columbian-born Leguizamo have demonstrated their talent as bankable actors, but that their success is the very reverse of Puerto Rican born Benicio del Toro, considered to be 'El latino más potente de Hollywood'[168] ('Hollywood's most powerful Latino') in 2001, is noteworthy. The only Puerto Rican actor to win an Oscar Award, del Toro 'came into power' for his Spanish-speaking role in Steven Soderbergh's 2001 film *Traffic*. While the fact that he spoke his native language throughout most of the film, suggested that the actor gave a more 'authentic' performance, del Toro's achievement also reminded the media of the significant rise of Latino *performers* during the past two decades. I emphasise performer because of the overwhelming international success of

---

[164] Fusco (1990), p 56.

[165] *La Crónica de Hoy*, 'No hay boom latino, dice Marc Anthony,' *La Crónica de Hoy*, 28 April (Mexico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 13 November 2001.
http://www.cronica.com.mx/2001/abr/28/culturas06.html

[166] Navarro (1999), p 24.

[167] Also included in this list is Antonio Banderas. Like Penelope Cruz, Banderas has been 'labelled' as Latino although both are Spanish/European citizens. Alex Avila, '25 Most Powerful Hispanics in Hollywood,' Hispanic, April (1996), p 22.

[168] Rocío Ayuso, 'El latino más potente de Hollywood, *El País*, 11 February, El Espectador Section (Spain, 2001), p 1.

another native Puerto Rican star two years prior to del Toro's award winning role: Ricky Martin. It is not my aim to discuss Toro's or the above-mentioned actors' careers at length, however, it is necessary to briefly comment upon the rise of Latino stars during the past twenty-five years as it parallels contemporary Latina stardom.

Hector Elizondo, Raul Julia and Edward James Olmos were just a few of the Latino actors appearing in films when the 1980s began. Elizondo, of Puerto Rican and Basque descent, whose films include *The Taking of Pelham 1-2-3* (Joseph Sargent, Palladium Productions, 1974), *Cuba* (Richard Lester, Holmby Pictures, 1979) and *American Gigolo* (Paul Schrader, Paramount Pictures, 1980) is perhaps most remembered for his (non-Latino) role as the hotel manager who transforms Julia Robert in *Pretty Women* (Garry Marshall, Touchstone Pictures and Silver Screen Partners IV, 1990). The actor had been an award-winning stage performer before embarking on a film and television career in Latino and non-Latino roles.[169] What is more, prior to the 1980s (the era proclaimed as the 'Hispanic Decade,') both Raul Julia and Edward James Olmos garnered excellent reviews for their stage performances.[170]

After establishing himself as a member of the New York Shakespeare theatre company, Raul Julia attained star status for his Oscar-nominated performance as a revolutionary in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Hector Babenco, Sugarloaf Films, Inc., 1985). The Puerto Rican native became 'the most employed Hispanic actor of his generation'[171] while 'manag[ing] to portray characters from a variety of backgrounds - Greek, Jewish, Britain, as well as a host of Latin Americans.'[172] One of the actor's most respected non-Latino performances was as the 'cool, brilliant attorney' Sandy Stern in *Presumed Innocent* (Alan J. Pakula, Warner Bros., 1990), confirming that some Latino actors were earning considerable salaries in Hollywood and were not limited to Latino roles; before his demise the actor earned eight million dollars in one year.[173] This is not to say that Latino actors were not being over overlooked by the film industry's frequent casting of non-Latino stars in major Hispanic roles (e.g., Al Pacino in *Carlito's Way*, Brian De Palma, Epic Productions Inc. and Universal Pictures, 1982) but rather that, during the 1980s and 1990s, Latino stars were becoming a popular and beneficial commodity in the film industry.

In contrast to Raul Julia's stardom, Edward James Olmos established his career in predominantly Latino roles. Ironically, the same year the actor starred in the television drama *The*

---

[169] Dávila, p 50.
[170] Olmos' 1979 portrayal of the character El Pachuco in Luis Valdez's play *Zoot Suit* helped to launch the actor's career, especially when he recreated the role in the film version of the theatrical production.
[171] Alan L. Gansburg, 'Raul Julia: One of the Busiest Actors in America,' *Hispanic Business*, July (1992), p 48.
[172] Ibid.
[173] No Author, 'Cover Story: Top Entertainers,' *Hispanic Business*, July (1994), p 40.

Ballad of Gregorio Cortez (Robert M. Young, Embassy Pictures and National Endowment for the Humanities, 1982), based on the true story of a Mexican-American farm worker mistakenly accused of murder, he portrayed, in his own words, 'a multiethnic [...] with German blue eyes, Japanese-slanted eyes, Chinese yellow skin and [speaking] ten languages fluently'[174] in *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, Blade Runner Partnership and The Ladd Company, 1982). In 1984 the actor returned to television to co-star in one of the decade's most popular series *Miami Vice* (Anthony Yerkovich, Michael Mann Productions and Universal TV, 1984-1989). Attaining creative control over his character Lieutenant Castillo, Olmos had confirmed his growing star power and the industry's positioning of (some) Latinos in the media as 'the good guy.' In fact, in the July 1988 *Time* magazine which displays Olmos on the cover, the actor is described as 'very inspirational, a real hero to the Hispanic community.'[175] Also underscored in several New York newspapers is the recognition of a small number of *hispanos* as positive role models and the modest transformation of the Latino image on screen. In a *New York Times* article Steven D. Stark wrote that 'In the 1980s, Hispanic people have often been cast as violent gang members or drug dealers,'[176] but one year later *The New York Daily News* offered a different perspective by stating that, in 1988 there were 'several positive images in the movies and on TV: Edward James Olmos [...] and Jimmy Smits [...].'[177]

Jimmy Smits along with Edward James Olmos appeared in award-winning television series while also starring in films in the late 80s. Olmos played the lead in *Stand and Deliver* (Ramón Menéndez, Warner Bros., 1988) based on the life of a Bolivian maths teacher who helped eighteen East Los Angeles students in Los Angeles to pass a calculus placement test; the next year Smits was seen as a general in Pancho Villa's army in *El Gringo Viejo* (*The Old Gringo*, Luis Puenzo, Columbia Pictures and Fonda Films, 1989). *El Gringo Viejo* did not enjoy commercial success unlike *Stand and Deliver* which 'grossed $13 million, more than nine times as much as its initial cost,'[178] but Smits gained crossover appeal and became 'Hollywood's hottest property'[179] before returning to his television role as a Latino lawyer in *L.A. Law* (Steven Bochco and Terry Louise Fisher, 20th Century Fox TV, 1986-1994). In 1994 the actor starred as Detective Bobby Simone in

---

[174] Guy D. Garcia, 'Burning with Passion: Despite a low-key exterior, Edward James Olmos ignites the screen,' *Time*, July, (New York, 1988), p 37. Reported by Elaine Durtka in Los Angeles.

[175] Producer Moctesuma Esperanza is cited in Guy D. Garcia's article on the actor, 'Burning with Passion: Despite a low-key exterior, Edward James Olmos ignites the screen,' *Time*, July, (New York, 1988), p 37. Reported by Elaine Durtka in Los Angeles.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Lewis Beale, 'Hollywood Hispanics: Old Stereotypes are cleaned up in New Films' *The New York Daily News*, 3 January (New York, 1988), p 3.

[178] Garcia, p 37.

[179] Ruben Castañeda, 'Jimmy Smits: Hollywood's Newest Hottest Property,' *Hispanic*, June (New York, 1989), pp 25-28.

yet another police series, *NYPD Blue* (Steven Bochco and David Milch, 20th Century Fox TV and Fox Television Network, 1993-2005) while preparing for his role in the 1995 film *My Family* (Gregory Nava); this is the film in which Jennifer Lopez debuted. Smits briefly shed his respectable image but as seen in one of his more recent roles, in *Star Wars Episode II Attack of the Clones* (George Lucas, Lucas Film Ltd., 2002), he continues to portray noble characters.

As Hispanic themed films and Latino actors were emerging in television and film, only one actress in the early 1990s seemed to dominate as the industry's most 'powerful' Latina star: Rosie Perez. This demonstrates how Latino actors were much more in demand than their female counterparts who would have to wait until the late 90s to gain 'equal' stardom. By the time Jennifer Lopez and Cameron Diaz began to overshadow Perez' fame, we read that more Latino 'actors like Andy Garcia, John Leguizamo and Benicio del Toro regularly play interesting, non-stereotypical characters and get critical kudos for their work.'[180] Avila notes: 'Like the great actor Raul Julia, García has never denied his Hispanic heritage but he plays non-Latino roles with ease. [...] The Hollywood reporter, a respectable trade magazine, declared García Hollywood's most bankable Hispanic star in May 1995.'[181] Earning $9.5 million,[182] Andy Garcia set the path for his film career in a non-Latino role in Brian de Palma's film *The Untouchables* (Paramount Pictures, 1987). The actor's film credits include *The Godfather Part III* (Francis Ford Coppola, Paramount Pictures, 1990), *Internal Affairs* (Mike Figgis, Paramount Pictures, 1990), which Garcia co-wrote, and *When a Man Loves a Woman* (Luis Mandoki, Touchstone Pictures, 1994), in which he appeared opposite one of Hollywood's 'sweethearts' Meg Ryan. Garcia also co-starred in *Ocean's Eleven* (Steven Soderbergh, Jerry Weintraub Productions, 2001) and *Ocean's Twelve* (Steven Soderbergh, Warner Bros., 2004) along with Hollywood's top (White) male stars: George Clooney, Brad Pitt and Matt Damon.

Compared to Garcia, the rise to stardom of John Leguizamo was very rapid. Starting out as a stand-up comic in New York City, Leguizamo based his routines on his life in the city. Within a short period the Columbian-Puerto Rican actor was recreating his one-man shows - *Mambo Mouth* (John Leguizamo, HBO, 1991) and *Spic-O-Rama: A Dysfunctional Family* (Peter Askin, HBO, 1993)- on the cable television network *HBO*. Few Latino stars have created and starred in their own television sitcom, gaining a huge Latino following as Leguizamo did. Moreover, the success of his television shows clearly reflected the receptive response given by Latino audiences in search of Hispanic representation during the early nineties. At this time, the actor began to recognise the

---

[180] *Daily News Staff & Knight Ridder*, 'That Latin Touch: Hispanics are set to make their mark in Tinseltown,' *Daily News*, 26 July, (New York, 1998), p 15.
[181] Alex Avila, '25 Most Powerful Hispanics in Hollywood,' *Hispanic*, April (1996), p 23.
[182] No Author, 'Cover Story: Top Entertainers,' *Hispanic Business*, July (1994), p 40.

'very little representation' Latinos have in the United States and that 'whoever is up there at the moment becomes the representative of the whole Latin experience.'[183] With few Latino representatives in the media it seemed that both the film and television industries took advantage of Leguizamo's influence over Hispanic audiences hence the creation of his short-lived television show *House of Buggin'* (Adam Bernstein, Fox Network, 1994). Although one of the first of a few Hispanic-themed TV programmes during the 1990s, the show failed to attract Latino viewers in the way that *Fox*'s African–American comedy show *In Living Colour* had captured Black audiences. Criticized because of its many routines involving Hispanic stereotypes, *House of Buggin'* was cancelled after one season thereby eliminating 'one of the only opportunities to not only see Latino images, but to experience Latino humour.'[184] Despite the cancelling of his television show Leguizamo went on to appear in feature films in Latino and non-Latino roles. Similar to Jennifer Lopez, the actor has clearly not been limited to Latino roles perhaps because his lighter skin, and US accent, thus his portrayal of diverse characters such as a Latino drag queen beauty contestant in *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar* (Beeban Kidron, Amblin Entertainment and Universal Pictures, 1995), Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* (Baz Luhrmann, 1996), and the French painter Henri-Toulouse Lautrec in *Moulin Rouge!* (20th Century Fox Films, 1995).

Thus, male performers were in the forefront of Latin stardom and, over the past two decades, have become representative of the Latin cultural explosion. It is significant to note, however, that, with the exception of Ricky Martin, all the male stars mentioned above have similar stereotypically Latin physical traits: dark hair and eyes. As such, despite their dark features they have been able to easily shift between Latino and non-Latino roles, something which Latina actresses have only just been able to achieve, during the past two decades with the rise of Latin stardom.

This brings me to the diverse physiognomy of Rosie Perez, Jennifer Lopez, known as 'J.Lo', and Cameron Diaz. These three stars (most notably Diaz, a 5ft 9in blue-eyed blonde) provoke much interest as Hollywood promotes them as Latina representatives. It is the aim of this research to analyse the physical image of these three actresses in media texts and films, in particular the manner in which the film industry has projected these actresses and how the Latino community responded (and continues to respond) to them is of interest. What follows is an in-depth analysis of their stardom, beginning with the career of Rosie Perez, since she was the first of the three actresses to be examined in this research to rise to fame.

---

[183] Lucas Rivera, 'Mambo: King of Comedy,' *Hispanic Business*, March (1992), p 14.
[184] Antonio Mejias-Rentas, managing editor-entertainment at the Spanish newspaper *La Opinion* cited in this article. No Author, 'Cover Story: Show Biz Highlights,' *Hispanic Business*, July (1995), p 24.

3

Rosie Perez: The Mouth that Roared

> Despite a certain wariness regarding issues of feminine specificity in connection with the voice, the function of the woman's voice, even when contained by classical sound conventions, is far from simplistic.[1]

> And then there is Rosie Perez, who, rain or shine, is about as muted and muffled as a stick of dynamite on a short fuse.[2]

The representation of Latina actress Rosie Perez in the media has constantly focused on her distinctive and potent vocal range. Whereas the actress's persona may not solely be defined by her voice, it is considered to be her 'trademark.' In an article entitled 'Rosie Blossoms,' which intended to discuss the transformation of the actress over the last ten years, the journalist was fixated on her 'unique' voice. Four lines of colourful narrative open the article:

> Here she is, that pretty, dimple-cheeked, Coke bottle shaped Puerto Rican girl - the one with the high-pitched, Brooklyn voice that, in her 1989 debut in '*Do The Right Thing*,' was about as subtle as 20 pairs of fake, neon-green dragon-claw fingernails across a chalkboard - and she's nothing like what you've seen or read about before. [3]

That the actress's manner of speech is often associated with her ethnic background is crucial to this research, but what is also important to consider is how her voice has stirred reactions from Latinas who view Perez, as analysed by Clara E. Rodriguez, 'as an embarrassment to her race.'[4] In fact, during a conference with former President Clinton on 'racial' issues in The United States, 'two

---

[1] Amy Lawrence, *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema* (Berkeley, CA and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p 125.
[2] Peter Applebome, 'Trying to Shake a Stereotype but Keep on Being Rose Perez,' *The New York Times*, 14 February, Section 2 (New York, 1999), p 11.
[3] Denene Millner, 'Rosie Blossoms,' *New York Daily News*, 24 January (New York: 1999), p 12.
[4] Clara E. Rodriguez, *Latin Looks: The Images of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. Media* (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1997) p 1.

Hispanic women complained about being compared to the sort of character played by Rosie Perez.'[5] While this type of discourse would support a reading of the voice as a negative site, not all members of the Latino community have constructed the actress in this manner. Rather, Rodriguez also informs us that some of the Latino community feel that the actress's image 'should be put out there [so that Latinas will be] respected as tough.'[6] Thus, this perspective may be seen as a reflection of the actress's performances in films like *Night on Earth* (Jim Jarmusch, Fine Line Features, US, 1992), when her character warns Giancarlo Esposito to 'watch out for this little girl.' Interestingly, it is precisely this attitude that is admired by casting director Sheila Jaffe who recognises that the Puerto Rican actress is often perceived in the Hollywood industry as being, 'too outspoken and aggressive for her own good.'[7]

In this chapter I will look at how Rosie Perez' body is continuously presented as an ethnic feminine figure in films because of her accent and dark features. I focus on the actress's voice and body as she is repeatedly typecast in Latina roles which regionalise her characters as being from Brooklyn and working class. I will argue that although the actress is often presented as a stereotypical figure of *latinidad*, she embodies what Kathleen Rowe terms an 'unruly' women thus contesting patriarchal discourses of femininity. For this reason I look to Rowe and other feminist film scholars such as Amy Lawrence, Kaja Silverman and Maria DiBattista whose work on the woman's voice in classical cinema will be referred to throughout this chapter. While Rowe focuses on women in comedy, her work is useful here to facilitate an examination of how Perez' is established as an 'ethnicised' unruly woman in her films as well as how her 'disruptive' persona is projected in relation to Latino culture.

Because Perez' voice and body serve as a site of ethnic femininity I consider how her directors have built upon the actress' persona as authentically urban and genuinely Latina. Therefore I will analyse how her films offer 'authentic' depictions of Hispanicness via dialogue and/or mise-en-scène. Also to be analysed is how Perez' dark features not only reflect a 'typical' Puerto Rican image, but also that of African American femininity hence my interest in the framing of her body as a 'black woman' in a few of her films. It should be noted here that Angharad N. Valdivia analyses the representation of Perez in her films as a 'woman of colour' as well as briefly explores how the actress's ethnicity and class are marked by her voice. While Valdivia recognises Perez as achieving crossover success in mainstream films and exercising some level of agency the

---

[5] Felicia R. Lee, 'The Honest Dialogue That is Neither,' *The New York Times*, 7 December (New York, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 4 March 2000.
http://search.nytimes.com/search/daily/bin/fastweb?getdoc+site+site+105984+4+wAAA=Rosie%7EPerez.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Applebome, p 20.

author fails to go beyond the notion of stereotypical representations of Latinas as loud and sexual women.[8] Perez may be projected as the stereotypical embodiment of what Ritchie Pérez classifies as the 'hot blooded-mama'[9] in his essay on Puerto Rican images in U.S. films, however the actress's petite stature and animated voice have not (until recently)[10] been analysed academically beyond the 'hysterical fits and temper tantrums' she displays.[11]

That Perez' body can be framed as 'a woman of colour'[12] and 'constructed' as capable of representing blackness is also integral to my study, in particular since I argue in chapter 5 that fair-featured Latinas are created and promoted to represent whiteness.[13] To explore how films frame blackness it will be necessary to examine the work of writers such as Vincent Roccio and Ed Guerrero who offer much insight on African American portrayal in contemporary cinema. The association between Perez' racialised body and ethnic background will also lead to discussions on the actress as representing an 'authentic' hip hop artist at a time when the dance movement was slowly becoming commercialised and accepted in American popular culture. Raquel Z. Rivera's work on Latinos in hip hop will be of use in this chapter as well as W. T. Lhamon, Jr.'s book *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop.*

If we are to consider hip hop performance as the catalyst which propelled Perez to fame, then it will be helpful to examine the circumstances which have led to her stardom. Here I draw upon the work of Charles Ponce de Leon Richard Dyer and Diane Negra as these will allow me to contribute to discourses on stardom. In my work on Lopez I also look to these authors to examine the significance of her stardom as well as considering how the star of *Selena* became an 'authentic' hip hop representative.

---

[8] Angharad N. Valdivia, 'A Latina in the Land of Hollywood: Transgressive Possibilities,' *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood and Other Essays on Media Culture* (Tuscon, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2000), pp 89-105.

[9] Richie Pérez, 'From Assimilation to Annihilation: Puerto Rican Images in US Films,' *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños* Bulletin, No. 2 (New York: Hunter College Press, 1990), p 13.

[10] Throughout this research I also look to Chris Holmlund's readings of Perez' stardom via her voice. I am interested in how Holmlund describes Perez' voice as an 'impossible body' in her chapter 'Latinas in La-La Land,' in *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculinity at the Movies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp 109-122.

[11] Michael Wilmington, 'Fear of Flying,' *Chicago Tribune*, 15 October (Chicago: 1993), in *Current Biography*, September (US, 1995), p 47.

[12] D. Kellner, 'Aesthetics, Ethics, and Politics in the Films of Spike Lee,' in M. Reid (ed.), *Spike Lee's "Do The Right Thing,"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p 105, note 37, cited in Chris Holmlund's book, p 196, note 22.

[13] It is necessary to remember that if Perez can personify an African-American image, it is because the influx of African slaves in Puerto Rico contributed to the strong 'racial' resemblance between many Puerto Ricans and African-Americans. Arturio Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company: 1993).

Since the notion of 'transformation' is one of the main focuses of my research, this chapter will specifically address the 'adaptation' of the Latina stereotype Perez actively embodies. It is my intention then to explore how Perez' 'unruliness' is not seen as that of just a Latina spitfire, as in the case of former stars Lupe Vélez or Carmen Miranda, but rather as a positive and active agent of *latinidad.* In this manner the performances of Perez become much more complicated if compared to these two former 'Latina' actresses. For this reason my discussion of transformation will be less straightforward than in my chapter on Jennifer Lopez, as I look to the complexity of the term as applied to the individual films of Perez and across the persona of the actress. Significantly, in comparison to the dialectical shift between whiteness and *latinidad* in the stardom of Lopez is the simultaneous embodiment and transformation of Perez into one of the main stereotypes of Latina femininity.

In this chapter I will examine five films, as well as reviews and interviews with the actress, in order to demonstrate the continuous construction of her characters as tough, loud women in *Do The Right Thing* (1989), *White Men Can't Jump* (Ron Shelton, 20th Century Fox, 1992, US), *It Could Happen To You* (Andrew Bergman, Tristar, 1994, US) and *Somebody To Love*, (Alex Rockwell, Lumiere Pictures, 1996, US). In my analysis of Perez' performance in *White Men Can't Jump* (Ron Shelton, 20th Century Fox, 1992, US) and *Fearless* (Peter Weir, Warner Bros., US, 1993), I use vocal performance as a case study to which ethnic femininity can be examined. Moreover in my discussion of *It Could Happen To You* it will be argued that the actress's voice remains a site of authority despite the film projecting her as a modernised version of the Latina spitfire.

Given that the notion of 'transformation' will be discussed throughout this research, it should be mentioned once again that in contrast to the other chapters in this thesis, a limited number of images of Perez will be included as her features have not dramatically changed like those of Jennifer Lopez, nor has she portrayed 'WASPy' roles as has Cameron Diaz. By doing so, I hope to show how the former 'Fly Girl' 'transformed' into a 'real Hollywood star.'[14]

A 'Fly Girl' grows in Brooklyn

One of ten children born to Lydia Perez, a former singer in Puerto Rico, and Ismael Serrano, a native Puerto Rican and merchant marine, Rosie Perez was christened Rosa Mary (1964) in the

[14] The orginal text is in Spanish and read 'auténtica estrella de Hollywood.'Carlos Bardem, *Durango Perdido: Diario de Rodage de Perdita Durango* (Barcelona: Ediciones Grupo Zeta, 1997), p 198.

Bushwick neighbourhood of Brooklyn, New York.[15] Watching her parents dance salsa, the desire to become a dancer was sparked at a very early age. Perez left New York at the age of 18 to study marine biology in Los Angeles, and while dancing at one of the trendier clubs was asked to go on *Soul Train*, a weekly dance show originally geared towards African-Americans with its Soul and R & B music.[16] Subsequently, she would go on to choreograph the 'Fly Girls' on the popular black television comedy show *In Living Colour*.[17] The term 'Fly Girl'[18] simply means an attractive young woman and was first used in hip-hop circles as well as on the show, and Perez, who had begun to frequent clubs at the age of thirteen with her siblings, perfected the raw 'hybrid' street dance style 'of frenetic footwork and gymnastics seen usually among male hip-hop dancers.'[19] Perhaps this explains why the actress feels that she 'dances like a guy,' as well as the reaction creator Keenen Ivory Wayans had towards her dancing: 'Rosie you look kind of awful. The Fly Girls are supposed to be feminine. Soften it up a little.'[20]

Despite Perez' less than feminine dance moves the Puerto Rican figure captivated audiences in her film debut *Do The Right Thing*. Director Spike Lee discovered Perez at the Funky Reggae club and described her dancing as 'killin.'[21] Impressed, Lee immediately decided to cast her as Tina in his controversial 1989 film *Do The Right Thing*. Originally an African-American part, Perez took on the role of Lee's on-screen girlfriend and mother to their son.[22] But before she begins her dialogue the audience is already drawn to her body due to her aggressive hip-hop dancing in the opening sequence. Later on, when we finally 'hear' the Latina star, we are presented with a ferociously charged voice behind the petite frame.

Since *Do The Right Thing* was the actress's film debut, it is necessary to understand how Perez came to personify and function as a 'loud Puerto Rican.'[23] Given that her first role defined

---

[15] In some news articles it is reported that Perez is one of 11 children.

[16] 'The Soul Train Story.'
[Online] Accessed 22 October (2000).
http://www.soultraintv.com/st/story.html.

[17] Keenen Ivory Wayans created the comedy show *In Living Colour*, which featured on *Fox* television network.

[18] Nancy Hill-Holtzman, 'Hip-Hop Hopefuls: Trendy TV Show holds Casting call for Dance Troupe,' *L.A. Times*, 5 August, Metro Section (Los Angeles, 1992), p B3.
[Online] Accessed 9 September 2000.
http://latimes.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=It92+50205&LATID=847947
'Fly look is combat-style boots, black mesh stockings and skimpy tops.'

[19] Susan Howard, 'Rosie Perez Takes 'Fly Girl' to a New Altitude,' *Newsday*, 28 November (New York, 1990), p 67.

[20] Ibid., p 76.

[21] Ibid., p 67.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Angharad N. Valdivia, 'Stereotype or Transgression? Rosie Perez in Hollywood Film,' *Sociological Quarterly*, Summer, Vol. 39, Issue 3 (US, 1989).

the star's persona throughout her film career, we need to understand the motives that provoke her character's 'hysteria.' While it is my intention to analyse the circumstances which lead to the actress's outbursts, as well as explore how Spike Lee interprets *latinidad* throughout the film's narrative, I will also briefly look at how her body is framed as an African-American woman in several scenes. In view of the fact that her characters have often been projected to promote 'Blackness,' it is essential to trace the pattern from the Latina's first film.[24]

A fistful of Rosie

Do The Right Thing (Universal Pictures, US, 1989) stars director Spike Lee in his third feature film and recounts the explosion of intense racial confrontations on one block in Brooklyn during the hottest day of the year. Lee's character Mookie works as a delivery-boy at Sal's pizzeria, 'the only white-operated business in the neighbourhood.'[25] When one of Mookie's friends, Buggin' Out (Giancarlo Esposito), boycotts the locale because of the owner's refusal to add prominent African-Americans to his photographic 'Wall of Fame,' as well as restricting the playing of rap music, Sal (Danny Aiello) is eventually confronted by Buggin' Out and Radio Raheem (Bill Nunn), another of Mookie's friends. Meanwhile, Mookie faces his own problems with his sister Jade (real sister Joie Lee), who tells him to face up his responsibilities to his girlfriend Tina (Perez) and their son. Back at Sal's the situation intensifies as tempers flare and chaos ensues with the tragic death of Radio Raheem.

One of the most memorable moments in Spike Lee's controversial film is the opening sequence of Rosie Perez shadowboxing to Public Enemy's 'Fight the Power.' The parallel between the intense conflicts of colour in the scene (red vs. black and white) and that of the makeshift canvases in the background inspires the aggressive hip-hop dance. The agitated physical response to the lyrics of 'I'm black and I'm proud' sets the tone of the film's tense portrayal of race relations whilst projecting the actress's figure as an anonymous aggressive image; she is not introduced as a potential character during this dance sequence.

[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_1587603421&site=ehost&return=n.

[24] Whereas this research establishes the majority of Perez' characters as Puerto Rican, it should be noted that her appearance on the *Home Box Office* cable television show *Criminal Justice* was a non-Latina character by the name of Denise Moore, a prostitute attacked outside of a crack house in Brooklyn. The program aired 8 September 1990, Los Angeles, 21:00.

[25] Mark Deming, '*Do The Right Thing*,' *MSN Entertainment.com, All Movie Guide.*
[Online] Accessed 11 May 2003.
http://entertainment.msn.com/Movies/Movies.aspx?m=141758

In figuring the meaning of dress in dance performances, Alexandra Carter discusses costume as 'establish[ing] character,' as well as 'defin[ing] the body image.'[26] The positioning of the actress in fighting attire mimicking boxing struts, reflects Alice Evans Field's examination of the wardrobe as 'harmoniz[ing] to the mood, be it comedy, tragedy or romance; they must simply add subtly to the grace of the wearer; and they must enhance the rhythmic flow of the story.'[27] Although Field does not look to Perez as a case study, the author's work on costume is of interest as she examines Hollywood's 'formula' for costume design as 'corresponding' to the emotional moments of the film's narrative. Therefore, while the boxing gear adds to the physically challenging routine performed by Perez, instead of adding 'grace' to her image, the actress's connection to the 'masculine' attire[28] eventually defines her as an 'authentic fighter'. In fact, one article described Perez in *Do The Right Thing* as 'a powerhouse of physical form – athletic, muscular, *Fearless*.'[29] Similarly Vincent F. Rocchio's essay on the film contends that the boxing costume evokes 'the figure of the angry black male athlete – most notably Mohammad Ali, who refused to stay quiet about racism in sports and in broader culture.'[30] Of more importance, the author notes that Perez' image and 'dance' further intensifies Public Enemy's lyrics, and so, because of the 'authentic' manner in which she responds to the hostile lyrics we cannot help but link her aggressive figure to the surrounding vocals. The extreme close-up of her face reveals grinding teeth and flared nostrils, representing that confrontational attitude Perez manifests on screen as well as off. Such a confrontational attitude can be compared to blackface performance which embodied, according to W.H. T Lhamon Jr., a rebellious and conflictive form of expression.

In the context of Perez' dance number we witness the actress punctuating similar moves (such as the jump and running on the spot) that were originated by blackface performers.[31] In describing minstrelsy as a form of entertainment which attracted the lower classes, as did hip hop, David R. Roediger's insights into 'coon songs' are of much interest as they 'project[ed] onto Blacks

---

[26] Alexandra Carter, 'Bodies of Knowledge: Dance and Feminist Analysis,' in *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*, Patrick Campbell (ed.) (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), p 52.

[27] Evans Field's comments are cited in *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*,' Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds.) (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp 195-196.

[28] Although the initial appearance of Perez in the opening sequence of *Do The Right Thing* is in a dress, her less than feminine moves parallel her 'tough' image when dancing in boxing apparel.

[29] Rachel Altman, 'Hip-Hop Taxing for Motown Generation; You may be the oldest in the YMCA dance class, and you soon realize those old dance routines from the '60's just don't work with 'Arrested Development,' *LA Times*, 9 December (Los Angeles, 1993), p J-3.
[Online] Accessed 23 September 2000.
http:latimes.com.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=It93+55897&LATID=847947

[30] Vincent F. Rocchio, '*Do the Right Thing*: Style as Confrontation,' in *Reel Racism: Confronting Hollywood's Construction of Afro-American Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), p 156.

[31] W. T. Lhamon Jr., *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip-Hop*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p 142.

values and actions that aroused both fear and fascination among whites.'[32] The importance of this is that in analysing Perez' performance we are given a version of the 'coon' shouting in the way the actress's aggressive imagery appeals to the audience despite the fact that it is not her voice causing uproar. Significantly the association of coon songs, as Linda Mizewjeski explains, 'with the darker races and lower classes,' led to the grotesque exaggeration of physical features by blackface performers (e.g., offensive impersonations of black dialect and loud shouting).[33] We are shown a close-up of Perez' face which accentuates her wide nostrils and thick lips thus creating an exaggerated version of blackness. Moreover, because the identification of Perez as Latina is not clarified at this early stage of the film's narrative, her body personifies and reinforces a convincingly cultural and racialised image of blackness in American performance.

In many respects it is through Perez' body that blackness is constructed early on in the film, thereby transforming her Latina identity to release a more racialised image in opposition to whiteness. In arguing that race has played an influential role in the construction of Puerto Ricans, Linda Chávez discusses the perspective of white Americans towards *boricuas* and notes how this Latino group is also identified as being black and hence subjected 'to similar discriminatory treatment as African American[s].'[34] If both Puerto Ricans and blacks are perceived as racially problematic then Perez' image in *Do The Right Thing* serves to embody a conscious declaration against whiteness and its unequal exchange of 'power'.[35]

William E. Perkins informs us that, during the 1980s, the decade when *Do The Right Thing* premiered, 'hip hop's identity broadened' in the 'inner-city playgrounds of America.'[36] The growth of this ethnic and urban dance craze, created and participated in by both blacks and Latinos, ultimately transformed the cultural landscape of the United States and hip hop became associated with American performance. What is more, this expression of 'street art' associated with blackness and *latinidad* eventually became a model of American culture and identity. But this was not always the case. During the eighties the United States was shaped by the Reagan-Bush administration which provoked a dramatic drop in the labour force, and as Juan Flores explains 'the intensification

---

[32] Roediger refers to Lewis Erenberg's work, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Chicago; 1981), p 3. In Roediger's book *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and The Making of the American Working Class* (Revised Edition), (London and New York: Verso, 1999. First Edition 1991), p 116.

[33] Linda Mizejewski, *Ziegfeld Girl: Image and Icon in Culture and Cinema* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p 57.

[34] Raquel Z. Rivera, *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2003), p 28.

[35] I refer to Roediger whose discussion on minstrelsy contends that blackface performance 'involved a conscious declaration *of* (my emphasis) whiteness and white supremacy.' (1999), p 104

[36] William Eric Perkins, 'The Rap Attack: An Introduction,' *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 13.

of racist police repression.'[37] Outraged, Latinos and Blacks vented their frustration through rap as they faced a weak economy, unemployment and racism. Thus rap music, like 'coon songs', has instigated fear and fascination as angry young black men began to voice their criticism of society and the government. As Chuck D. from the rap group Public Enemy explains, 'we decided to direct our anger at something real... the government and people who were responsible for what was happening in society.'[38] This meant fighting the powers that be, as in *Do The Right Thing.*

The potency of the lyrics during the opening sequence is meaningful as it presents a less than conventional Latina figure. In other words, here was the 'new' Latina using her 'voice' to lash out against society's treatment of Hispanics. I would argue then that Perez' unruliness functioned to reflect and respond to Hispanics' economic, social and political condition during the 1980s, which was recognised as a turbulent period for Latinos in the US. In short, Perez' outrage represented the grudge Latinos' bore about being ignored, exploited and portrayed in mainstream society via stereotypical depictions of race, ethnicity or class both on and off screen. Thus when Perez was seen in her dance number, she was not only being defined by the lyrics as an unruly ethnic female, but also transforming and therefore actively employing the Latina stereotype as a mechanism to fight against discrimination.

However, because the film itself insists on maintaining Perez' image as that of an ethnic representation it allows for the actress to embody stereotypical traits often associated with Latinas: 'very temperamental and hot-headed.'[39] In view of stereotyping, Spike Lee manipulates the presence of Latina women in the film (Perez and her on-screen mother Carmen portrayed by Diva Osorio) since they are also depicted as 'Latinas whose accents and actions were meant to be laughed at.'[40] Mimicking Tina's English, Lee's character Mookie repeats her saying, 'I'm no playin,' and later on he yells at Tina's mother: 'English! I want my son to speak English. Bad enough his name is Hector.' Thus, although Perez' body was presented as 'even violent'[41] early on in the film, her image and persona become reduced to her voice and reinforced by Lee's mimicking of her accent. Such a reaction to the actress's voice trades off her 'masculine' and athletic agency

---

[37] Juan Flores, 'Puerto Rocks: New York Ricans Stake Their Claim,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 124.
[38] Perkins, p 21.
[39] Pérez, p 12.
[40] Ibid., p 14.
[41] *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 'Puerto Rican Profile: Rosie Perez,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 27 April, Vol 5, no 17 (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2001.
http://puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n17/ProfileRPerez-en.sthml

through a high-pitched intonation, which is featured as being 'funny,'[42] 'squeaky [and] annoying.'[43] In this way, we can read Perez' urban attitude and *latinidad* as being negotiated through a balance of tension and humour located in the actress's voice.

While such representation of *latinidad* offers much for discussion, it is the actress's dialogue with her on-screen mother which marks out the actress's intense persona.[44] As we will see shortly, the introduction of the actress's voice during a heated discussion not only reveals the potency of her accent, but also demonstrates the unruly force behind her character as she physically breaks away from her mother's grip. In this regard, the 'unruly' character/behaviour the actress incarnates becomes a central aspect of her persona because the narrative places emphasis on her body as 'excessive': 'too mouthy'.[45] In her work, Kathleen K. Rowe characterises the term 'unruly woman' in relation to 'women's bodies, [when they] are considered excessive – too fat, too mouthy, too old, too dirty, too pregnant, too sexual (or not sexual enough) for the norms of conventional gender representation,'[46] and, I would add, for this chapter, 'too dominant'. Conflict can be read on Tina's expressive face as her eyes rolled upwards and tightly puckered lips reveal frustration and disappointment when her mother tells her that she will not baby-sit. A man is heard speaking Spanish but we soon realise that the masculine figure is absent, as is the case in many Puerto Rican households.[47] In the distance, the barred windows emphasise the domestically confined tension of these women, seen in the kitchen. Carmen is draped over the stove as she cooks and Tina is near the door. When she begins to curse her mother in Spanish for refusing to take care of her son, she is aggressively forced against the kitchen wall. Attempting to escape, Tina forcefully pushes against her mother's grip and runs from one room to another until she is pulled back by the need to respond

---

[42] Mirta Ojito, 'Everything's Coming Up Rosie,' *Latina* (New York, 1997), p 42.

[43] John Simon, 'Believe it Who Will,' *National Review*, 29 November, Vol. 45, Issue 23 (US, 1993), p 69. [Online] Accessed 29 September 2000. http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_1587603421&site+ehost&return=n.

[44] There are several other ways in which Lee 'defines' Latinness in the film. For instance, when informed by newspaper headings that it is the hottest day of the summer, the audience 'reads' English alongside Spanish titles in the same frame thus establishing further a diverse ethnic presence. When the black radio station W(e) L(ove) R(adio) plays *salsa* music, Afro-Caribbean rhythms can be heard for a few seconds until the sounds are washed away by Radio Raheem's 'ghetto blaster' belting out more rap music.

[45] Ana M. López also discusses excessiveness '- of costume, performance, sexuality, and musicality – ' in her discourse on the Brazilian actress Carmen Miranda, in her essay 'Are All Latins From Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 416.

[46] Kathleen K. Rowe, *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p 410.

[47] Stephan Thernstrom (ed.), *Harvard Encyclopaedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1980), p 862.

to her mother's outbursts. Although her retreat is briefly disrupted, Tina enters the last room and slams the door in Carmen's face.

One of the functions of this scene is to demonstrate that Tina is trapped in a situation she desperately wants to escape. First we see the barred windows, then she is held against the wall, and finally, she escapes to a small bedroom at the other end of the apartment. As a result, her character is provoked into a hysterical fit because she is no longer free to do as she pleases. Obviously, the scene with her on-screen mother posits Perez as representing a more 'traditional' Latina figure in film, e.g., a mother confined to her home, thereby presenting her as momentarily 'shifting' away from the progressive image she embodied early on in the film. But I would argue that the notion of Perez dominating the frame as a 'defiant' ethnic figure in both sequences works to ascribe the force of her persona via her dancing body or high pitched voice. In short, Perez' image projects outrage against all notions of authority; her on-screen mother or boyfriend. And despite the suggestion of her character as 'conforming' to stereotypical notion of Latinness, the actress nonetheless (truthfully) conveys a more transformed notion of Latina stereotypes because she 'articulates' a resisting and daring Latina who is in control of her own body and speech.

The narrative of *Do The Right Thing* characterises the construction of Perez' persona as an urban/ghetto, loud-mouthed Latina, and because of this, many Hispanic groups criticised her for promoting a stereotype in *Do The Right Thing*. She defended the film, responding that the character of Tina was 'really out there.'[48] Asserting that Tina 'was so far removed from me,'[49] the actress 'cleverly side step[ped]' roles easily associated with this particular character and categorised as a victim.[50] With her transition to roles not considered stereotypical (Gloria in *White Men Can't Jump* or Carla in *Fearless*), Perez appeared in films that enabled her to develop a diverse body of work. What is perhaps striking ten years after her debut performance is that she continues to receive offers of roles as a 'ghetto chick from Brooklyn who's pregnant.'[51] Even so, the combination of Perez' 'in your face' look and high-pitched voice give her a powerful and controlling quality few Latina characters have portrayed on screen, particularly during the late 1980s. Thus at a time when few Latina stars were becoming popular, Perez made her mark as a problematic ethnic female, representative because of her attitude and voice.

---

[48] Charles Leerhsen, 'Rosie the Riveting,' *Newsweek*, 4 May (New York, 1992), p 65.
[49] Gail Buchalter, 'The World Doesn't Owe Me a Thing,' *Parade*, 19 September (New York, 1993), p 12.
[50] Elena Kellner, ' Everything's Coming Up Rosie!: Her acting Career in Full Bloom, the Rising Star and Entrepreneur has the Clout to call her Own Shots,' *Hispanic Business*, July (New York, 1994), p 28.
[51] Steve Hochman, 'Whatever,' *Los Angeles Times*, 14 February, Home Edition, Calendar Section (Los Angeles, 1999), p 25.
[Online] Accessed 23 September 2000.
http://latimes.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=lt99+13485&LATID=847947

In her work on Latinas in Hollywood, Chris Holmlund places Rosie Perez under the caption 'ghetto girl/drama queen' as the author briefly analyses the work of the Latina in three of her films.[52] She argues that 'Perez' roles, whether mainstream or indie, capitalize on her idiosyncracy, positioning her as a hysteric who is likeable if screwy; most showcase her dancing and talent for ensemble acting.'[53] While I agree with the author that Perez is often reduced to a working class ghetto queen cued to have a hysterical fit, she fails to offer any details as to the nature of the actress's hysteria as a resisting agent. Granted Holmlund momentarily comments upon Perez' performances in *Do The Right Thing* and *Night on Earth* as strong ethnic female characters but she ignores the circumstances leading to her rage. What is more, it is ironic that Holmlund should fail to analyse *Fearless*, as the film positions Perez in a different, less than screwy role thereby disputing the author's labelling of her as merely a 'drama queen' rather than a serious actress.

Part of the commercial success of *Do The Right Thing* sprang from the controversy about racial conflict it provoked while also appealing to a large African American audience. The film's publicity was not limited to reputable newspapers like *The New York Times* and the *Village Voice* and it was highly publicised on primetime television programmes. According to Ed Guerrero, the film, which cost less than seven million dollars to produce, 'made three times its production costs in its first twelve weeks of release' and became a popular video rental in 1989.[54] That Perez should debut in a film responsible for provoking racial debates in the United States is of interest however, because of the film's popularity at the box office, she began her career as a rising Latina star. Furthermore, her dance performance in this film has been recognised as a memorable moment in film not only in her own publicity but also in media texts discussing the film.

Perez doesn't feature heavily in the media until 1992 when she appears in the film *White Men Can't Jump*. Thus, if, as Thomas Harris informs us, fan magazines and newspapers play an important role in building a screen star, then Perez was for the most part ignored until this film.[55] Among the materials gathered for this thesis is a 1990 article which contains a feature story on the actress's move to television as a choreographer for the television programme *In Living Colour*. Perez trained female dancers to recreate a similar version of her routine in *DTRT* thus verifying her dance performance in the film as a genuine street performance. Significantly, Perez' dancing impressed a number of African American rap performers such as Heavy D. and LL Cool J. who sought her services in the hope of learning to dance hip hop. Thus, her relationship with black

---

[52] Holmlund, p 114.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ed Guerrero, *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p 146.
[55] Thomas Harris, 'The Building of Popular Images: Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe,' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), p 41.

artists and African American programmes such as *Soul Train* and *In Living Colour* established a direct connection to African American culture. What is also established in several early articles is the linking of the actress to her New York urban roots.

In her work on New York Puerto Ricans in hip hop culture, Raquel Rivera writes that: 'Since the 1960s, most New York Puerto Ricans have lived in Brooklyn and the Bronx, with the Bronx having the highest concentration.'[56] Significantly the positioning of Perez in Brooklyn in her first three films (including *Night on Earth*) reflects Rivera's observation. Moreover, in articles on Perez her voice is also marked as Brooklynese, as noted in the following:

> Very few actors and even fewer actresses these days seem as if they're from anyplace recognizable in terms of geography, class and ethnicity, if they can help it. When she started acting, Ms. Perez was advised to take classes to lose her Brooklyn inflections and mannerisms.[57]

Thus Perez is consistently recognised as a New York Latina in her films, as in the next movie to be analysed, *White Men Can't Jump*, where Perez' Brooklyn background was written into the script. If the actress's dance and vocal performance in *Do The Right Thing* paves the way for a more emancipated Latina figure then her performance in *White Men Can't Jump* offers a more ambitious and intelligent ethnic figure thus affirming her move to a more transformed Latina image than her debut character Tina. As we will shortly see, *White Men Can't Jump* presents a considerable transformation of the actress's roles and vocal persona (this time, overflowing with 'knowledge').

With a voice like that

In 1992 Rosie Perez co-starred with Woody Harrelson and Wesley Snipes in her second feature, the comedy film *White Men Can't Jump*. Showcasing Perez with the opportunity to expand her acting talent, the film propelled her to a higher level of fame and placed her on the verge of stardom. Discussing the success and promotion of the film, Perez said the following in an interview:

> Take "*White Men Can't Jump.*" I loved that movie. I loved the fact that Fox put the dollars into promoting it. I loved that the paycheck was nice and fat. I loved that everyone in the world went to see it. [58]

Perez thus confirms that *White Men Can't Jump* was another Hollywood box-office success and the significance of this is that the actress was promoted much more heavily in media texts, in contrast to the lack of publicity after the release of *Do The Right Thing*.

In a 1992 article on Perez' appearance in *White Men Can't Jump*, Douglas J. Rowe writes:

---

[56] Rivera, p 23.
[57] Applebome, p 11.
[58] Ibid, p 20.

> The question: Who is Rosie Perez? The petite actress-choreographer, who just took time off from filming a movie in Minnesota to promote Shelton's movie, plays Gloria Clemente, who longs to appear on '*Jeopardy!*.' [59]

Rowe's question mark over the actress indicates her relative anonymity prior to *White Men Can't Jump*. The presentation of Perez as a character who appears on a game show which tests your intelligence is particularly interesting as Latinas are rarely shown participating in such key aspects of American popular culture. Thus it may be suggested that during the game show Perez' character seems briefly to be 'Americanised' perhaps because she is competing against white participants who are obviously not as smart as she is. In other words, Perez represents a socially acceptable version of Latinness. What her performance also signifies is that Latinos were slowly reaching a point in American history where, like Blacks, they were becoming part of American culture and society.

White Men Can't Jump stars Wesley Snipes and Woody Harrelson as basketball hustlers, Sidney Dean (Snipes) and Billy Hoyle (Harrelson), seeking a little fortune on the courts of Los Angeles, California. When the two characters meet, Billy uses his 'goofy white man' look to hustle money from the flashy black 'fast talking, aggressive Sidney.'[60] Shortly after, Sidney tracks down Billy in the hope that the two can go into 'business' conning other African-American players in tougher Los Angeles neighbourhoods. The partnership soon disintegrates as a result of Sidney's competitiveness to out-hustle Billy, but the two are forced to pair up again by their respective partners. Hoping that the men will win the grand prize during a 'brotherhood' basketball match, Sidney's wife, Ronda (Tyra Ferrell), begins to look forward to the possible purchase of a home in the suburbs while Billy's girlfriend, Gloria Clemente (Perez), wants to settle an old debt with the 'deadly' Stookie Brothers. Meanwhile, Gloria sits at home preparing herself for a possible appearance on the game show *Jeopardy!*.

When she is first shown, Gloria is actually hidden behind the *World Almanac*; her 'intelligence' is momentarily doubted when the book is slowly dropped from the frame and we see a medium close-up of the character. Seemingly contradicting any image of astuteness, she is seen wearing large gold hoop earrings, a black low-cut blouse and with a mass of ringlets. In the background, books are spread about, especially on the bed where Perez is sitting, as well as

---

[59] Douglas J. Rowe, 'Hispanic bombshell has the answers for her career in film,' *The Star Ledger*, 17 May (Newark, New Jersey, 1992), p 6.

[60] Andy Pawelczak, 'Film Reviews: '*White Men Can't Jump*,' *Films in Review*, July/Aug., Vol. 43, Issue 7 (US, 1992), p 263.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_1587603421&site+ehost&return=n.

photographs of U.S Presidents, and notes are taped onto surfaces. When Gloria first questions Billy as to how much money he made (hustled) on the courts, he replies, 'well I missed you too.' Realizing that her behaviour was rather insensitive, Gloria apologises to him as she beams a wide and child-like smile.

Billy then attempts to exert power over Gloria by telling her to eat health food, and she takes control as she looks at him in disbelief and says, 'I'm a let you get away with that one since you got me money today.' As if frustrated, seconds later he grabs a bottle of vodka and questions Gloria who replies: 'Oh, come on, look it, I've been studying all day. I did fires, earthquakes; I was on a disaster kick today. Oh! Assassinations, come on try me.' This time, Billy's annoyance fades as her wish to be examined on her recent studying of natural and human disasters is granted. Billy (and perhaps the spectator) is surprised to hear Gloria give the correct answer to a question on presidential assassination, and seconds later it is her turn to question him as she asks how much he loves her. Laying her down on the bed he replies, 'I love you infinity,' but Billy's devotion is soon rebuked and ridiculed when she tells him that his numerical equation is not great enough, hence Gloria attacks him as 'stupid' because he should have said, 'infinity plus infinity.'

What is unusual about this introduction is that during the first few minutes of the film, Rosie Perez represents the spectator's access to the *World Almanac* instead of an angry woman venting her frustrations, as seen in *Do The Right Thing* (1989) or *Night on Earth* (1992). Whilst we are not sure what exactly Gloria knows, the sequence projects her as having book and street savvy (something that she commands throughout the film), as well as having a certain control over Billy. For instance, she does not take him seriously when he attempts to make her eat certain foods; she can prove to Billy her ability to retain historical facts as well as reinforce that her knowledge is greater than his: 'infinity plus infinity,' and is strong enough to force Billy to get off her because he 'stinks,' thus demonstrating her control over him. However, this 'control' is questioned when Gloria becomes briefly hysterical when there is a knocking on the door. Running to the shower to where Billy is, she forces him to rush to the door and only calms down briefly when listening to him say where they should meet. When Billy does open the door he is faced with Sidney who wants to make him a proposition. After Sidney enters the room, Gloria comes out of the bathroom, furious that Billy has not warned her of the false alarm. As Sidney introduces himself, extending his hand, Gloria says 'so?'. Not impressed by his pleasantries, she is suspicious of Sidney's actions when he picks up the bottle of money she had been saving to pay off the debt owed to the Stookie Brothers. Taking a gun from a duffle bag, Gloria cocks it and aims at the intruder while threatening, 'yo, you take that shit and I'll shoot your ass.'

Within this one sequence there are several elements of Gloria's character that can be seen in relation to Perez' persona. For instance, the spectator is reminded of the actress's heritage when Harrelson is heard singing in the shower the Puerto Rican hymn normally heard during New York's Puerto Rican Day Parade. That Harrelson is playfully paying tribute to the Puerto Rican flag may astonish a Latino spectator who may be familiar with the song although not accustomed to a non-Latino person singing in Spanish. More importantly, whilst Perez' character may astonish the audience with her knowledge, the actress's public may be surprised to read that she 'is secretly a nerd. [...] What people perceive as a rapid-fire street jive is the reflection of a hungry mind.'[61] This association between her book and street smartness suggests Perez is drawing heavily on her own background thereby transforming the image of Latinas from that of simple-minded figures to people who can be exceptionally smart.

Charles L. Ponce De Leon characterises how the publicity of a star seeks to emphasise real or genuine traits. Looking at the emergence of celebrity Leon defines the image in the following way:

> No matter what area of a public figure's life a writer focused on, the emphasis remained the same: illuminating the real self and revealing how the subject, now viewed as a complex human being, nurtured and expressed his or her individuality.[62]

In most of the articles published between 1992 and 1993 (the year of and after Perez' appearance in *White Men Can't Jump*), there is reference to Perez as an educated woman. Thus, if Perez is depicted on a parallel level to her book smart character Gloria in *White Men Can't Jump* it was because the press and the actress had not failed to underscore her intelligence. Disclosing in an interview her desire to obtain a good education Perez declares:

> 'I didn't want to end up like Tina," said the diminutive actress of the character – an unmarried teen-age mother – she played in "*Do The Right Thing.*" I knew through education, that it would give me my ticket. [63]

For the actress this so-called ticket no doubt represented her plan for a better life but the emphasis here is that she is linked to astuteness thus revealing the 'true' Perez as not being the stereotypical Latina so often portrayed in film.

In the second sequence to be discussed, Perez' character proves once again her power of control over Billy, as well as her determination to confront any obstacles in her way, including Sidney's attempt to keep her boyfriend's money. Billy has just arrived at the motel after losing his money and before entering the room he is seen looking through the window as if to 'peep' in to see

---

[61] Stephan Talty, 'A Rosie Grows in Brooklyn,' *Time Out New York*, 14 August (New York, 1997), p 8.
[62] Charles L. Ponce de Leon, *Self Exposure: Human Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p 40.
[63] Matthew Flamm, 'Girl From the Hood,' *The New York Post*, 16 April (New York, 1992).

what Gloria is doing. Her positioning behind the closed door of a motel room and his cautious indication, as well as troubled facial expression, demonstrate the intimidation she exerts. The delayed introduction of Gloria also builds up tension during this scene as Billy emotionally prepares himself to open the door and confess his financial loss. As a result, Gloria's location, presence, and 'power' can be compared to the uneasy experience of visiting a priest in a confessional booth.

As Billy walks in, Gloria is sitting at a small table with several books spread around and a bottle of gin in sight. After he admits to losing the money, Gloria moves from the table to the bed and begins to question Billy on his performance on the court. Deducing his defeat to Sidney's hoax, Gloria smiles and informs her mate, 'Honey, you got set up by Sidney.' Determined to get back 'her' money, Gloria gets up from the bed and puts on her jacket while he protests; throughout the film, Billy's winnings become Gloria's money. Ignoring his objections, Gloria asks him where Sidney lives and, before he can respond, she states, 'he lives in the jungle, right?' Her casual tone suggests no concern as to where she is heading, but the association of the Crenshaw district with the jungle creates a forbidden barrier restricting Billy's whiteness from entering the 'hazardous turf.' As Billy explains: 'I'm telling you, they don't let white people in the Crenshaw district. I don't know about Puerto Ricans but I'm telling you it's a reverse discrimination thing.'

When Sidney's wife Rhonda opens the door we see Gloria standing alone, chewing and popping her gum. This framing of Gloria captures the familiar essence of attitude Perez displayed in her role of Tina in *Do The Right Thing*. Upset and with puckered lips, she first asks for Sidney and then tells Rhonda that her husband has stolen Billy's money. Gloria's furrowed lips expand as she pulls a frightened Billy into the frame to make his presence known to Sidney's wife, as well as to the audience. Once invited inside, the couple face Sidney and his cohort sitting on the sofa watching a basketball game. Oddly enough, one of the characters refers to Billy by saying, 'boy got a lot of guts,' when in reality it is not he but she who has tracked down Sidney. As Billy begins to moan about his disbelief in Sidney's betrayal, Gloria's presence is marked as if to challenge/confront the masculine group; her 'body language' makes her seem like a wall which will prevent any of the men from leaving the premises. Focusing her attention on Sidney, who has confirmed her suspicion, Gloria seems oblivious to the mixed male reactions towards her. For instance, the youngest of the men calls out, 'look at the girl' while another claims Gloria to be 'fine,' and the third man boldly disagrees, 'she ain't fine!' Later on, when she stands in front of the television with Ronda, one guest complains to Sidney who counterattacks by responding: 'Why don't you tell them to move? That's *Black women* over there [my emphasis]. You think I'm crazy?!'

We can see the strong association between a Puerto Rican (Rosie Perez) and African-Americans (Wesley Snipes, Tyra Ferrell and the players) in that attitude is embodied as a natural

aura of the streets through jargon and instincts. There is also a similar rapport between Puerto Ricans and Blacks in the Crenshaw district since Billy is the only (white) figure threatened by the marginalized area, hence the 'admiration' for his courage/'guts'. It also demonstrates that the actress's presence in the 'ghetto' is believable since she shows no fear of walking either in or out of the area. If the body is 'regarded as site of social, political, cultural, and geographical inscriptions,' as Elizabeth Grosz writes, then Perez' body should be regarded as culturally ethnic and geographically ghetto.[64] This is extremely important because the positioning of Perez in a marginal zone further suggests the acceptable gaze of African-American men upon the actress. Thus, despite a different approach (as in *Do The Right Thing*), Perez is once again posited as a black woman (if only briefly) in this film: 'That's Black women...'

The manner in which Gloria maintains control in this second scene further reveals that, unless the character is called upon to perform vocal outbursts, Perez remains 'quiet'. Shown as a 'knowing' character, the actress contests the Latina stereotype to provide a self-assured version of ethnic femininity. Instead of continuously 'having a fit' as in the role of Tina, the actress is projected as comprehending and very much in control. As such, instead of positioning her character as losing her wits, Gloria responds in a calculated manner, first by noting Sidney's hustle, and second, by going after 'her' money.

The repeated performance of waiting for Billy to get back from a game is the setting for Gloria's eruption in the final scene to be looked at from this film. With her foot on top of the table where she sits, and half a bottle of wine in view, Billy's entrance marks Gloria's cue to kick the pizza onto the floor in frustration. When he gives her a present, Gloria's anger is momentarily stilled as she opens her gift and turns down the lights so that she may kiss Billy while sitting on his lap. When he whispers in her ear 'It happened again,' she violently pushes him, saying, 'There is no it! You happened again!' Getting up from his lap, Gloria sits at the table where she was initially seated only to stand up again and knock the table down. As she gathers her clothing Gloria's explosive temper erupts as she tells him, 'that money was mine to keep the both of us going till *Jeopardy!* called.' Still seated with his back to her as she shoves clothes into the suitcase, Billy dares to tell her that *Jeopardy!* will not call thereby escalating Gloria's anger into a hysterical monologue:

> *Jeopardy!* is gonna call Billy! It is my destiny that I triumph magnificently on that show and I'll never do that if I have to wear that stupid hoochie momma[i] dress that you bought me which was obviously a poor excuse to cover up the fact that you fucked up again! I'm gonna win all right. I'm gonna get on that motherfuckin' show and I'm gonna win because

---

[64] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p 23. Cited in Mizejewski's *The Ziegfeld Girl*, p 38.

> I'm overflowing with more useless God damn information than any human being on this fucking planet! Who's James Polk? How many moons are on Pluto?! What's a quince?! It's a food Billy that starts with the letter Q, and I got seven more! I can't believe you lost the Goddamn money!!

The high-pitched shrills of Rosie Perez' voice embody aggressiveness to the point where her words seem to take on a physical application. The rapid outpouring of words followed by heavy exhaling, then gasps, seem to nudge at Billy as he flinches during Gloria's enraged reaction while the piercing emphasis on the final word of each exclamatory phrase can be compared to a wave of frequencies; the positioning of Gloria standing, and Billy seated, not facing her, further reflects the condescending tone Perez' character exercises. Thus, Perez creates a forceful impression by dominating the space with her accented voice while Harrelson whispers throughout most of this scene. In fact because of her authorial position in the film, Perez is positioned within the diegesis thereby defying Kaja Silverman's discussion on how the female character in classical cinema 'is confined not only to the safe place of the story, but to safe places within the story (to positions, that is, which come within the eventual range of male vision or audition.)'[65] Perez' initial appearance may underscore her character as sexual, reinforced by the black male characters looking at her, however throughout the film her character assumes authority by controlling her male partner and not being intimidated by the black male gaze. In other words she succumbs to no man, black or white.

The extent to which women oppose the male gaze and voice their demands has been discussed in feminist discourses. Maria DiBattista, for example, has observed that the 'fast-talking dame is her own sexual agent. She is not afraid of openly pursuing the man she fancies, nor does she hesitate, in contrary instances, to reject any erotic or romantic alliance that does not suit her interests or appeal to her heart.' [66] When it comes to the scene where the black males look at Perez, her character is quick to face them and physically show her lack of interest in their remarks towards her. Significantly, if the fast-talking dame has been able to speak her mind, then several of Perez' characters can be seen as Latina heroines who articulate their needs and quite loudly. In her attempt to obtain their desires, the fast-talking dames, as DiBattista writes, 'spoke fast and furiously, as if their survival depended on their doing so.'[67] Clearly when Perez' characters are called upon to speak, the actress is willing to express not only her desires but also her dreams. [68] As she states in her scene with Harrelson, 'It is my destiny that I triumph

---

[65] Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p 164.
[66] Maria DiBattista, *Fast-Talking Dames* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p 26.
[67] Ibid., p 269.
[68] DiBattista writes how "talking pictures" gave women the chance to speak up, speak out, and speak to their own desires, dreams, and ambitions.' p 269.

magnificently on that show.' Thus I would argue that in *White Men Can't Jump* the actress's performance can be compared to the fast talking dame or comic heroine of the 30s and 40s, i.e. a working girl (reporter, writer or actress) 'literally make[ing] her living out of words.'[69] Thus, in contrast to Miranda or Vélez mangling the English language in their films, Perez' fast talking is a purposeful outburst imbued with information. In short her character must learn the right words to win the game show, although sometimes the words she utters may start with the letter 'Q'.

Returning briefly to DiBattista's work on comic heroines, the author describes the character of Rosalind Russell in *His Girl Friday* as being 'neither [an] endangered species nor rowdy anachronism: she represents, rather, a new female mutation.'[70] In the case of Rosie Perez the actress may also represent this new mutation because of her determination to speak her mind despite her petite stature, high-pitched, loud voice and Latina background. We must remember that in 1992 Perez stood alone as the most profiled Latina star; she thus proved to be an ambitious, powerful and talented portrayal of *latinidad* during the early 1990s, the decade of the Latino boom. Surprisingly, while DiBattista refers to Cameron Diaz and Jennifer Lopez in her book, she fails to recognise Perez as a more genuine version of the fast talking dame.[71] While both Perez and Diaz are women who speak their minds, neither can do so as potently and as comically as Perez.

In a film review of *White Men Can't Jump*, Kenneth Turan praised Perez' performance, writing:

> There is one fine exception, however, and that is Perez as Billy's girlfriend Gloria Clemente [...]. It's a very appealing conceit, and it is safe to say that Perez plays it like no one else on the planet. [...]. To hear Gloria giving Billy a hilarious what-women-want lecture [...] is to feel in the presence of true screen original. [72]

Another article, entitled 'Rosie the Riveting,' expressed the same opinion: '*White Men Can't Jump*, but one Puerto Rican woman can sure carry a movie.'[73] While the actress's performance as Gloria was singled out, the legitimacy of her acting was questioned in this article; was the actress performing or interpreting herself? It continues: 'And the hearts of both genders melt when, at a critical moment earlier in the movie, she mispronounces 'Mount Vesuvius'- 'Suvius' she says. Is

---

[69] Opcit., p 23.
[70] Ibid., p 271.
[71] Ibid., p xiii.
[72] Kenneth Turan, "*Fearless*': A Bellyful of Plane Crash Survivor,' *Los Angeles Times*, 15 October (Los Angeles, 1993), p F1.
[73] Leerhsen, p 64.

this great 'acting' that's moving us so?'[74] Having difficulties in pronouncing her own name as a child, 'she called herself Wosie until she was in the sixth grade,'[75] the detection of Gloria's mispronunciation of 'Vesuvius' echoes Rosie Perez' speech impediment. Thus, Perez is not simply embodying the fumbling of words as Miranda or Vélez but instead interacting with the film's dialogue in her performance of Gloria. Also significant is that the narrative of *White Men Can't Jump* seems to be consistent with the publicity surrounding the actress. In his interview with the actress, Douglas J. Rowe confirms the latter as well as including her expression of pride that her character was not stereotypical:

> All he did, though, was change the character's last name and ethnic origins, the Brooklyn native said. "Instead of Boston Ivy League, she was a Brooklyn disco queen," said Perez. "But what was great about it, she was still well-versed. She was very intelligent. And she followed all the characteristics that the original Gloria had. The dialogue never changed, and the story line never changed."[76]

While such account confirms the re-writing of the script to suit Perez' ethnic identity, the importance of this film lies more in the transformation of her persona.

It should be clear that the transformation of Perez up to this point in her career serves as an elevation of Hispanic images in the media, in particular in American film. Having begun her career as a hip hop dancer Perez initially conforms to the formation of Latina roles as embodying a sexual and problematic figure, and this is consistent with the Latina spitfire image incarnated by actresses such as Lupe Vélez. However in contrast to Vélez, who did not act serious or tragic moments, Perez could and did perform heartfelt realism. Thus, at this point in her career Perez' representation of Latina women began to step away from Hollywood's caricature of ethnic femininity as simply comical and offensive, to that of a more diverse, inspiring and more importantly, realistic ethnic female figure. And evidence to support this is *White Men Can't Jump* which associated Perez with contemporary popular cultural elements such as the American television program *Jeopardy!*; thus the film serves as an example of how the actress transformed her persona to include American culture and wits.

Stephen Talty of *Time Out New York* states that: 'America had never seen an actress like her: brassy, hyper-smart, totally-up front sexually.'[77] This upfrontness is recorded by Douglas J. Rowe who, in an interview with the actress, asked if there were any similar aspects between the star and the character of Gloria. Perez was quick to reply "Slight Nympho" before we read that 'she

---

[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Rowe (1992), p 6.
[77] Talty, p 8.

implored in a mock coquettish way: "Don't print that, please."'[78] These two articles project Perez as exemplifying female sexuality, which seems to run along ethnic lines unfamiliar to (a white) America. But does it? I contend that Perez signifies a Latina version of the New Woman who is working class and whose sexuality is, as Marsha Orgeron clarifies, 'outside of the conventional bounds of womanhood.'[79] Like the New Woman, Perez' sexuality is presented as increasingly visible but not as debated as that of white women of the 1920s, such as actress Clara Bow. According to Orgeron, it seems that Bow's characters were sexually liberating, thus contending the contemporary rules of femininity which admired virtuousness. In comparison Perez has been candid about her sexuality which is considered the norm due to the fact that the sexuality of ethnic figures has been incredibly visible in film whereas white women have traditionally been put forward as virtuous figures.

If, by the early twentieth century 'women's lives were becoming increasingly public,' then by the end of the twentieth century women's sexual lives were being openly discussed, especially if the woman happened to be a star.[80] It should come as no surprise that throughout her career, writers would bring up Perez' sexuality and that of her characters to deliberately project the ethnic femininity generated in her persona. Writing on Perez' candidness on the sexuality of her characters, Tim Fennel observes:

> It's very hard for me to take off my clothes," she says. "I will sit there and discuss it with the director and say, "Is it necessary?" If it is necessary to show the sexuality of the character then I'll say, "Let's do it. If it is not necessary then you are exploiting me. Don't just show my tits just to show my tits, ya know? Unfortunately dat's what I thought Spike Lee did to me. I was really young at the time. [81]

Perez' openness and candour about sexuality helps map out her body as more visible, in particular during a period when other Latina stars were less successful. Yet, the extent to which the article emphasises sexuality also conjures up a more stigmatised portrayal of Perez as 'Other' because of the grammatical spelling used to depict her heavy New York accent. In fact, Perez is framed in a way which conjures up images of Hollywood's sexual female figure: the vamp.

Discussing how the vamp became part of Pola Negri's persona, Diane Negra writes that Negri, along with other foreign stars of Eastern and Southern Europe, was 'publicised as

---

[78] Rowe (1992), p 7.
[79] Marsha Orgeron, 'Making It in Hollywood: Clara Bow, Fandom, and Consumer Culture,' *Cinema Journal: The Journal of Society for Cinema and Media Studies*, Volume 42, No. 4 (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2003), p 82.
[80] Ibid., p 81.
[81] Tim Fennell, 'A Rosie By Any other Name: Tim Fennel meets Rosie Perez, keen, among other things, to talks about her chests,' *Empire*, May (UK, 1994) p 75.

"culturally and sexually predatory"'.[82] The author continues by describing the cinematic vamp as 'a thinly disguised incarnation of the threat of female immigrant sexuality' and how the notion of 'uncontrollable female desire' spread into dominant culture.[83] If we analyse Perez' persona thus far she is not positioned to represent immigrant sexuality as such, despite her films projecting characters with sexual desire. In other words, because Perez is not presented as a foreign female wishing to drain her male partner or her country, her sexuality is not deemed necessary to control, in particular since Latinas are often portrayed as naturally hyper-sexual.[84] Even if Perez' sexuality presented a cultural threat her sexual image is immediately diminished in the comedic roles she often takes on. Furthermore the emphasising of her accent in the press as 'squeaky' clearly marks her as 'other' but not as a destructive immigrant female figure; instead it marks her out as a Latina from Brooklyn, as noted across media texts.

If we return to Leon we learn that:

> More often than not, people achieve this status not by accident but through conscious effort, by following a carefully mapped out plan for attracting publicity and projecting an image that will make them interesting and attractive to the media – the essential conduits through which individuals are made visible to the public. Even those who become celebrities through no efforts of their own quickly learn how to use the media to make the best of the situation.[85]

Up until this point Perez seems to have carefully planned her career by taking on roles which would attract Hollywood's interest in her as an actress. The promotion of Perez by Perez is also noteworthy as the actress informs readers of her views on fame in another 1992 interview:

> Show business is mostly about marketing [...] I learned that when I was a college student in L.A., dancing at the clubs. Four different record companies offered me contracts – and I sing like shit. All they knew was, she's got the packaging, she's got the look, and that was enough for them. I saw that, and I said to myself, "Approach this like a business."[86]

On the one hand Perez' divulgence of the mechanisms of stardom to the public might explain how the actress became a star the following year when she appeared in *Fearless*. On the other hand, as the second Latina nominated for an Oscar it is ironic that Perez continues to be packaged and

---

[82] Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female* Stardom (New York & London: Routledge, 2001), p 62.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Gaylyn Studlar explains that the vamp's 'sexuality was one of a spider who entrapped and destroyed the hapless male. In "'Out-Salomeing Salome": Dance, the New Woman, and Fan Magazine Orientalism,' in *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*, Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar eds. (London & New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1997), p 116.
[85] Leon, p 6.
[86] Leerhsen, p 64.

promoted as a 'motor-mouth actress and choreographer' despite her knowledge of what kind of packaging is needed in the film industry to survive.[87]

In his discourse on stardom Richard de Cordoba writes that the picture personality was constructed by 'the truth of the star's identity [...] located in the realm of the private,' or 'the deployment of the player's secret identity.'[88] Accounts of Perez' stardom offer little information on her upbringing and what is written on the star highlights a tragic and emotionally disturbed background. It is ironic then that, despite Perez' attempt to conceal her past, she offers readers limited access to her private life, if only to indicate how she suffered from racial discrimination:

> In second and third grade I went to an all-white elementary school, and I was ostracised and abused emotionally by the kids and the teachers there.[89]

> She recalled one childhood incident. "I always had a secret passion to become a dancer, so when they had a program for inner-city kids, I couldn't wait to go. I was short and stocky – not like the other girls who were white and willowy. I think that was the premise behind the lady telling me I had no rhythm. I cursed her out, and she told me never to return. [...] It was very hard for me. I never had a bad attitude, but I was shy and I had a bad mouth. For a while no one accepted me, because I was Puerto Rican.[90]

Significantly, the actress's image is complicated by the manner in which she racialises her own body thus explaining why her characters are often seen as representing an ethnic, or more specifically, a Puerto Rican identity. The description of Perez as stocky further adds to a masculine depiction as opposed to the more delicate image of whiteness, an image that surprisingly has been ascribed to fellow Puerto Rican Jennifer Lopez in the later stages of her career.

Looking at the above descriptions, we read how the representation of whiteness is reinforced by the notion of superiority, thus underscoring the emotional abuse Perez received as a child. Perez' connection to poverty is also suggested in two articles, thereby offering an explanation as to why the actress is usually recognised as working class in her films. According to a 1997 article, the actress 'was born poor, the middle child of a Brooklyn family that underwent such turbulent times that she gets flustered just by being asked about it.'[91] In another article two years later the actress simply states 'I never thought I was poor until someone told me I was.'[92] In terms of her childhood, details serve to remind audiences of the stereotypical depiction of *latinidad* so

---

[87] Mr. Showbiz News, 'Keanu Gets Action; Bruce Gets Plugs, View Gets Dirty,' IMDB, 13 July (1999). [Online] Accessed 17 February 2000. http://mrshowbiz.go.com/archive/news/Todays_Stories/000713/quickhits071399.html

[88] Richard de Cordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System* (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press: 1990, p 140.

[89] Actress Marisa Tomei interviewed Rosie Perez for *Interview* magazine, March (New York, 1993), p 124.

[90] Buchalter, p 12.

[91] Ojito, p 42.

[92] Applebome, p 20.

often portrayed in film narratives: poor, neglected, living in the ghetto, and from a large family whose mother is unwed. The circulation of this imagery is key to Perez' early stardom as it authenticates her portrayal of the working-class.

At this point the authentification of Perez' characters as Latina is also underscored by the consistent emphasis in the press on the actress's accent. In fact because of her voice, as Shelton confirms, the actress is limited to Latina roles, hence the premise behind the director's decision to change her character's background to Puerto Rican: 'I didn't change a line just made Gloria Puerto Rican [...] she has to be who she is.'[93] While this feature tells us that the star is not faking her accent thus reinforcing her image as ethnic, it also emphasises how Perez' voice has become the most promoted aspect of her body throughout her stardom. Even when the actress was on the brink of stardom with her performance in *White Men Can't Jump*, it was her voice which called most attention to the her unique individuality:

> The scene she is most remembered for in *White Men* is when Gloria, who often mispronounces big words as well as small ones, went on *Jeopardy*, after studying dictionaries and encyclopaedias.[94]

> "The best thing about [Shelton's] engaging comedy...,' Georgia Brown wrote in the Village Voice [April 7, 1992], "is the commanding presence of the shrill, pint-sized motor-mouth Rosie Perez."[95]

Just as Perez' image and voice were being accepted by the film industry as self-governing or under her control, the actress decided to take on a role that would construct a more disciplined persona. This is not to say that Perez had ceased to be ethnically marked in her roles or in the press, instead that she began to show a shift in her image to that of a mature actress in a dramatic role. Evidence of this is noted in the following:

> By the time she completed *Untamed Heart*, Perez was eager to expand her repertoire beyond Latina roles, which, in her view, all too often perpetuated the erroneous notion that Hispanic women are loud, boisterous, and volatile. She wanted, she has said, a part in which she would not be required to "[scream] at the top of [her] lungs." "I can be Hispanic and play a Jessica Lange role," she told Renee Michael.[96]

It is important to note here that while Perez is aware of how her body and voice limit her roles to Latina characters, she is also conscious of the film industry's offer of worthwhile roles to non-Latin actresses. In an interview, Perez claimed, 'I want roles for a white person [...] *White Men Can't*

---

[93] Ibid.
[94] Michelle Magenheim, 'Rosie Perez: Hip Hopping from Brooklyn to Hollywood,' *NY Casting* (New York, 1994), p 4.
[95] *Current Biography*, p 46.
[96] Ibid.

Jump was for a medium class white girl.' Thus when Perez began to get noticed by the press for her acting talent it was in roles originally intended for non-ethnic women, as in *Fearless*.

Before continuing with the third of Perez' films to be analysed I wish to briefly discuss another (ethnic/Jewish) star whose voice has also provoked discussion in women's studies: Roseanne Arnold. That Arnold and Perez, two women of distinct backgrounds have generated and attracted so much discussion about their loud mouths is of interest, in particular since Arnold dominated the television charts in the US and UK at the time that Perez appeared in *White Men Can't Jump*. Arnold began her career as a stand up comic before creating the persona of *Roseanne* (ABC 1989-1999), which made her the most successful female television star of the early 90s and one of the most polemic in the tabloids. Kathleen Rowe offers an analysis of her career as having been built on the comic actress 'making a spectacle of herself.'[97] Ironically, while Arnold's persona was deemed offensive by many, the actress had been voted the most popular television star in 2000.[98] As a result, her success came at the hand of female fans who watched the show because of its 'strong female characters and feminist content.'[99]

In her discussion of Arnold, Rowe points out that the actress's rise to fame was heightened by her claim to social power and 'perceived threats to the dominant culture.'[100] Partly due to her size, Arnold's heightened visibility was associated with a concept of the female as vulgar, outrageous, and noisy. For example, invited to San Diego in 1990 to sing the national anthem at a baseball game, Arnold screamed the words, grabbed her crotch and spat after her performance. On another level, the creation of an unruly persona by Arnold helped to launch her to international stardom. However, this stardom focused the image of Roseanne as excessively fat and angry, two depictions which disturbed the notion of female beauty.[101]

While Perez is not excessively fat, she is often presented as an angry female who is not afraid to physically fight for her desires. Both Arnold and Perez appeared in comedy vehicles which slightly defused their images as sites of anger, if only to momentarily distract audiences from those issues which suggest their unruliness. Both actresses also exercise a certain level of agency in their work but on different levels; for example, Perez may suggest that her directors include certain elements of *latinidad* which offer a more genuine image of her ethnic background, whereas Arnold

[97] Rowe (1995), pp 56-57.
[98] Ibid., p 57.
[99] Ibid., pp 59.
[100] Ibid., p 54.
[101] Ibid., p 58.

is the author, subject and object of the laughter she produces in *Roseanne*. The programme, which looks at the problems of a middle-class family, features Arnold as the lead character and 'narrator' of a more genuine image of a working-class family in American culture. The image projected however, is one of sloppiness and disorder, an image similar to descriptions of Arnold in the press.

In her chapter on Roseanne Arnold, Rowe notes that:

> Body language conveys the individual's relation to the social group along a continuum of control, from strong to weak, from total relaxation to total control. Among the socially powerful, relaxation signifies "ease." Among those deemed in need of social control, it signifies "looseness" or "sloppiness."[102]

Rowe continues to suggest that because of the lack of control Arnold has over her body weight the actress is seen as a grotesque woman 'with a looseness of body language and speech.'[103] But as a result of the figure with the loose body and mouth, Arnold has been able to transform her one-woman act to a top-rated weekly television series. What is more, if the character of Roseanne is seen as out of control and displaying sloppiness it is because Arnold the creator and star has made the decision to project the character in such a manner. Thus, by having complete power over her character Arnold contradicts the laws of body language and projects a strong female image in a society intimidated by women in control.

The description of Arnold's body as offending people because of her heavy frame runs in contrast to the portrayal of Perez' body, toned from her years as a dancer. Described by one journalist as a 'petite powerhouse', Perez' figure clearly projects the strength and temperance usually acquired when training in dance.[104] But because of her features and explicit sexuality on-screen as well as off-screen, the Latina star is seen as uncontrollable despite her disciplined female body and petite stature. The looseness of her body along with her thick lips, sharp accent and unrelenting mouth indicate a rebellious woman who is far from being governed against her will. Thus while Perez' body may not take up as much physical space as Arnold's, her excessive speech is seen as an overpowering threat to masculinity and those boundaries created for women which are considered feminine spaces (e.g. the home) in American culture.

In discussing the female body in dominant cinema, Kaja Silverman observed:

> Thus (with the exception of music), there are no instances within dominant cinema where the female voice is not matched up in some way, even if only retrospectively, with the female body. For the most part, woman's speech is synchronised with her image, and even

---

[102] Ibid., p 62.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Deborah Gregory, 'Rosie Perez,' *Essence*, October, Vol. 24, Issue 6, Section: People (US, 1993), p 48. [Online] Accessed 29 September 2000. http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_1587603421&site+ehost&return=n.

> when it is transmitted as a voice-off the divorce is only temporary; the body connected to the female voice is understood to be in the next room, just out of frame, at the other end of the telephone line. In short, it is fully recoverable.[105]

It is difficult to completely accept Silverman's argument when reading Perez' voice and body as they are not always matched up despite the petiteness of her frame, girlish voice and moments of hysteria. In other words, because of the manner in which Perez controls her body through dance and her overwhelming ability to take on masculine traits, there have been moments, particularly in *White Men Can't Jump* where the voice and body are not synchronised to represent femininity. Thus Perez is neither entirely 'excluded from positions of discursive power' as Silverman notes, nor 'inaccessible to definite male interpretation.'[106] This is not to say that Perez has not been subject to female passivity and silence as in the next film to be discussed, *Fearless*, instead that her voice and body can work to 'insinuate' masculinity via qualities such as knowledge and power.

In the next film to be looked at Perez offers a distinct vocal performance to those discussed so far in this chapter. The construction of the actress in *Fearless* positions her as fragile and subdued thus offering a profound transformation of her persona and image thus far. No longer personifying an unruly body, Perez transforms the Latina image to that of a more serious and compelling character. Such a transformation is quite dramatic if we consider the actress's previous role and her portrayal of a Latina whose wits make her a television game show 'star.'

A Natural Star

After being figured as a comedy actress and on the brink of stardom, Perez dramatically changed her image from 'ghetto chick' to bereaved mother in the next film to be discussed, *Fearless* (1993). Prior to casting Perez, Weir had been considering pop singer Madonna for the role of Carla, which at the time was originally an Italian-American female, like the blonde singer. When Perez read for the director he claimed, 'From my first wobbly videotape I knew that here was a natural.'[107] Tony Bill, director of *Untamed Heart* also states that Perez 'has such a naturalness and a genuineness about her'[108] while Andrew Bergman, director of *It Could Happen To You*, the next film to be discussed, claims the actress 'conserved naturalness' despite her stardom.[109] Andrew Britton's work on screen legend Katherine Hepburn discusses the actress's publicity and those remarks

---

[105] Silverman, p 165.
[106] Ibid., p 164.
[107] Kate Meyers, 'The Subject is Rosie,' *Entertainment Weekly*, 3 November (US, 1993), p 38.
[108] Leerhsen, p 64.
[109] Television programme on Perez, *Biography* Channel Spain, 3 July 2005, 8pm.

referring to her acting talent as 'natural – and therefore great.'[110] As Britton observes: 'In fact, the assessment of Hepburn's acting ability has always been closely interwoven with judgements about the values she embodies in such a way to suggest that the acting of glamorous ladies can be felt to be important too.'[111] In the case of Perez, her acting has been interwoven with emphasis on her ability to interpret roles from gut instinct, thus also offering a believable performance, much like Hepburn. Despite her confession of 'never ha[ving] an acting lesson in my life'[112] Perez explains that she sticks to her instincts to deliver lines as authentically as possible because she can 'never not be authentic.'[113] In this manner, naturalness is presented as an explanation for Perez' rise to fame and credible performances of ethnic femininity.

For her performance of Carla Rodrigo, Perez continued to be described as an 'authentic' performer: 'a ferociously real, marvellously touching actress, with a role that should make her a star.'[114] Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* also considered Rosie Perez' performance 'remarkable even by her standards.'[115] While most reviews praised her, John Simon from the *National Review* considered the casting of Perez in this film as 'ethnically authentic,' yet her presence 'questionable.'[116] He continued:

> With her tiny stature and squeaky voice, she makes Carla cute rather than near tragic, **and when she shouts, as she is often called upon to do**, her timbre and accent make her all but incomprehensible, which is annoying even when the dialogue is unlikely to contain many gems.[117]

That we are to associate the actress with 'shouting,' as Simon affirms, is evident in the films of Rosie Perez. Yet, the construing of Carla's cries as annoying does not seem precise, especially if we examine the character's first entrance. We are presented with a hysterical woman who has just lost her two year-old-son in a plane crash, and the combination of guilt, loss and disbelief are emotions that provoke Carla's incomprehensible yells. Before we see her image, we hear her voice screaming the word 'my' followed by a cut to a dishevelled Carla finishing her phrase, 'My boy! My little boy's in there! My baby's in there!' Unable to leave her child in the wreckage of the plane, she is first pulled then picked up by two men who carry her away from the remains as they burst into flames. As the camera pulls in and out of the debris, her voice drifts as her screaming 'my baby'

---

[110] Andrew Britton, *Katherine Hepburn: Star as Feminist* (London: Studio Vista, 1995), p 61.
[111] Ibid, p 58.
[112] Gregory.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Turan, p F4.
[116] Simon.
[117] Ibid.

interweaves throughout the scene. Struggling with the men, Carla's strong maternal urges are reduced to the struggling of a helpless frenzied woman.

Adapted by Rafael Yglesias from his novel, *Fearless* is a look at the aftermath of a plane crash and survival of a near-death experience. Jeff Bridges stars as Max Klein, a San Francisco architect who overcomes his phobia of flying after surviving a crash. Considered a Good Samaritan (after saving several passengers), Max develops a sense of immortality, and with this new outlook on life he is asked to meet another plane crash survivor.[118] Unable to cope with the death of her son, Carla is introduced to Max by a psychologist in an attempt to bring these two survivors back to 'reality' and an unusually intimate bond develops between them with almost fatal consequences.

After the plane crash, Carla is seen sleeping in a dimly lit room but is awakened by her husband Manny (Benicio del Toro) who tells her that Max has arrived. In contrast to the opening sequence, Carla is no longer struggling to overcome her loss and, as a result, a contrasting emotion envelops her: her voice is silenced by her grief. Unwilling to respond to her husband's presence and his attempts to lift her limp upper torso, she weakly responds, 'Ay Manny, please just let me die.' By the time Max walks into Carla's bedroom, signs of a Hispanic household are evident as the grandmother in the living room watches a Spanish television station. As Max nears Carla's bedroom, Spanish voices in the kitchen attract his attention and before he enters the bedroom, a male voice from the kitchen is heard saying in Spanish, '*No me gusta esto.*' (I don't like this). Max pauses briefly at the door, where there is a sticker with '*Jesús es mi mejor amigo*' (Jesus is my best friend) printed on it and, as Max smiles, he slowly opens the door to find Carla sitting on the edge of the bed. As he nears her, we see a small shrine with her baby's photo. Max introduces himself and goes on to describe his father's death, which he witnessed as a boy. When Carla speaks, her voice no longer appears to moan as she softly interrupts him, saying: 'That was God.' As she continues to listen to Max talking about God having killed his father, Carla begins to open up to him, confessing that she goes to church every day 'to pray for my baby's soul.'

In terms of race and ethnicity this last scene offers an example of how whites may perceive Latinos. Bridges' character is perhaps the most obvious sign of cultural difference, not because he admits to not believing in God but more so because of his fascination with Carla's Catholic religious rituals: setting up a shrine for the dead, going to church and praying at the feet of religious statues. Such detailing is noteworthy for Perez was involved in the visual presentation of *latinidad*

---

[118] Richard Schnickel, '*Fearless*: A Question of Mortality,' *Time*, 18 October, Vol. 142, Issue 16 (New York, 1993), p 98.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_1587603421&site+ehost&return=n.

KENT
TEMPLEMAN
LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY

in the film. In fact the actress told the director what elements would add authenticity to the script's portrayal of a Latina character and Hispanic atmosphere, thereby exercising a significant amount of agency. The actress claimed: 'He listened to everything I told him about Latin households, [...] I told him that there had to be Café Bustelo in the kitchen and a shrine in honour of the dead loved ones and that my character had to attend a Catholic Church with a Spanish-speaking priest.'[119] Articulated through her cultural beliefs and gestures, the making of Carla was identified with those interpretations practiced by Rosie Perez, thus these specific references serve as a pointer of the actress's ethnic identity.

Significantly, at the same time that Perez serves as a point of reference of authenticity for the director, she also leaves her 'mark' on the film. Silverman's discussion of Andrew Sarris' work 'Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962' stresses that during the period of classic cinema the mise-en-scène and director's style were often given greater importance than the narrative.[120] Because Perez participates both inside and outside the film's text it may call into question Peter Weir's control of the film as auteur. Having changed the script to suit Perez' image and voice the director had to rely on the actress's experiences to provide a more 'authentic' portrait of Carla thereby, making her responsible for those signifiers of Hispanicness in the film. Consequently Perez may not have been presented as a strong voice within the film's dialogue but she is posited as residing behind much of the film's text.

Shortly after their initial introduction, Max proposes that he and Carla go on a drive and she replies in a shaky voice that she should not leave the house. Eventually agreeing, she questions Max on the sturdiness of his car to reassure herself of safety, and he tells her, 'you're safe because we died already.' When Carla begins to panic, Max stops the car and attempts to calm her. On the verge of tears Carla claims, 'I didn't die in my head, my son died,' as her eyes focus on her opened hands. A close-up of her palms fades to that of a parallel image shortly after the crash. We then see her kneeling in the wreckage with her empty hands still extended in the air. There is a bright light in the background and mist softens the foreground of Carla's figure. 'Empathetic music' replaces her voice and the intensity of the sound carries on the sadness of the scene, in what Chion describes as 'taking on [its] rhythm.'[121] Surrounding Carla are fragments of the plane, and for a moment there is a brief cut to a close-up of her face back in the car with Max, head dropped and eyes closed as the 'present' image fades back to her flashback. Searching the debris to find her son, Carla's face

---

[119] Gregory, p 48.

[120] Andrew Sarris, 'Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962,' in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 3rd ed., Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press 1985), p 538. In *The Acoustic Mirror*, p 195.

[121] Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p 8.

reveals her pain as her body moves into the background, her mouth forming the word 'no.' She pulls herself even further behind an obstacle while her mouth appears to remain open. For a second time we see Carla with an open 'frozen mouth,' evoking that first image we have of her as she is carried away at the beginning of the film; unlike the first scene, during the flashback sequence Carla is completely silenced.

During the opening sequence of the film we hear the 'grain', as Barthes calls, of Perez' voice, a voice with a high-pitched texture and in distress. [122] Thus before we realise what type of character Perez is about to perform we immediately identify her voice with those characters which have constructed her persona as impossible and unruly. However, if Perez' voice and body constructed her as an excessive site of unruliness in her earlier films then *Fearless* showcased her as an extremely modest character whose speech and body are not overtly on show. In her move away from roles which provoked scenes of hysteria, Perez portrayed a character whose silence was just as intense as her out of control fits. In discussing her role as Carla, Perez stated:

> It scared me. I had to prove myself. [...] [The director] didn't make me scream. I'm really like Carla. I can make you very uncomfortable with my silence.[123]

Thus *Fearless* sets out to demonstrate a somewhat 'different' vocal approach by the actress, demonstrating her transformation from the hyper Latina roles she often performs.

Since Perez takes on a somewhat unusual role for her, the actress's dramatic portrayal of Carla allows her to convey a diverse range of emotions. The first, already mentioned, is that of uncontrollable hysteria, the second, quiet sadness when Max pays a visit. Thus, the relationship between the actress's vocal performance and her character's emotional ordeal is demonstrated by the complex ranges of pitch and tone executed by Perez throughout the film. Indeed, having consistently performed as a loud Hispanic woman who exhibits 'uniform' outbursts, Carla remains, to date, the most tranquil character in the actress's film repertoire. After her initial powerful sequence, the following 'scenes with her,' as Kenneth Turan writes, 'are almost uniformly [...] solid and affecting,' particularly because Carla was 'acutely played with a fine-tuned sadness.'[124] It is perhaps because Perez' voice was restrained from continual outbursts throughout the film that it was described as being 'tuned.' This 'instrumental' description could have been associated with the director's attempt to 'reduce her voice an octave,'[125] by sending her to a voice coach.

---

[122] Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp 179-89. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p 44.
[123] Television programme *Biography*.
[124] Turan, p F4.
[125] Patrick Z. McGavin, 'Distinctive Voice,' *Chicago Tribune*, 6 November (Chicago, 1994), p 8, cited in Angharad N. Valdivia (2000), p 8.

For her performance in *Fearless* Perez was nominated for an Oscar in 1993. Ironically the film did not receive much critical acclaim and lasted only three weeks in the cinemas, leading to its box-office failure; the first of Perez' films to disappoint audiences. Nevertheless, her nomination stirred much anticipation as she became only the second Latina star to be nominated for an Academy Award and one of the highest paid Hispanic actresses in Hollywood; shortly after *Fearless* she 'triple[d] her income per film to $1.5 million.'[126] *Fearless* became a turning point for Perez who had now become the most reputable Latina star in Hollywood. However, her flirtation with stardom was short-lived as her reign in Hollywood slowly declined with the selection of her subsequent film roles and the appearance of another Puerto Rican actress, Jennifer Lopez, in 1996, three years after *Fearless* hit the screens.

After her performance in *Fearless* it is surprising that Perez returned to a comedic role more similar to her earlier performances. In one review of *It Could Happen To You*, Roger Ebert notes:

> And in Rosie Perez's work as Muriel it has another almost indescribable performance from this loud little dynamo. It has been observed that Rosie Perez always seems to give the same performance, and it's true that her characters in "*Do The Right Thing*," "*White Men Can't Jump*," and "*Untamed Heart*" all struck more or less the same note, although she was more subdued in "*Fearless*."[127]

While I disagree with Ebert and feel that Perez offered a different performance in *Untamed Heart*, I am interested in this excerpt as it reinforces the notion of Perez' voice as being the central element of her acting talents, and compares her performance of Muriel in *It Could Happen to You* to her role as Gloria in *White Men Can't Jump*. Considerably both characters are determined women seeking out their 'true' destiny: in the former, Perez' character wants to achieve upper-class status and in the latter, a chance to show off her brainpower. However, the complexity of Perez' performance in *It Could Happen to You* not only exhibits a shrewd Latina character willing to 'annihilate' anyone in the way of her financial security but also an ethnic figure 'powerful' enough to 'destroy' the sanctity of an 'American/white' ideals. Thus I look to the manner in which the construction of Perez' Latina ethnicity is presented and how her background is worked into the narrative as part of her character's hysteria.

---

[126] *Hispanic Business*, 'Cover Story: Top Entertainers,' *Hispanic Business*, July (US, 1994), p 42

[127] Roger Ebert, '*It Could Happen to You*,' *Chicago Sunday Times*, 29 July (Chicago, 1994). [Online] Accessed 1 October 2000. http:www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1994/07/932682.html

Falling from grace: It Could (also) Happen to You

It Could Happen To You is a fairy-tale version of a true story of a police officer giving a two million dollar tip. When Charlie Lang (Nicholas Cage), a New York City cop, is short of a tip, he promises the coffee shop waitress Yvonne (Bridget Fonda), half the winnings on his lottery ticket. Twenty-four hours later and $4 million richer Charlie must tell his money hungry wife Muriel (Rosie Perez) of his good deed. Despite his wife's pleas for him to stiff Yvonne, Charlie does the right thing and what ensues is romance between the cop and the waitress who must both face Muriel's wrath.

Early on in the film the three main characters are established. We see Charlie being a good cop, Yvonne treating an AIDS victim with much compassion and Muriel complaining about Charlie's lack of ambition to a customer in her beauty shop. Disgusted by her husband's goodness and having to live in Queens, Muriel informs the client that besides losing her patience she is 'a person who needs money.' Meanwhile Bridget Fonda's character Yvonne is actually on the verge of bankruptcy and when we first see her standing in court to be declared, we see a medium close up of her blue eyes and soft blonde hair. Notably, in contrast to Rosie Perez who is dimly lit, Bridget Fonda is brightly and softly illuminated to project a more angelic image of the (white) star. Here we can clearly see how whiteness is projected as being racially superior.

During the scene where the lottery money is divided, Muriel wears gaudy clothes while Yvonne is more demure. Dressed in a neon-green top and black skirt Perez appears to represent working class at its tackiest while Fonda, in a flowery dress, offers an innocent prairie-girl look. The visual presentation of Perez in a mini skirt and claw-like nails serves to heighten the Latina star in terms of ethnic sexuality, in particular if compared with the loose, long garment worn by Fonda. Yet for all her sexuality, Perez' character cannot maintain her husband's interest as he begins to form a more intimate relationship with Yvonne. While spending time together, Charlie and Yvonne pay the fares of train riders en route home and hire a bus to take a group of children to Yankee Stadium. It is after Charlie returns from the baseball field that we see Muriel's second outburst in the film, her first occurring after the lottery win.

Standing at the door of a rented school bus as children step off, Charlie is suddenly showered with his own clothes which are being thrown from an upstairs window by Muriel. Screaming at the top of her lungs in Spanish '*vete al carajo, pendejo*' (go to hell, asshole!), we see Perez in a momentary frenzy. During this scene we witness her providing an 'authentic' portrait of Latina female rage as she rants in Spanish; up until this scene her Hispanic background is not confirmed despite her accent. After confronting Charlie about his possible affair with Yvonne, which he denies, Muriel says,

> oh of course not, not you! Not Mr. Saintly, you're too good to have an affair. Oh God Charlie I'm just so sick of it! Your niceness and your decency but you wanna know what? You're nothing. You're a working class stiff. You are blue collar all the way! [...] So I want a divorce as soon as possible. I have wings Charlie, I want to fly.

It Could Happen To You clearly creates an unequal racial portrait of Fonda and Perez as representing extreme cases of whiteness/goodness/Americanness versus blackness/malevolence/Latinness. Indeed, that Perez' character embodies those traits which are not, as Dyer notes, 'characteristic of the white race' such as greed, deceit, self-interest and lack of morality,'[128] merely projects the star as a threat to whiteness. Dyer confirms that 'to be white is to be at once of the white race and 'honourable'[129] and Fonda's role, like Cage's, is that of a humble and compassionate character while Perez is best described by Peter Rainier as 'a gold-digging chatterbox. [...] She's a cartoon Emma Bovary.'[130] Thus, in opposition to whiteness, Perez' ethnic background is aligned to make a point about racial (therefore wicked) representation which fights against the 'saintly' behaviour of her on-screen white husband. Significantly, one film reviewer also noted Perez' malevolent character and wrote:

> The colourful and scene-stealing character in *It Could Happen To You* is Charlie's wife Muriel, wickedly portrayed by Rosie Perez, who goes ballistic after she finds out her husband gave away $2 million of his winnings to a complete stranger. [131]

Interestingly, another film review, reduces Perez' ethnicity to her sexuality and voice while promoting her co-stars as white American icons:

> He (director Andrew Bergman) brings out the spitfire in Perez, the angel in Fonda [...]. Regrettably, Bergman can't do so much with a one-note script by Jane Anderson that reduces Perez to a grating cliché, Cage and Fonda to a parody of Ken and Barbie [...].[132]

Perez' ethnic femininity in the film indicates a very sexual and racial identity which experiences the American dream of rags to riches. At the same time however, her character's greed causes her to sever ties with her husband thus damaging the institution of the 'American' home. Perhaps because of her *latinidad*, Perez was not able to portray convincingly a typical American wife as well as Fonda's character, who, with fair features, is linked to the perfect American female icon: Barbie. On the one hand Perez is presented as an example of ethnicity unable to cope with the

---

[128] Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p 31.
[129] Ibid, p 65.
[130] Peter Rainer, '*It Could Happen to You*' is Just the Ticket; A cop gives a waitress half of his $4-million lottery payoff in Andrew Bergman's cheery fairy tale,' *LA Times*, 29 July, Home Edition (Los Angeles, 1994), F-13.
[Online] Accessed 27 September 2000.
http:latimes.com.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=lt94+42656&LATID=71101
[131] Bruno R. Lester, 'Film of the Draw,' *Film Review*, December (London: Visual Imagination Limited, 1994), p 43.
[132] *Rolling Stone*, '*It Could Happen To You*,' *Rolling Stone*, 11 August, Issue 688 (New York, 1994), p 62.

success of an American dream, leaving the way clear for a happy ending for Charlie and Yvonne. On the other hand, Perez is presented as too domineering for her on-screen husband, hence his search for a more passive and more traditional (American) companion. Thus, Perez is presented as a threat to American male masculinity which shows Charlie under his wife's command.

Put forward as an immoral token of ethnic femininity, Perez' character also represents an insult to working class and family values. She shows no respect for her dead father, whom she hated, and even has less compassion towards her husband whom she demeans. Her greed leads to the verbal abuse she inflicts upon Charlie, calling him 'a working class stiff' and 'blue-collar all the way.' (Charlie being blue-collar in the film is factual as he wears a blue uniform; he is a cop, or a 'good cop' as the narrator (Isaac Hayes) informs us). Far from being the loving daughter and devoted wife, Perez' character is cast as a threat to the sanctity of family duties which is further emphasised when she misleads Charlie into thinking that that if they had money they could start a family; shortly after winning she asks for a divorce.

It Could Happen To You may be seen as problematic for the Perez persona because of the way in which the star is depicted as a hysterical gold-digging fanatic thus not offering room for transformation in the actress's persona. But I would contend that the importance of the film in relation to Perez' stardom is how the actress is able to transform what is considered to be an offensive ethnic character to that of a realistic portrayal of avaricious human nature. In short, the part played by her in this film runs parallel to the actress's image and persona because of her willingness to dictate over her life at the costs of breaking away from respectable traditions of (white) femininity. Within this framework of women who have a say in their destiny, DiBattista refers to the recognition of American women who not only find their voice in classical cinema but also are accepted as 'performer and heroine.'[133] While *It Could Happen To You* is predictable in the acceptance of Yvonne as a heroine, Fonda's character fails to have a voice let alone a say in her future, unlike Muriel. In further contrast to Perez' character, Yvonne has no power over men or financial assets, only acquiring wealth because of Charlie's kindness thus being placed on an 'inferior' level to Perez' character, financially speaking.

It could be suggested at this point that the projection of Perez' character as an affluent ethnic figure runs parallel to the promotion of the actress as an influential Latina star. For example, the caption in Elena Kellner's article reads 'Everything's coming up Rosie!: Her acting career in full bloom, the rising star and entrepreneur has the clout to call her own shots.'[134] In the text Kellner elaborates thus:

---

[133] DiBattista, p 11.
[134] Kellner (1994), p 28.

> Hollywood has embraced Rosie Perez on her terms. With five motion pictures behind her and two more to be released this year, Ms. Perez proves she can deliver diverse and memorable roles beyond designated "Hispanic" characters. In fact, she has captured Hollywood's attention and made a name for herself by landing leading roles originally written for non-Hispanics. [135]

So far, Perez had been able to make a successful career out of her performances in films which altered the female characters to suit the actress. Furthermore, the recognition of Perez as a star is of extreme importance considering that no other Latina at the time had been able to have such an influence over Hollywood. In a 1995 article on the most powerful Hispanics in the film industry, Perez ranked second to Cuban actor Andy Garcia.[136] Or as one film review of *It Could Happen To You* stated: 'Perez has got the power.'[137] (Jennifer Lopez' appearance on several television series and movies had not yet caught the attention of Hollywood, while Cameron Diaz' successful debut in *The Mask* was still too recent to predict the Cuban-American's stardom.) That *It Could Happen To You* remains her most recent commercially successful film proved Perez' talent as an actress, which clearly contributed to the success of the film. More importantly, with her ability to transform roles into performances which hyped the Latina figure as versatile, Perez was able to demonstrate that despite taking on roles which seemed to embody the female version of the Latina buffoon Carmen Miranda made famous, Perez's characters are not that simply one-sided. This would perhaps explain why in 1994 Perez reigned as the highest paid Latina actress in Hollywood.

Leon writes that many stars with 'personalities' had vehicles produced for them to keep their stardom in tact. He continues:

> This in turn resulted in many actors being typecast, which allowed them to make a very good living but caused many to become frustrated artistically and ill prepared for moving into different kinds of roles in later years, when the appeal of their personalities waned.[138]

It seems that although *It Could Happen To You* would mark the peak of Perez' fame, the actress felt that she was starting to be typecast in the majority of her roles. Claiming to receive 'horrible scripts of mostly low-grade versions of her "Tina" character in "*Do The Right Thing*," [139] the actress turned to producing as a possible means of creating different roles and avoiding being typecast. Thus, just

---

[135] Ibid.
[136] A. Avila, 'The 25 Most Powerful Hispanics in Hollywood,' Hispanic, April (US, 1996), p 26, cited in Chris Holmlund, 'Latinas in La-La Land,' in *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculity at the Movies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p 112.
[137] Magenheim.
[138] Leon, p 214.
[139] Ibid.

as the character of Muriel quietly returns to the Bronx, Perez withdrew from the public eye and went to Puerto Rico for several months before returning to Brooklyn and deciding to produce.[140] Perez' transition from 'superstardom' to a lower profile image is discussed by the star who claims, 'I really don't care about being a superstar, I love my private life, I love my home life, I love my friends and family – that takes priority. And then I have my career.'[141] Constructed as a domesticated figure, which clearly coincides with a more subtle/American femininity, Perez' ethnic identity began to produce a paradoxical image of the star as that of a the passive Latina abiding to the laws of ethnic and American patriarchy.

So Perez quietly steps down from the limelight, just as her character left behind fame and glory: there is a freeze frame of Muriel as we learn she was hustled out of her money. Ironically this type of departure is far from the construction of Perez' loud mouthed persona. Rather than projecting the working class ghetto chick, Perez was linked to 'ultra-feminin[ity]', as Millner states in her article, which functioned to project the Latina actress as a 'lady' rather than a star. Since this comment was made after Perez' appeal began to wane and Jennifer Lopez' stardom emerged, I would suggest that such an account sets the path for Lopez who began to represent a 'new' ethnic femininity which included American representation. However, before Lopez emerged on the screen as the 'new American face', Perez would appear in *Somebody To Love*, an independent film written especially for her.[142]

Starring: Rosie Perez

The last film to be analysed in this chapter offers a starring vehicle for Perez which not only positions her character as a dancer and struggling actress with dreams of becoming a star, but also explores the process of 'stardom' and the film industry's casting procedure. In my analysis of Perez' performance in *Somebody To Love*, I will discuss how the actress's character, Mercedes, 'responds' to Hollywood's 'represent(ation) of ethnic minorities,' when a 'Barbie-like' figure walks away with the part she (Perez) goes after: a 'Spanish dancer.' The manner in which the actress's body is positioned will also be examined, in particular during the on-screen casting calls in which the spectator is given the film industry's perception of Perez'/Mercedes' body, including the voice. The final sequence from the film to be looked at shows the actress attempting to 'improve' her character's voice via a self-help speech therapy cassette. The importance of this scene is that, while

---

[140] Millner.
[141] Ibid.
[142] David Handleman, 'A Diva Is Born,' *Mirabella*, July/August (US, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/mirabella0898.htm

it shows Perez trying to 'alter' her character's voice, it reinforces the fact that she is unable to transform that aspect of her which has become a trademark. This film itself is of extreme significance to Perez' stardom as it provides a useful example of the way in which her Latina persona is written into a narrative somewhat descriptive of her own career and, more importantly, also emphasises the diminishing of her dominant and unruly persona.

Somebody To Love stars Rosie Perez as Mercedes, a 'Brooklyn-born' taxi dancer and aspiring actress who is constantly faced with slammed doors when attending casting calls. One night while working at the dance club, Mercedes approaches Ernesto (Michael DeLorenzo), a humble Mexican who falls hopelessly in love with her. Ernesto is so in love with Mercedes that he takes on the job as hit man to obtain money for her boyfriend, who is desperate to get rid of his wife. Ernesto is killed at the end of the film, his death allowing Mercedes to return to New York and start a new life. In some manner his death serves to demonstrate to Mercedes that she can only find happiness with 'her own people'. In other words, only a Latino can take care of her and fulfil her dreams, unlike her white married boyfriend Harry (Harvey Keitel) who misleads her with his promises to leave his wife or help her get into the film industry.

Ironically, while *Somebody To Love* projects Perez as a genuine Latina it also draws attention to Hollywood's failure to hire genuine Latina representation in film. When Mercedes attends another audition, for which she is well-suited, ('mid-twenties, dancer, New York, Spanish,') she fails to convince the casting agent that she is the woman he is looking for. When she doesn't get the part she is the only person to protest to the male casting agent when he selects a blonde light-skinned woman to play the part. Mercedes tries to talk to him but ultimately ends up raising her voice out of frustration: 'Excuse me sir, can I talk to you for one minute? Uh you know, I don't mean to tell you your job but, are you fuckin' blind?! You got fucking Barbie here. I mean, did you read the description?!' When the casting is called off Mercedes continues protesting as she states, 'this part is me!,' refusing to accept the decision. In disbelief Mercedes yells out to the other women: 'What, you all just gonna just walk away? What, you gonna take this shit from this fucking Grecian formula asshole?!' As they continue to walk away from her and offer no response we see an overhead shot of Mercedes, which emphasises her isolation in battle. We then hear the casting agent telling two extras dressed as cowboys, 'that's it, get rid of her,' but as they approach Mercedes she tells them that she is willing to leave on her own.

In *Cinema and Sentiment* Charles Affron argues that 'A voice must be powered so that it will be heard.'[143] As the only woman in the scene to be 'given' a voice, Mercedes threatens the

[143] Charles Affron, *Voice and Sentiment* (Chicago and London; The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p 108.

casting agent's authority because of her refusal to be quickly dismissed. With her high-pitched chords, the actress adds to the potency of the scene which is magnified by the pulling up and away of the camera, as she stands on the corner. Lawrence observes that 'in films such as *Notorious* and *Sorry, Wrong Number* where women initially seem to have the power of speech, they talk too much and must be silenced.'[144] Not conforming to the norms of femininity, Mercedes is projected as threatening, particularly if she gathers more female opposition towards the casting agent, prompting him to have her physically removed from the studio lot. In this respect, Perez' association with uncontrollable ethnic femininity gives the film industry justification for not hiring 'authentic' ethnic women. The scene also reminds us of Hollywood's continual casting of non-Latina women in Hispanic roles. As a result, even when Perez' character is willing to take on the role of a Latina, she is prohibited from embodying a genuine ethnic identity. This suggests that Mercedes' identity as a Latina is questionable since the film ignores her existence as an 'authentic' ethnic representative in Hollywood.

In an interview with Elena Kellner, Perez not only discusses her unwelcoming response from Hollywood, she also comments upon the industry's unwillingness to accept her as a Latina: "You could pass for mixed, white, or black," people told her. When she [Perez] replied, "What about Spanish?" they told her she wouldn't get anywhere.'[145] Kellner's article also confirms Hollywood's reaction to Perez' voice by instructing the actress to 'lose her accent or she wouldn't get work.'[146] In *Somebody To Love*, her character is also criticised for her accent during auditions. As the target of the diegetic masculine gaze, we witness how her physical surface is dissected and scrutinized as she is told she is 'too tall,' that her breasts are 'too small' or 'too big,' and that her accent is strong. Only then does she yield, stating, 'I can lose it.' Perhaps Perez' experience of being told to lose her accent on screen, as well as off screen, provides the basis for the next scene in which her character tries to 'alter' her voice, using a self-help cassette entitled 'Talk to Win: Six Steps to a successful vocal image'. Sitting on a chair in her small motel room with a book balanced on her head, she looks at herself in a mirror while carefully brushing her teeth as the female voice from the tape coaches her. Repeating infantile phrases such as 'Kate kicked the kitty cat,' Mercedes continues her speech lesson according to the instructions. This is probably the most meaningful moment in the narrative as the spectator, and maybe even the actress herself, realises the ineffectiveness of trying to alter her distinctive voice.

---

[144] Lawrence, p 130.
[145] Kellner, p 30.
[146] Ibid.

The scene is extremely significant in the stardom of Perez since it connotes the shifting of her stardom from highly visible to less popular. In the scene, there is a moment when Mercedes stops for a second and looks at herself while in the background the voice of the woman on the tape instructs her character how to speak. As Perez tries to define her voice she is aligned, in Silverman's term, 'with an unpleasurable and disempowering interiority.'[147] Faced with a voice that is charged with ethnicity Perez/Mercedes must listen to a non-accented and imaginary woman talk about 'individuals with deep rich sounding voices [who] command more respect.' If Lacan's 'Mirror Stage' is that moment when a child sees its own reflection and discovers his being, then the mirror scene with Perez is the moment when the actress recognises the improbability of changing her vocal register. It is also that moment when she is no longer recognised as a privileged voice in her films.[148] Despite the film being written for her, she is denied an 'authorial voice' and the most obvious evidence to indicate this shift takes place when her character attends yet another casting call and is told that her accent is too strong. Her immediate response, 'I can lose it,' supports the demise of the actress's dominant persona, in particular since her characters have rarely failed to speak up. And for Mercedes to lose her accent is for Perez to lose the trademark which made her a star.

With Perez no longer projecting the Latina image which contributed to her fame, that is, an ethnic female using her voice to speak her mind, it was perhaps no surprise then that *Somebody To Love* was a box office failure, and that after the film the actress failed to regain her status as a top celebrity; the film went straight to video. Even after her appearance in two independent films in 1997, *A Brother's Kiss* and *Perdita Durango*, Perez no longer attained the level of stardom she had with *White Men Can't Jump* and *Fearless*. Meanwhile, Jennifer Lopez was beginning to gain mainstream popularity first with *Selena* (1996) then *Anaconda* (1997), and although the actress may have received harsh criticism for her performance in this last film, the industry seemed more concerned with its financial success. More importantly, in contrast to Perez, Lopez began to shift between Latina and non-Latina roles, an accomplishment Perez could not convincingly perform because of her accent and racial features. Thus, Lopez was beginning to demonstrate her influence at the box office and was proving to be a more multi-faceted actress than Perez. And so, with Lopez taking Hollywood by the reigns, Perez turned to other avenues which recognised her acting talent and gut instinct to produce good work. Therefore, in the following section, it is my intention to explore her shift from ghetto chick to mature actress.

---

[147] Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans, Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), pp 1-7. Cited in *The Acoustic* Mirror, p 100.
[148] Silverman, p 7.

The transformation of a Latina star: Perez matures off-screen and on-stage

By 1997 Rosie Perez had appeared in nine films and several television shows and had choreographed the television comedy show *In Living Colour*, as well as producing two television programmes. Stressing that 'the real strength in Hollywood is behind the scenes,'[149] the actress also began to produce her own films including the 1999 independent film *The 24-Hour Woman*, which she also starred in and promoted. The film was not well-received and in one film review, Perez was given little praise: 'Ms. Perez is vigorous, though never entirely convincing in the film's workplace scenes.'[150] The description of her performance as unconvincing is crucial, particularly since, as Dyer claims, 'the criteria governing performance have shifted from whether the performance is well done to whether it is truthful, that is, true to the 'true' personality of the performer.'[151] While Perez' role as a producer reflects the actress's own life, she fails to give audiences a sincere performance on screen, thus reinforcing her fall from true stardom. If we look back at Perez' career, the type of vocabulary to support her stardom has been that of natural and 'authentic'. No longer possessing those traits which made her unique endangered her star status.

As a racially marked ethnic figure in Hollywood, Perez has been typecast in roles which promote a street kid and tough image, an image which responded to a more authentic and up to dated urban Latina. But by the mid-nineties this image seemed no longer to attract either Latino or mainstream audiences. With the arrival of Jennifer Lopez, Perez' stardom began to decline and it seems that the notion of maturity offered her a more 'reputable' transition from celebritydom for several reasons. First and foremost, the image of Perez as a street tough hip hop 'queen' faded as she turned thirty and became a stepmother. No longer embodying the unique trait which launched her to stardom, Perez transformed from the street kid image she had made popular to a mature actress thereby alleviating the anxieties she provoked as an unruly woman in the early 90s.[152] In one article the transformation of the actress is described in terms of maturity:

> Today, it's simply Rose Perez, a mature, 34-year old, well-spoken, intelligent, ultra-feminine woman. A lady. You almost feel guilty for expecting anything less. And you should. Because Rosie says she was that way in '92 "a little," but dropped the party girl image around the time New York City had a Democrat in City Hall. [153]

---

[149] Kellner, p 30.
[150] Janet Maslin, '*The 24-Hour Woman*: Working 9 to 5 in Daydreams Only,' *The New York Times*, 29 January (New York, 1999).
[151] Richard Dyer, 'A Star is Born and the Construction of Authenticity,' *Stardom Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill, ed. (New York and London: Routledge, (1991), p 133.
[152] Negra, 2004.
[153] Millner.

The journalist also notes: 'She is definitely Ms. Perez, but she is also a successful television producer, rather than a kid from the streets, trying to balance work, marriage, and motherhood.'[154] In this article, Perez is discussed in terms of 'maturity', which implies her having transformed from the image we witnessed in *Do The Right Thing*. She stepped away from the film industry to exhibit her acting talents on Broadway, displaying yet another move to 'serious' acting.[155] As the actress stated in an interview: "I felt ready, [...] I felt I had matured as an actress, and Shakespeare really primed me for this play."[156] Thus, for Perez to make a smooth movement away from fly-girl it was necessary to soften her image from that of the ill-tempered woman she had personified to that of a mature actress.

Significantly, Perez' transition to the theatre also resulted in her involvement 'in politics and activism,[157] and especially in women's rights issues.'[158] Since the figure of Perez was presented as being more experienced, her 'new' image helped to soften the shaping of the actress as lacking (Hollywood) star quality at the same time that her voice was being accepted as that of a public activist. But while Perez' image softened she continued to embody a 'progressive' Latina spitfire, particularly since she actively resisted society's treatment of 'others', most notably 'her' people. I would say that as an activist Perez helped to establish a more profound relationship with Latino culture as she began to 'fight the power'[159] against the United States Navy, which was using the Puerto Rican island of Vieques as a bombing range.[160] Having been arrested for demonstrating in front of the United Nations, Perez became widely admired for her participation by Puerto Ricans both on the mainland and on the island. Thus, if Perez' relationship with Latino culture in the early phase of her career served as a reminder of Hispanic presence and struggle, then the later stage of her career marked her participation in Latino culture as an established and reputable spokesperson.

---

[154] Ibid.

[155] During her theatrical period, Perez married (and is now separated from) film director Seth Zvi Rosenfeld who directed her in *A Brother's Kiss* (1996). Elena Kellner (1994), p 30.

[156] Doreen Carvajal, 'John Ortiz and Rosie Perez: Accidental Actors,' *The New York Times* cited in *The Puerto Rican Herald*, Theatre, 8 April (Puerto Rico, 2001). The play *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* stars Perez as the wife of a Gulf war veteran.
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2001.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n15/OrtizPerez-en.shtml

[157] Rosie Perez is also an adamant AIDS awareness activist. She has attended schools to inform youngsters of the dangers of the disease, collaborated in fundraisers and continues to volunteer at AIDS organizations.

[158] *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 'Puerto Rican Profile (2001).

[159] Perez' decision to use her 'voice' for AIDS and political campaigns casts her as something of a diva in that she uses her star power and ambition to seek a cure or justice.

[160] Russell Scott Smith, Liza Hamm, et.al., 'Celebrities: Pop Quiz with Rosie Perez,' *People*, 21 January, Vol. 53, Issue 3 (New York, 2000), p 18.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_1587603421&site+ehost&return=n

In addition, her involvement in AIDS awareness projects began to emphasise a transformed image of Perez in the press as subtle and earnest, depictions not often used in her publicity.

It should be mentioned that Perez' participation in politics has led to favourable comparisons with Jennifer Lopez. As The Puerto Rican Herald puts it: "She came to us (Puerto Ricans), not as a celebrity paper doll but rather as a sister," wrote Marinieves Alba. "Her power and strength doesn't come from celebrity, but community."[161] This is significant since, several years earlier, many members of the Latino community were embarrassed to have Perez 'represent' their people. Yet, the description of Lopez as a doll is of importance since Perez has declined to alter her body in the 'superficial' way that Lopez has. In an article on Perez in *Latina*, Ojito described the transformation of the actress's physical appearance: 'She wears a dab of pink lipstick and black eyeliner; her hair is swept up, and her trademark huge silver loop earrings are nowhere in sight. Instead there is a rock (from Tiffany's of course) on her left ring finger.'[162] Despite being told to lose weight, get a nose job or colour her hair blonde (tactics which enabled Lopez to cross over to non-Latina roles), Perez has undergone little physical transformation. (See photocopy).

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have looked at the complex performances of Rosie Perez' persona as a transformed Latina stereotype. With the exception of her role in *Fearless*, the actress 'creates' and executes a series of performances which interact with the typical Latina, leading her to transform the spitfire image into an updated and 'positive' version of ethnic femininity. As I have shown in this chapter, this depiction of the actress associates Perez with the notion of unruliness because of the manner in which her persona challenges patriarchal discourses. Moreover, and as discussed earlier, Perez' unruliness is seen on a parallel level to Roseanne Barr in that both she and Barr have been recognised as 'creators' of 'insurgent' female characters. Thus, if both women have made 'spectacles' of themselves it is because they have exercised a certain level of agency over their persona (either in dialogue or mise-en-scene) which they 'control' and shape into their idea of authentic representatives of ethnic and working class women.

Seemingly, Perez can only serve as registering ethnic/racial/Latina femininity which often means being linked to the lower class. Jennifer Lopez, on the other hand, has been able to shift between working and middle class on film but the shift upward only takes place when she is playing

---

[161] Robert Waddell, 'Rosie Perez Speaks Out on Vieques Controversy,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 6 October (Puerto Rico, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2001.
www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n42/RosiePerez-en.shtml

[162] Ojito, p 42.

Figure 1. Rosie Perez at Fundraiser. (October 1995, USA).

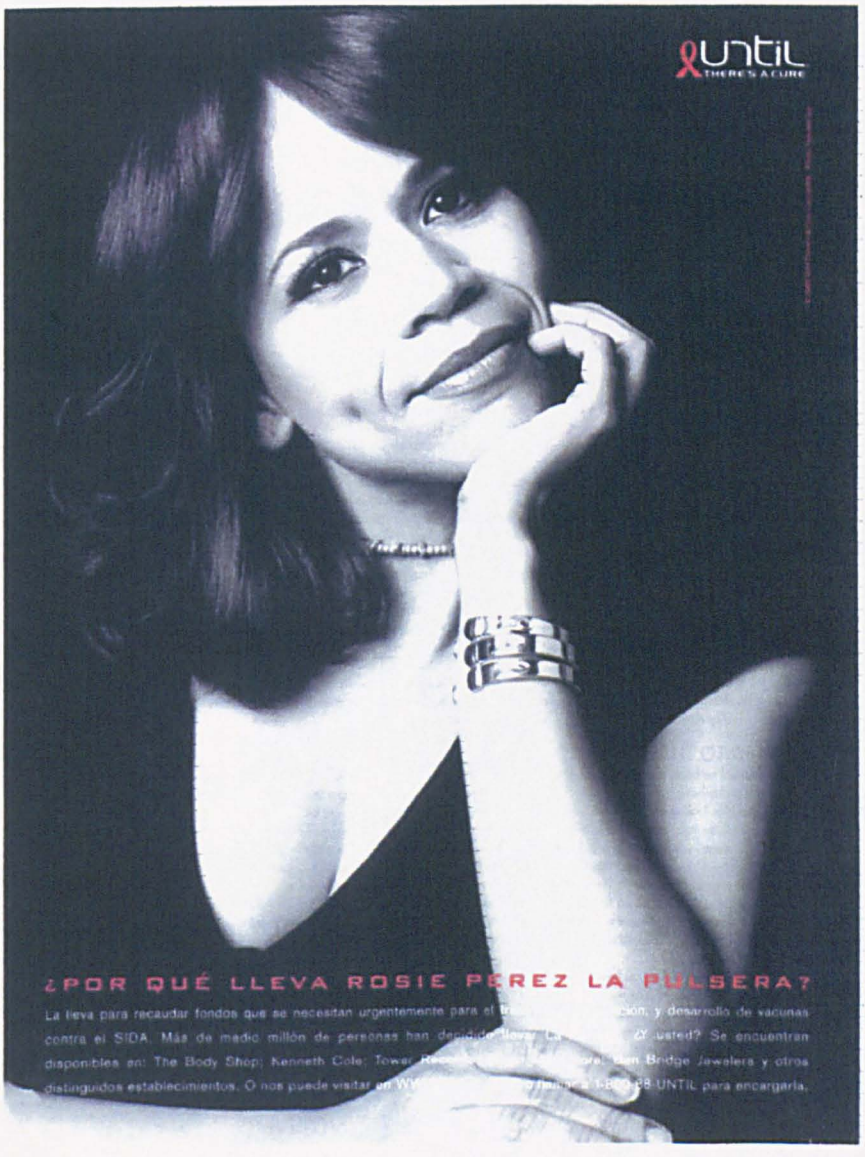

Figure 2. Rosie Perez for 'Until There's A Cure' AIDS Campaign (2003, USA).

a non-Latina role. More importantly, and as we shall see in the following chapter, Lopez has been able to market Puerto Ricanness thus paving the way for Latinos as a site of 'cross-consumption categories'.[163] Dyer sums up the condition for stardom by stating: 'Stars are the direct or indirect reflection of the needs, drives and dreams of American society.'[164] Lopez' stardom clearly reflects the growing power of Latinos as consumers, since Hispanics propelled the actress to stardom. Perez' stardom however, personified the hardship Latinos were facing in the 1980s and early 1990s thus projecting a more confrontational or unruly aspect of Hispanics.

Perez' films clearly marked the actress as Latina thus forming the basis of a genuine ethnic female but with an authorial voice. Despite serving as a 'problematic' ethnic character in the majority of her films, Perez' characters are to be admired for their fast-talking and determined stance. Even Jennifer Lopez has not been able to successfully perform as sharply and powerfully as Perez, whatever the ethnic background of her characters. Consistently constructed as tough and loud, the characters Perez has played have been notable for her vocal performance even when the narrative 'contained' her outbursts, as in *Fearless* (1993). Although *Fearless* demonstrated her acting talents and consolidated her star status, in her publicity Perez' performance was often 'reduced' to her voice.

In accounts of Perez' stardom, her voice was often associated with her ethnic background, however, to associate Perez with her background is to also consider how the actress's body has been linked to the representation of blackness in film and performance. In Perez' case her 'representation' of blackness coincides with her image as a true hip hop artist which is seen as early as her debut performance. Significantly Perez' dark skin colour, thick lips and wide nostrils speak of a racialised body which has been grotesquely exaggerated in dance as well as in narratives; her face conjures up images of the minstrel figure in American performance. Thus to observe the notion of blackness in Perez' stardom is to take into account the framing of the star's body as conjuring up an 'authentic' portrait of black ethnic femininity carried across several of her films.

While Perez' dark features, petite stature and potent vocal range placed the actress at risk of only playing ethnic/Latina roles, it also provoked the film industry to alter its perception of ethnic actresses' ability to take on non-ethnically defined roles. However, while Hollywood may work around Perez' image and voice, and posit the petite star as a loud Latina, the actress continued to be characterised as tough and strong-minded. Such determination has also been documented in Perez'

---

[163] Negra, July 2004.
[164] Dyer (1979), p 6, citing Alexander Walker, p xi.

publicity when the actress discussed the 'difficulties she has faced as a Hispanic actress in Hollywood:'[165] In an interview, Perez noted the racist attitude taken towards her:

> "The racism, the sexism, I never let it be a problem," says Perez. "It's their problem. If I see a door comin' my way, I'm knockin' it down. And if I can't knock the door down, I'm sliding through the window. I'll never let it stop me from doing what I want to do."[166]

Thus, if, like many actresses, Rosie Perez is reduced to a body and a voice, at least she is projected as a Puerto Rican woman who is prepared to fight with a vengeance and *roar*.

---

[165] *Ibid.*, p 47.
[166] Ibid.

4

Jennifer Lopez: From 'Fly Girl' to Diva

One of the main findings of the scholarship on the dynamics and politics of Latino celebrity representation is that opportunities for "cross-over" historically have taken vastly different trajectories for Latino and Latina actors in Hollywood, depending on a variety of factors - for one, how closely the performer embodied ideals of whiteness. [1]

Homegirl [Jennifer Lopez] hasn't looked Latina in a good minute, you know. [...] her hair has been progressively lighter, her skin has been getting, everything about her, you know, aside from her ass, has been progressively whiter.[2]

In a 1999 article that appeared in the Spanish magazine *El País*, Latina actress Jennifer Lopez was described as being 'slightly plastic,' as well as, having 'a touch of Barbie that distances her from the ethnic Puerto Rican daughter educated in The Bronx.'[3] (See Appendix B-2.1) Lopez' association with this 'white icon' is perhaps no surprise as the actress's photograph reveals flawless skin and streaked blonde hair. Three years later in an article entitled 'Lopez sold out Latina heritage to make money,' Lilly Gonzales asks: 'Why is this Puerto Rican from The Bronx, whose natural hair colour is as dark as mine, walking around with blonde hair? Did she feel she could only attract a mainstream audience if she didn't look so threateningly Latina?'[4] It is clear that in 2002 analysis of Lopez' transformed image was provoking questionable debate, in large part because she no longer embodied a 'Latina look.'

---

[1] Mary C. Beltrán, 'The Hollywood Latina Body as a Site of Social Struggle: Media Constructions of Stardom and Jennifer Lopez' "Cross-over Butt",' in *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 19 (Brunner Routledge, 2002), p 77.

[2] Interview with Elizabeth Mendez-Berry, Music Editor of *Vibe* Magazine in '*J.Lo: Behind The Behind*,' Wednesday, 30 April 2002, Channel 4, 10pm (UK).

[3] Joseba Elola, 'Jennifer López: Fiera Latina,' *El País Semanal*, 6 June (Spain, 1999), p 72. Spanish translations of texts in the Appendix.

[4] Lilly Gonzalez Column, 'Lopez sold out Latina heritage to make money,' *The Daily Northwestern*, 11 April (North Carolina, 2002). This column is found in Northwestern University's newspaper.
[Online] Accessed 3 June 2002.
http://www.dailynorthwestern.com/daily/issues/2002/04/11/forum/f-gonzalez.shtml

Drawing on Adrienne L. McLean's essay 'I'm a Cansino: Transformation, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in The Construction of Rita Hayworth, American Love Goddess,'[5] I will map out the physical transformation of Jennifer Lopez' figure, as well as examining how ethnicity plays a crucial role in her star persona. In exploring her ethnicity in films, I will argue, like McLean does with Hayworth, that Lopez' heritage serves to guarantee her authenticity as an ethnic female figure despite her portrayal of non-Latina roles. My interest in Lopez' 'American' roles runs parallel to McLean's construction of Hayworth's 'cross-gender appeal to audiences,' thus allowing me to consider how Lopez' early stardom and portrayal as a Latina icon positioned her as a 'cross-over' artist.[6]

I also look to the work of Frances Negrón Muntaner and Mary C. Beltrán as they examine the construction of Lopez as cross-over celebrity in the media as well as exploring the frenzy over the actress's much reported curves. Neither Muntaner and Beltrán go beyond 1998, the year Lopez actually became a bona-fide Hollywood star thus limiting their work prior to the actress's mainstream success. Furthermore both exclusively concentrate on the extensive publicity on the actress's backside. While I also call attention to the 'booty brouhahah' Lopez provoked in the media after her appearance in *Selena*, I discuss the popularity Lopez found amongst mainstream audiences in her first non-Latina role, hence her cross-over success, and the actress's rising stardom thereafter.[7] Moreover, in contrast to both authors, I analyse Lopez' successful cross-over to pop music stardom as well as exploring her transcendence from film star to conglomerate empire. More importantly, I examine the physical transformation of the Latina star to a more white look thus challenging Muntaner and more specifically Beltrán's work on Lopez as celebrating Latina beauty.

Given the multi-faceted nature of her career, I also observe Lopez' musical career, since no other contemporary actress has been so successful in simultaneously dominating the film and music industry. To explore Lopez' shift from singer to actress and entrepreneur, I turn to Diane Negra's work on Cher and the singer's metamorphosis from singing (hippie) queen to actress and icon. Because I also examine whiteness in Lopez' persona and image, I look to Negra's discussion of former skating star Sonja Henie to observe the manner in which Negra analyses whiteness in her

---

[5] Adrienne L. McLean, '"I'm a Cansino': Transformation, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in the Construction of Rita Hayworth, American Love Goddess,' in *Journal of Film and Video*, Fall-Winter, Vol. 44, No.3 (University and Video Association: 1992-1993), pp 8-26.

[6] Discussing McLean's work, Diane Negra offers this concise observation in her book *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), p 10.

[7][1] At the time of this research Negrón had not offered a postscript on Lopez's stardom in her paper 'Jennifer's Butt,' which appeared in *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall (US, 1997). It is in her book *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture* (New York University Press, New York and London: 2004), which includes a brief postscript on the Latina star, mentioning her physical transformation, the significance of *Out of Sight* to her career and her relationship with former boyfried Sean Combs.

stardom. I will also refer to Richard Dyer's observations about 'magical synthesis' since I concentrate on the notion of contradiction in Lopez' status as a Latina icon with a 'manufactured' white image.[8]

The first three films to be analysed, *My Family/Mi Familia* (Gregory Nava, New Line Cinema, 1995, US), *Blood and Wine* (Bob Rafelson, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1997, US), and *Selena*, reveal the positioning of the star as exemplifying diverse Latina figures (Mexican, Cuban and Mexican-American), thereby reinforcing her Latina persona. In my discussion of *Selena,* we begin to witness a transformation in the actress's career as she becomes a star amongst the Latina community, and her publicity begins to focus more on her body. With Lopez' physical transformation is the actress's crossing over to 'American' roles such as in *Anaconda* (Luis Llosa, Columbia Pictures, 1997, US) *Out of Sight* (Steven Soderbergh, Universal, 1998, US) and *The Wedding Planner* (Adam Shankman, *Filmax*, 2001, US). Although the last two films present the actress in her most successful mainstream roles she is promoted as an Italian-American character, thus indicating how the actress's body is 'negotiated' into characterising another ethnic figure. These films are useful in that Lopez' 'white' persona is established thus serving to compare the later stages of her transformation from a Latina look prior to her crossover stardom, which will also be analysed.

Following my analysis of Lopez' cross-over success, I explore the actress's return to a Latina role in *Maid in Manhattan* (Wayne Wang, Sony Pictures, 2002, US) and further discuss her continuous shift between *latinidad* and Americanness in her star texts. At this later stage in Lopez' career, I also take into account how her musical career serves to highlight her ethnic background, at the same time that it responds to her public's enquiries about her stardom and changing image. Thus, through a reading of her success as a pop star, I analyse a limited number of the actress's music videos (those which are most representative of her ethnic star persona). In the following section I will examine Lopez' initial climb to stardom by first concentrating on her upbringing and early career as a 'Fly Girl.'

From 'Fly Girl' to actress

The middle daughter of Puerto Rican emigrants who settled in New York's South Bronx, Jennifer Lynn Lopez (b.1970) demonstrated her dancing skills at a very early age. According to the actress, 'I remember being 2 years old and being put on the table and in Spanish they say *manéalo*, but it

[8] Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI, 1979), p 30.

means shake it, shake it.'[9] Showing a preference for musicals, she began dance classes at age five with hopes of becoming 'the next Rita Moreno.'[10] Given her urban upbringing, we can understand how Lopez became interested in dancing to the latest sounds of rap and hip-hop during the mid-eighties. Discussing her enjoyment of the then urban craze in a 1998 interview, she recalled how one particular song during her late teens changed the course of her life: '[M.C.] Hammer came out with "U Can't Touch This," and all the auditions started becoming hip-hop auditions. I was good at it, and they were like, "Ooh, a light skinned girl who can do that. Great, let's hire her!"[11] Selected from 2000 dancers at an open audition, she received her first big break when chosen as a 'Fly Girl'[12] on the weekly African-American television comedy *In Living Colour* (Keenan Ivory Wayans, Fox, 1991, US).

Although Lopez builds her urban upbringing through hip-hop, she also calls attention to her features as being 'light.' This is important as Dyer notes that there are diverse examples of ethnic groups that may be regarded as white including 'a dark-eyed Latin lover.'[13] What this suggests is that although Lopez does not claim a white identity she does link herself to whiteness by separating herself from dark-skinned bodies. In other words, she does not consider herself as 'coloured', hence the improbability of her ever discussing her transformation to 'more' white. In contrast, the endorsement of her image as a hip-hop dancer links her body to the streets of New York City, as does her title of 'Fly Girl' and debut appearance on an African-American television programme. This 'ghetto' image becomes crucial to the actress's musical career when Lopez positions herself as a genuine urban representative.

Charles Ponce de Leon gives an example of how stars create autobiographical tones in interviews when discussing particular moments which have affected their lives on the road to stardom. In Lopez' early interviews there is a consistent repetition of factors that have helped define her aspirations to become a star. These factors include her Bronx roots, her fondness of the film *West Side Story* (Robert Wise, MGM/UAA, 1961, US), because it was the only commercially successful film to feature Puerto Rican characters (and star Rita Moreno), and MC Hammer's song which motivated Lopez to audition as a hip-hop dancer. All these elements allow for a dramatic portrait Lopez herself creates and controls to highlight authentic accounts of events that led the

---

[9] Nancy Jo Sales, 'Vida Lopez,' *New York*, 6 September (New York, 1999), p 26.
[10] David Handleman, 'A Diva Is Born,' *Mirabella*, July/August (US, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/mirabella0898.htm
[11] Ibid.
[12] As mentioned in the Perez chapter, 'Fly Girl' is an attractive young woman in hip-hop dance circles.
[13] Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p 51.

Bronx Latina to fame. Such details also allow for Lopez' fans to have specific knowledge of her success and her chosen path to celebrity thus making her more accessible to the public.

After being a 'Fly Girl' for two years on *In Living Colour*, Lopez moved on to appear in television programmes, in which she was cast in Latina roles. During this time, few television programs featured and promoted Latina characters, one exception being her final series *Hotel Malibu* (CBS, 1994, US), which was a spin-off from the cancelled series *Second Chances* (CBS, 1993, US). With her consistent portrayal of Latina characters, she began to represent (on television) diverse members of the Latino community (e.g. Puerto Rican and Mexican-American). This is extremely significant, as she would also portray Mexican and Cuban characters in her films, thus continuing the establishment of her persona as being pan-Latina. In this following section, I examine how Lopez is projected as a Latina figure on-screen, and how she was chosen to authentically 'reinterpret and appropriate'[14] *latinidad* on diverse levels.

Representing Latinas

Directed by Gregory Nava, *My Family* features the actress as the young matriarch Maria Sanchez in a three-generation epic saga. Narrated by the eldest son Paco (Edward James Olmos), we learn of his father's difficult journey from Mexico to 'Nuestra Señora Reina de Los Ángeles, the one in California.' It is then, during the 1920's, that a young Jose (Jacob Vargas) falls in love with Maria (Lopez) after seeing her for the first time. While cutting hedges, Jose looks up and from his point-of-view we see a long shot of Maria with three blonde children as their mother kisses them and walks away. As the children disperse Maria calls out '*niños*!,' and when she looks to her right we see Jose looking in her direction. Next, we see her with hair neatly pulled back and as the camera zooms in, an iris effect is created until the lens momentarily closes. When the lens opens again we see a wider iris effect with Jose and Maria in wedding attire and what follows is an edit of two young children, fruit of the newly wed couple who soon expect a third child.

In this initial introduction of Lopez there are several connections to *latinidad* that are promoted by means of domestication and family values. The presentation of her character in wedding attire emphasises the traditional image of the 'faithful señorita,'[15] a figure strongly

---

[14] In Jacob Golomb's book, *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegard to Camus*, he discusses the potential one has to willingly reinterpret one's heritage. Chapter 5, Heidegger's Ontology of authenticity (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p 115.

[15] In his description of Hispanic female character types, Gary D. Keller writes that the 'faithful señorita is the analogue to the faithful Mexican male.' Lopez' character fits this description throughout the entire film as she claims that her duty is to be with her husband and family. Gary D. Keller, *Hispanics and United States Film: An Overview and Handbook* (Bilingual Press, 1994), p 42.

associated with Latinas in early cinema. Latinas in the media, as Clara E. Rodriguez states, are often 'commit(ted) to home and children,'[16] as represented by the actress's character who is first shown caring for her employers' '*niños*' (children), before getting married to form her own family. In the actress's publicity, keynotes of family values also have emerged in articles discussing her thoughts on motherhood: "I want a family," she says. [...] "That would be the ultimate goal for me."[17] That these accounts depict Lopez as recognising the family as 'the basic unit in the Latino culture'[18] is noteworthy, for *la familia* becomes a central theme in many of her films at the same time that Lopez' ethnic heritage is pointed up.

Also highlighted are Lopez' features during the iris effect as it foregrounds, according to Dyer, 'the [...] person as much as the character they play.'[19] Promoted as a site of ethnic femininity, the actress's dark features and round face evoke images of her early photos where she is credited with 'representing' Latina characters in her films. Thus, the iris effect projects Lopez' face as a personalised image Latino audiences could relate to. What this effect also provides is a specific moment in the actress's career to which we can compare the transformation of her image at a later stage in her stardom.

While the family remains a central issue in the next sequence to be discussed, other aspects of the Latino heritage such as the use of Spanish and practise of religion are also highlighted. Deported to Central Mexico by the immigration authorities, Maria arrives at her Aunt's house and we soon hear the young mother speaking in Spanish with her older relative. Telling her aunt that she is going to have a child, Maria talks about how she will pray to the Virgin Mary to help get back to her family. When she finally embarks on her journey the young mother and child nearly face death as the small boat they travel in overturns. Although she manages to cross the river with her child, her son's life is still in danger and she takes her child to two indigenous women speaking in their native (American-Indian) tongue. Begging in Spanish for their help, Maria is eventually told to 'pray to the Virgin,' by both native figures before they begin to chant and in the next shot, we see the young mother and child reunited with Jose. As they embrace, he says: 'It is a miracle. This is a miracle,' and soon after the young couple (both standing in the centre of the frame), pick up their son. With their faces turned away from camera we see the little boy's face, as well as the image of Jesus Christ in a portrait hanging on the wall to their left.

---

[16] Clara E. Rodriguez, *Latin Looks: The Images of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. Media* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), p 2.
[17] Diane Clehane, 'Whatever Lopez wants, Lopez gets,' *TV Guide*, 10-16 February (US, 2001), p 18.
[18] Denis Lynn Daly Heyck, *Barrios and Borderlands: Cultures of Latinos and Latinas in the United States* (London and New York: Routledge 1994), p 18.
[19] Dyer (1979), p 17.

If the film's introduction of Lopez presents a traditional figure marked by signs of her Latina heritage, then the second sequence further emphasises *latinidad* when her character is forced to return to her ethnic origins. Representing an ethnic feminine figure crossing over to her homeland and demonstrating her character's ethnic customs by means of native ceremonies/superstitions, religious beliefs (e.g., Catholicism) or the use of the Spanish language, Lopez is constructed as promoting a *genuine* performance. Contributing to the realness of her performance is the use of English subtitles throughout most of her Spanish dialogue thus 'creat[ing]... greater authenticity in the story.'[20] In his discussion of authenticity, David Hume defines the term as a 'sense of genuineness, of things being what they profess in origin or authorship.'[21] With her ethnic background, religious belief, and use of Spanish at home, Lopez was clearly posited as a Latina figure thus contributing to the authenticity of her character and the film's narrative. For the actress to debut as a Latina character in a film geared towards a Hispanic audience (as the director has declared)[22] is crucial, for as we shall see later on this connection to *latinidad* began to build up in her career with her portrayal of other Latina characters.[23]

As Lopez began to play more roles she was increasingly linked to other Latino groups, as in the next film to be examined in which she portrays a Cuban immigrant. Interestingly, her fourth role meant that she had embodied characters from the three largest Latino groups in the United States – Mexican and Puerto Rican complete the trio – thereby establishing her 'pan-Latina' persona. In *My Family* the placing of the actress on foreign territory and the use of the Spanish language foregrounded her character as Mexican, but in *Blood and Wine* (1997) her Cuban character was

---

[20] In his essay, 'A Social-Cognitive Approach to Ethnicity in Films,' Paul S. Cowen briefly discusses Spanish dialogue. In *Unspeakable Images, Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 367.

[21] J.Y.T. Greig, *The Letters of David Hume* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), p 328. Cited in, *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegard to Camus*, Jacob Golomb (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p 10.

[22] After the conclusion of the video *My Family*, Gregory Nava claims that the film 'will appeal very strongly to Latinos because they all love and relate to their family in a very profound way.'

[23] That so early on in her career Lopez portrayed a genuine Latina character meant that the actress began to gain some recognition from the Hispanic community. Also, with her decision to portray another Latina character after *My Family*, the actress was able to develop her acting talents as the female protagonist in the commercial film *Money Train* (Joseph Ruben, Columbia Pictures, 1995, US). In spite of the fact that this film will not be not analysed in this chapter, the significance, for discussions of her ethnicity, of Lopez' second film lies in how the actress's ethnic background is inscribed in the dialogue; it is also another constant factor in her publicity. Thus, her second character Grace is a Latina from The Bronx. What is more, Grace's surname, Santiago, is mentioned at least three times in the film, and in one particular scene Robert Blake's character stresses her surname: San-ti-a-go. No family name is mentioned for the two male protagonists. Furthermore, in this same scene after Blake's character questions the two male characters about their relationship with Grace, he adduces her status to 'Hispanic sister' since she is neither John's wife nor Charlie's girlfriend.

projected as an 'alien' figure with an exaggerated thick Spanish accent to 'emphasise' her *latinidad*.[24] Directed by Bob Rafelson, the film stars Jack Nicholson as Alex Gates, a desperate wine merchant who after losing his wife's (Judy Davis) inheritance, plans to steal a diamond necklace from one of his clients. To get into the house Alex uses his charms on Gabriella, the Cuban nanny (Lopez), an illegal immigrant and the mistress of Nicholson's character. Victor Spansky (Michael Caine) is Alex's partner in crime, a chronic asthmatic whose only wish is to live out his final days in the lap of luxury. Also co-starring is Stephen Dorff as Jason, Alex's stepson and rival.

When Lopez is first presented in *Blood and Wine* she is standing behind a gate and from her point-of-view we see Alex introduce Jason. Once she opens the door, we see her wearing a short pink uniform as she escorts Jason to the back of the house. In a long shot from behind we see the actress sashaying as she leads the young man and he tells her that she doesn't 'look like a maid,' to which Gabriella responds, 'I'm not, I'm the nanny.' Just before opening the back door she turns and sarcastically asks, 'do I look like a nanny?' and he replies, 'nope.' Shortly after, she explains to Jason that the Reeses' 'hire(d) an *American* (her emphasis) nurse' for their voyage. She only 'house sits.' As the two climb aboard a yacht Jason asks her if she knows how much a shark weighs and she repeats, 'a chark?' Informing her that it probably weighs more than three times her weight, Gabriella becomes offended and her accent becomes thicker as she quickly snaps that he doesn't know how much she weighs, moving her head and waggling her finger in time to her words.

Gina Marchetti offers insight as to how ethnic images and issues are created by Hollywood. In her discussion on *Year of The Dragon* (Michael Cimino, MGM, 1995, US), she reveals how textual evidence of ethnicity is structured as a contrasting image of Americanness. She states:

> Positive or negative, intended or accidental, real or imagined, the image Hollywood creates of race and ethnicity points to something far more fundamentally pernicious about the relationship between American society and the mass media. Hollywood has the power to define difference, to reinforce boundaries, to reproduce an ideology which maintains a certain status quo.[25]

Marchetti's observation is useful in my analysis of Lopez' character in *Blood and Wine* as the positioning of Gabrielle as an outsider/alien in the United States is immediately reinforced with the division (gate/'boundary') between her and Alex, as well as the Reese's decision to take an *American* nurse. In this first scene the long shots create a distance between the actress and the other characters thereby enforcing her figure as someone from afar. Her exaggerated Spanish accent also

---

[24] Lopez' thick Spanish accent can be compared to Natalie Wood's version of Maria in *West Side Story* (1961).

[25] Gina Marchetti, 'Ethnicity, the Cinema and Cultural Studies,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman, ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 278.

clearly projects Lopez as a *foreign* Latina, drawing attention to the fact that her own voice had not sounded Latina enough (unlike fellow actress Rosie Perez), and how Hollywood must depend on comic thick accents to project authentic *latinidad.* Commenting upon the different Latino accents she has had to portray, Lopez stated that: 'Learning the appropriate Latino accents for all those different roles was relatively easy [...] The hardest thing for me to do when I first moved to Los Angeles [...] was to get rid of my Bronx accent."[26] Thus, just as Lopez had altered her voice to become 'less Bronx,' she had to transform it again to sound more 'foreign,' or, in this case, more *cubana/Latina.*

The image of Lopez' body as a 'spectacle' in the narrative of *Blood and Wine* clearly responds to Hollywood's depictions of ethnic female bodies as functioning as a site of fantasy for white Americans. As a result, the film's positioning of her as an erotic image of ethnic femininity presents her body in terms of sexuality which is featured and exploited as an 'ethnic and sexual threat.'[27] This is especially evident when we learn that her character's dismissal may have been caused by her sexually suggestive figure: 'the Cuban girl? They fired her. Yeah, right before they left. I guess it don't pay to have that kind of ass in that kind of job, huh?' Here, as in the rest of the film, Gabriella's ethnicity and sexual difference is re-emphasized as a conflictive figure within dominant culture hence the need to keep her (Latina) 'ass' out of the Reese's home.

Ethnicity and sexuality also figure in *Blood and Wine* with the reinforcement of Latinas as authentic performers of dance. In one scene, Lopez' curvaceous physique is shown moments before she dances *salsa* with Jack Nicholson. We then hear the diegetic voice of Celia Cruz (a well known Cuban artist) singing as we are shown three side views of Lopez' figure in black lingerie, standing before a two-sided mirror looking at herself. Within moments she comes towards Alex and closes her robe before motioning with her hands for him to dance, and as the two move about while conversing, we can see glimpses of the actress's backside.

Through her performance in this last sequence, Lopez underscores her Latina identity at the same time as subordinating herself to a mainstream depiction that all Latinas dance *salsa.* While sexual and ethnic difference are associated with a 'bare' figure dancing to Spanish music (performed by Cuban icon Celia Cruz), the emphasis placed here is the legitimacy of the actress's portrayal as a Latina figure and her experience as a dancer prior to her film career. According to Sarah Rubidge, one way in which authenticity is demonstrated in dance performances is if the 'authentic performance reveals itself almost unconsciously as a living embodiment of past

---

[26] Peter Castro, 'Jennifer Lopez: Hollywood Meets The Bronx,' *Latina*, Summer (New York, 1996), p 42.
[27] Ana M. López, 'Are all Latins From Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism,' in *Unspeakable Images, Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 414.

practice.'[28] In an interview with her sister Lynda, the actress discusses her Bronx upbringing and informs us that she learned how to dance *salsa* during the Christmas holidays, a ritual which became a family tradition.[29] Thus while the dance performance in this last sequence positions Lopez as racially and ethnically different, it also serves as further proof that she is giving an authentic Latina performance.

Embodying 'foreignness' in the early phase of her career, Lopez took on roles which offered a representation of Mexican and Cuban immigration. *My Family* shows how Mexican immigrants in the early 20th century began to travel across the border to do menial jobs in Los Angeles, while in *Blood and Wine*, Lopez' character speaks of the difficult boat journey many Cubans have made to escape the island. In both cases Cubans and Mexicans seek political and economic refuge in regions where they have established themselves in growing numbers. For this reason, we witness Lopez in Los Angeles and Miami as these cities respectively serve as authentic locations of Mexican and Cuban residency in the United States; the placing of Lopez in Texas in the next film to be discussed *Selena* positions her characters as having lived in the three states with the highest percentage of Latino inhabitants. What we also witness as 'authentic' is the construction of Latina immigrants as working class citizens in domestic jobs serving affluent whites. Perpetuating a concept of immigrants as disadvantaged, and whose working class status, race and sexuality are eventually read against white/American ideology, Latina identity in *My Family* and *Blood and Wine* is portrayed to reflect stereotypical discourses of Latinas as inferior. Thus in both films whiteness serves as a code of authority to extricate non-whites not worthy of residing or maintaining employment in the US.

That Lopez' early films should project a constrasting view of whiteness and Latinness is of interest, particularly since the actress's body contributed to the defining of Hispanics in films. This is evident in photos of Lopez' initial appearance as a 'Fly Girl' on the television show '*In Living Colour*' (1991), where she is seen with naturally dark short hair and slightly heavier than her more recent photos. (See Photocopy). Four years later not much had changed for Lopez, who continued to be promoted as being a (more than usually) full-figured, dark featured Latina. If we look at a still from *My Family* we see the actress with dark hair, a wide face and flat nose whilst a year later in *Selena*, her voluptuous frame is shown wearing tight pants and bustiers. (See Photocopy). Thus

[28] Sarah Rubidge cites Shelly Berg in her essay, 'Does Authenticity Matter? The Case for and against Authenticity in the Performing Arts,' in *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*, Patrick Campbell (ed.) (New York and Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p 224.
[29] Lynda Lopez, 'The J.Lo you don't know,' *Latina*, December-January (New York, 2002-2003), p 84.

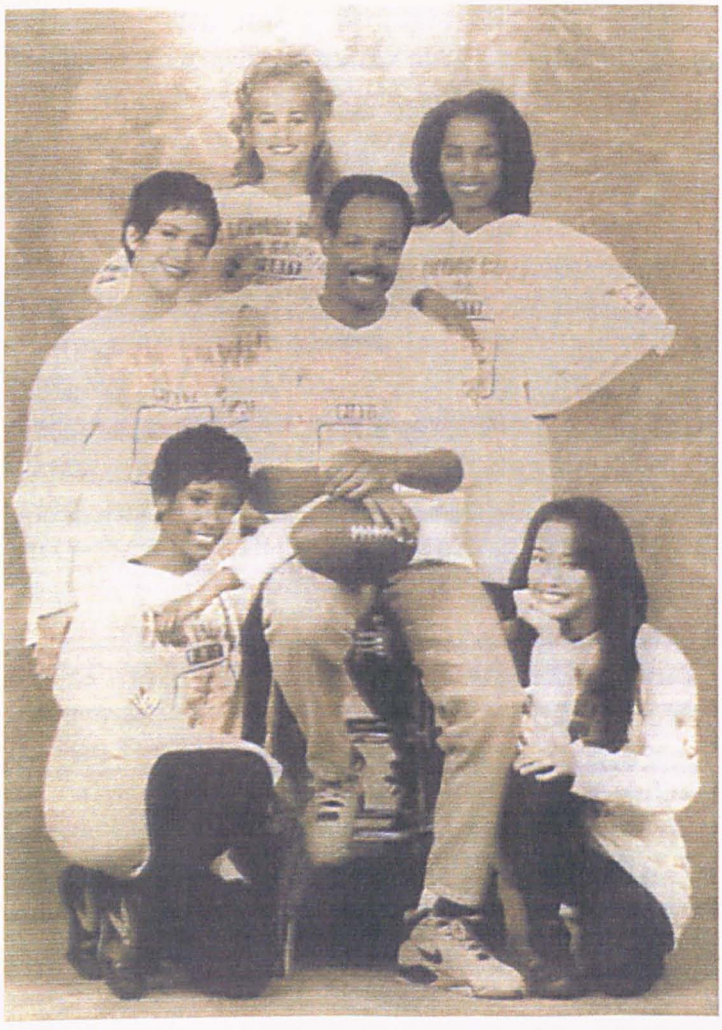

Figure 3. The 'Fly Girls' (1991, USA).

Figure 4. *My Family* (USA, 1995).

Figure 5. *Selena* (USA, 1997).

through much of Lopez' early career, the actress was conceptualised as a voluptuous body with dark features, resulting in the construction of her image and persona as authentically Latina.

Significantly, it was not until Lopez became a focal point in the media hype surrounding *Selena* - as in the 1997 *Latina* magazine – that her image began to represent Latina stardom. Proof of Lopez' stardom could be seen in the manner in which she had been framed in another photo in November 1996, just four months prior to the premiere of the film. As the actress faces away from the camera, we see a black and white image of her leaning her chin on her crossed hands, thereby calling attention to her dark features whilst also projecting a certain 'star' appeal. (See Photocopy).[30] If we analyse images of former Hollywood Golden Era stars such as Greta Garbo and Rita Hayworth (See Photocopy), it is worth noting the similar manner in which their faces were framed: the star resting her chin on the fingers of a closed fist, looking away from the camera distantly.[31] Thus, when Lopez was framed 'like a star' in 1997, it was because her performance in *Selena* catapulted her to fame, even though director Gregory Nava detected her 'star-appeal' as early as her debut film: 'In her first close-up, the director, Gregory Nava, put an iris around her face. "In that one shot," he said, "everyone knew she was a movie star."[32]

It is significant that Nava recognised Lopez' star qualities, particularly since he launched the Puerto Rican actress's film career and more importantly, ensured her (Latina) stardom. For this reason I analyse *Selena* in the following section, since the film serves as an important stepping-stone in Lopez' career. Significantly, Selena's career traces the opposite move from the one observed in Lopez' career to date, when she 'crossed-over' into mainstream roles and transformed into an American phenomenon and cultural icon.

A Latina Star is Born

Reunited with the director of *Mi Familia* (1995), Jennifer Lopez starred in the title role of Gregory Nava's film *Selena* (1997), recreating the life of the South Texas singer killed shortly after gaining mainstream success. Murdered by Yolanda Saldivar, President of the singer's fan club, Selena Quintanilla Perez was shot dead just weeks after winning a Grammy Award. In recreating the life of the *Tejana* singer, Nava tells of the shift of an 'ordinary' 'non-ethnic' girl to an 'ethnic' star.

---

[30] The image used in this research is from Adrian Turpin's article, 'Daddy's Girl?,' *The Independent*, 17 September (UK, 2000), p 4. However, the exact year of Lopez' image is in *Empire* magazine, November (UK, 1996).

[31] Both images of these actresses were accessed from silverscreensirens.com.
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://silverscreensirens.com/galleries/rita12.htm
http://silverscreensirens.com/galleries/garbo34.htm

[32] Turpin, p 4.

Figure 10. Jennifer Lopez
(*Empire,* November 1996, UK).

Figure 11. Greta Garbo
(Silverscreensirens.com. Still)

Figure 12. Rita Hayworth
(Silverscreensirens.com. Still)

Placing emphasis on acceptance of cultural identity, the director showcases the transformation of Selena as she learns to communicate in Spanish - her parents' mother tongue - enjoy Latino music, and dance to the rhythms of her 'father's music.'[33] As a result, we witness how her ethnic identity plays a crucial role in transforming Selena (and Lopez) to superstardom.

Coverage of Lopez' performance in *Selena* provides evidence that the film can easily serve as an allegory of the actress's own stardom. Several film reviewers criticised it, considering it to be a 'bland, upbeat hagiography'[34] or 'dramatically shallow,'[35] but Lopez' transformation into Selena is highlighted to the point where the *Tejana*'s success is compared to the actress's persona and image. For example, Kenneth Turan writes:

> This movie turns out to be a celebration not only of the singer but also [...] of the actress who plays her, Jennifer Lopez. Lopez' presence and ability made her seem just one role away from stardom, and with "*Selena*," she seized the opportunity and turned in an incandescent presentation that is especially strong during the film's musical numbers.
>
> "*Selena*" closes with documentary footage of the real singer, and it's a shock to realise that Lopez so much resembles her that for an instant you can't tell one from the other. And it's in fact a melding of the two, of the real story and the actress's ability to convey it that creates emotional connections destined to outlive the doses of biopic boilerplate that surround it.[36]

The physical transformation of Lopez into Selena has also been discussed by Frances Negrón-Muntaner in her essay 'Jennifer's Butt.' While this author, like Turan, agrees that there is a striking resemblance between the two women, Muntaner argues that Lopez' presence seems to 'eclipse' her own performance of Selena. As the author puts it: 'Regardless of how hard I tried, I did not see Selena. I either saw Jennifer Lopez and Selena, phantasmagorically juxtaposed as if on glass surface, or *simplemente* Jennifer.'[37]

While I agree with Muntaner that Lopez' physical resemblance to Selena detracts from her portrayal of the *Tejana* singer, the author fails to recognise the importance of this performance as a

---

[33] During the filming of *Selena*, Lopez met then later married her first husband Ojani Noa, a Cuban refugee who taught the actress how to speak Spanish. Elola (1999), p 72.

[34] Stephen Holden, 'A Short Life Remembered with Songs and Sunshine,' *The New York Times*, 21 March (US, 1997), p C16.

[35] Peter Travers, 'Selena,' *Rolling Stone*, 17 April, Issue 78 (New York, 1997), p 86.
[Online] Accessed 25 November 2001.
http://www.rollingstone.com/mv_reviews/review.asp?mid=73192&cf=1

[36] Kenneth Turan, '*Selena*,' *The Los Angeles Times*, 21 March (Los Angeles, CA, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 11 March 2000.
Accessed from latimes.com although the website page is as follows:
../moviegi?action=View&VdkVgwKey=%2E%2E%2F%2E%2E%2Fvol17c%2Fhttpd%Fd

[37] Significantly, Negrón-Muntaner also writes that during the Astrodome performance in the beginning of the film, fans were screaming out Selena and Jennifer, thus confirming the stardom of the actress as well as Selena's. Frances Negrón-Muntaner, 'Jennifer's Butt,' *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall (US, 1997), p 182.

turning point in Lopez' career. What is more, Muntaner does not take account of how Lopez' former career as a dancer helped to mould the actress for this performance, as well as how the image of the star on stage was a foreshadowing of what the future held for Lopez as a musical entertainer. This is most evident in the concert performance of Lopez in Puerto Rico where she struts around on stage in much the same way as she did in the role of Selena. Nevertheless, this construction of the actress's identity as 'surfacing' more than that of her character is apparent in the dance sequences performed in concert. For this reason, I will examine the concert she did in Mexico 'in character', as well as discussing the press conference prior to her performance. My interest in the press conference is that it will allow me to discuss Lopez' need to speak in Spanish and how this then became necessary in her career after *Selena*.

When Selena prepares to perform for the first time in Mexico she has to meet the press and converse in her parents' native language. Her poor control of the Spanish language presents a possible threat to the singer's *latinidad* when the promoter finds out that she cannot speak it well. Camera movements in this first scene are used to create tension between Selena, her father and the promoter. The breaking up of the space into zooms, panning, and high angles reflects the nervousness of the promoter as he first says, 'Ay Dios! [Oh God],' followed by: 'Nadie nos dijo que no hablaba bien el español. La prensa nos va hacer pedazos!' [No one told us she doesn't speak Spanish well. The press is going to tear us to shreds.].[38] When Selena's father, Abraham, tells her that he will do all the talking, the singer takes control of the situation and assures her father that she can handle it. As Selena enters the open terrace, she immediately greets the journalists with a Spanish 'hola,' before offering each a kiss and hand shake. The shots are all medium close-ups with her kissing a member of the press before we see a medium shot of her sitting down at the conference table to answer questions. Selena asks 'tienen preguntas?' [Do you have any questions?], before her point-of-view shows a woman reporter asking, 'en esta primera visita a México, cómo te sientes?' [On this first visit to Mexico, how do you feel?]. A reverse shot shows the singer looking towards the press waiting for her response. Selena continues in Spanish: '*Pues, me siento muy orgullosa de estar aqui con todos uds. y me siento muy...*' [Well, I feel very proud to be here with all of you, and I feel very...], before we see another p.o.v of the reporters and back to her as she tries to express herself, '*estoy muy* ['I feel very' before another pause], *muy* ['very' before finally saying in English] excited.' As Selena begins to laugh the reporters join her.

In her performance as Selena, Lopez is required to speak Spanish in order to demonstrate her character's ability to communicate with the media and her Mexican fans. Although her dialogue serves to create an authentic interpretation of her character as Latina, the scene also

[38] This is the text from the subtitles used in the film.

emphasises the actress's poor control of the Spanish language. Interestingly, Muntaner discusses the actress's appearance on Spanish-language television programmes during the promotion of this film, and describes Lopez' less than genuine Latina accent. As the author explains:

> Marketing *Selena* to "Latino" audiences required that the cast, director, and producers be available to the Spanish-speaking media, which mostly caters to Spanish-dominant immigrants. This inevitably created the context for each key player to show their fluency in Spanish, and hence their "realness" in relation to national culture. [...] Jennifer Lopez' Spanish was classic Nuyorican. She spoke a second-generation, Bronx-inflected Spanish, with its distinctive twang, occasional English vocabulary and Spanish syntax.'[39]

That Lopez would have to defend herself in front of a Spanish audience (and occasionally fall back on her English), just like Selena, is significant, in particular since Lopez' poor command of Spanish was sufficient to help the actress gain popularity amongst Latinos. Here, I would agree with Clehane who writes that despite Lopez' less than perfect Spanish, the actress 'became a role model for the Hispanic community'[40] due to making *Selena* and promoting the film to the Spanish press.

In the scene following her press conference, Selena performs in Monterrey, Mexico in front of an anxious and overcrowded audience. Like the first scene with her promoter discussed earlier, it is fast paced with rapid cutting of shots during the performance which has the same style and rhythm as a music video: high angles, overhead shots, split screens (which include the image of the moon or a rose), wipes, dissolves and zooms. No longer 'ignored' by her fans, Lopez' character is welcomed by an audience who had demanded her presence, chanting her name. Lip-syncing to the actual voice of Selena, the actress moves freely about in an open space, dancing and shaking hands with the diegetic fans. Her loose hair moves from side to side, as her white bustier, leggings and cowboy boots match the dominant white colour scheme. The Mexican public portrayed in the diegesis recognise and accept her character's 'ethnic' interpretation, eventually 'transforming' Selena into an overnight star and 'genuine artist of the people.' Thus, when Selena wins a Grammy Award for best Mexican-American album, she is ironically asked to make a 'cross over' album in English, despite the fact that this was how she started, as a singer of English language standards.

In looking at Lopez' films in this chapter, her dance performances as Selena are memorable, in particular the Houston Astrodome sequence as it celebrates Selena's crossover success and captures Lopez on the verge of stardom. The sequence also points out the rising Latino audience not only on screen but also off screen as Hispanic moviegoers increased in numbers by 22 percent from 1996 to 1997.[41] It is significant that in articles discussing the concert scenes, Lopez is

---

[39] Muntaner, p 186.
[40] Clehane, p 16.
[41] Marilyn Halter, *Shopping For Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity* (New York: Schocken Books: 2000), p 131.

identified as being the performer instead of portraying Selena. Peter Travers writes that, 'Lopez struts onstage in Selena's famous bustiers and boots, [and] lip-syncs to the Tejano song,'[42] while Turan states:

> Though Lopez lip-syncs to Selena's voice, she makes use of her background as a dancer (she was a Fly Girl on "*In Living Color*") to project an irresistible joy in performance that both does justice to Selena's appeal and helps burn away the film's saccharine haze.[43]

And according to Stephan Holden:

> The movie's concert sequences have a fluency and bounce that match the music. And Ms. Lopez, much more at home here than in the recent '*Blood and Wine*,' cavorts and dances about the stage with the un-selfconscious glee of a seasoned concert performer basking in the limelight.[44]

Lopez' performance is, therefore, not only packaged as being reminiscent of Selena's concert in Mexico, but also recognised as an 'authentic' interpretation of dance executed by the former 'Fly Girl.' In her study of the discourse of authenticity in the performing arts, Rubidge discusses how costume, set and a particular performer's interpretation contribute to the 'genuine' representation of a dance production even if reproduced from video documentation. Focusing on several approaches to the discourse of 'authenticity' in the performing arts, Rubidge questions the term itself and how 'work' can be measured as a 'genuine' act of performance. As the author explains, in music, authenticity is graded as being close to the original score whereas in dance new choreographic movements influence the recognition of the performance as being 'innovative.' As such, applications like these incite much debate as to the criteria applied to a piece of performance as being 'true.' Gary S. Tomlinson also argues that the concept of authenticity 'is constructed by the interpreter, temporarily defined through a dialectic between the work's "text," its culture and his or her own personal and cultural context.'[45] In *Selena*, Lopez' solo performance and movements are seen as an authentic interpretation of dance despite her mimicking of the singer's moves. Thus, the musical performances are most representative of the actress's persona because they 're-create' the initial phases of Lopez' career: a dancer who demonstrated her talents and transformed into a Latina performer, literally and figuratively.

In addition to how Lopez' dance performances can be read as 'defining' her persona, the scenes also function to highlight the actress's curvaceous figure which resembled that of Selena. It

---

[42] Travers (1997).
[43] Turan (1997).
[44] Holden (1997).
[45] Gary S. Tomlinson, 'The Historian, the Performer and Authentic Meaning,' in Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp 115-136; Stephen Orgel, 'The Authentic Shakespeare,' *Representations*, 21 (1988), pp 1-25. Cited in Sarah Rubidge's essay 'Does Authenticity Matter? The Case for and against Authenticity in the Performing Arts' (1996), p 224.

is during the Monterrey concert that we are given a clear view of her body as she parades in bustier and leggings, a look which attracted much attention in the press.[46] For this reason I want to briefly discuss how the actress's backside became 'sensationalised' because of this film. By doing so we can begin to establish how references to her stardom became synonymous with her body, specifically her ample bottom.

Mary C. Beltrán offers a brilliant analysis of how the media began to focus on Jennifer Lopez' body during her promotion for *Selena*. As she notes:

> Much of Lopez' publicity for the film, especially in the Spanish-language and English-language Latino-oriented media, focused on the fact that she didn't use any padding to play the bottom-heavy singer who often wore body-hugging costumes on stage. [...] The discussion of Lopez' body often was initiated by Lopez herself in the Spanish-language media, perhaps to woo and convince Latino audiences that she, as a Puerto Rican, could (literally) embody the role of Mexican-American Selena.[47]

This is fundamental in Lopez' star image because 'it was precisely the body,' particularly 'the *culo* [butt]' as Muntaner declares, 'that proved to be the most compelling way that Lopez and others found to speak about how "Latinas" are constituted as racialised bodies.'[48] Largely as a result of Lopez' self-promotion, the actress 'validated' her image and persona as Latina and garnered much admiration and approval from Hispanic audiences because of her decision to foreground her backside as a positive feature. As the star has claimed: 'I love my butt and I was never ashamed of it, and I guess not being ashamed of something like that, which is uncharacteristic of this society, made it a focal point.'[49]

The attention given to Lopez' most obvious attribute is not the first time the media has been engrossed by the size of ethnic and black female backsides. By the early nineteenth century white fascination with the Hottentot physique 'had grown into a grotesque voyeurism to which naturalists were not immune.'[50] In 1810 Sarah Bartman, a South African woman, became a popular spectacle in Paris and England where she was placed in a cage as spectators gazed and (for an additional fee) poked at her protruding buttocks. The exaggerated buttocks drew international attention to the racial and sexual difference of black women, so much so that after she died, scientists examined Bartman's cadaver to compare it with a white body. Referred to as the *Vénus Hottentotte*, Bartman

---

[46] Although the film opens with Lopez' character performing in concert, her purple spandex outfit is not as revealing as the white bustier and leggings worn by the actress during the Monterrey concert.
[47] Beltrán, p 74.
[48] Muntaner, p 185.
[49] Leah Furman refers to an article in *Details* magazine but does not give reference. In Furman's book *Jennifer Lopez: Latinos in the Limelight* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001), p 42.
[50] Londa Schiebinger, 'Theories of Gender and Race,' in *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*, (Beacon Press, 1993), pp 143-183.
[Online] Accessed 10 April 2005.
http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/rt21/concepts/SCHIEBINGER.html

apparently provoked several hypotheses as to the scientific 'inferiority' of 'Others' such as the 'savage' sexuality of African women. Described as bestial, Bartman's buttocks were compared to those of mandrills with grotesque magnitude while her lips were matched to that of an orang-utan thereby drawing upon theories of scientific racism, notably Darwin's evolution theory which links Africans to apes. Such racial codification appears in Hollywood films where the portrayal of blacks as primitive and animalistic was projected in films, the most popular being *King Kong*. James A. Snead's discussion on the stereotyping of blacks in film as racially inferior looks at the film and the formulation of the black character as 'natural' or primitive.[51] The linking of *King Kong* to blacks as savage and grotesque clearly reflects the Eurocentric gaze which valorises the white race as beautiful and virtuous. Thus blackness became a physical and sexual threat which paralleled depictions of the 'Hottentot Venus' as a hypersexual and grossly corporeal site.

Contrary to white culture is the celebration of the female backside in hip hop discourses. As the object of male desire to both Latino and African American rappers, the 'butt' has been celebrated in many songs.[52] Perhaps then it is no surprise to read about Lopez' body in texts aimed at hip hop followers, such as one article, in which it was stated that if it were not for the actress's curvy bottom, she might have not been recognized as a sexual icon:

> What makes Lopez lovely is not her sexy looks, her unbelievable flawless face or nut-wrenching aura. It's her ass. It's not a special ass, because most Black women are born with ass like this, but JL makes it work. The half-circle. The sphere.[53]

What Lopez makes work is the use of her 'sphere' as ethnically feminine and beautiful in a growing Latino market. Thus such a 'contradiction' against the notion of whiteness as the ideal prototype projected Lopez, in Beltrán's words, as positively committing a 'revolutionary act with respect to Anglo beauty.'[54] In other words, Lopez took advantage of her press to repeatedly emphasise that Latina bodies are worthy of admiration. But because of her large buttocks she cannot escape being marked as a racialised body linked to an African lineage, thus the tendency to associate her generously proportioned features with notions of blackness such as the Hottentot Venus.

---

[51] James A. Snead, 'Spectatorship and Capture in *King Kong*: The Guilty Look,' in *Representing Blackness: Issues in Film and Video*, Valerie Smith, ed. (London: The Athlone Press, 1997), p 26.
[52] 'Baby Got Back' by Sir Mix-a-lot is one of the songs Raquel Z. Rivera cites. *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2003), p 130.
[53] Goldie, 'Ass Rules Everything Around Us: Some Late Night Thoughts on Jennifer Lopez,' *XXL* 2, No. 3, Issue 5 (1998), p 80. Cited in Raquel Z. Rivera's book *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone*, p 131.
[54] Beltrán, p 73.

Along with promoting Lopez' body as ethnically beautiful, *Selena* provides for a racially dichotomised imbalance of hierarchal differences. This is provided in one scene in which 'white power' is weakened by one Latina star. Thus before moving on to an analysis of her next film, *Anaconda* (Luis Llosa, Columbia Pictures, 1997, US), I wish to briefly discuss how *Selena* foregrounds a positive version of *latinidad.*

When Selena and a Latina friend enter an exclusive store to find a dress for the Grammy Awards they are followed by a white sales assistant who thinks that they plan to steal something. Depicting white people, as Valerie Babb indicates, as having a demeaning 'assumption, and [superior] attitude,'[55] the attendant tells Selena that the dress costs several hundred dollars, an amount she assumes no Latina can afford. When the salesperson learns of Selena's identity and star status from one of the fans crowding into the store, she becomes embarrassed and it is now Selena's turn to snub the white woman by telling her that she's not interested in the dress. While the scene depicts the consistent construction of whiteness as equivalent to Eurocentrism, which defines people of colour as poor, it also offers a positive angle in that Selena looks down on the woman because she can now afford to shop there and that she is seen an extraordinary person (at least amongst the Latino community).

Discussing white working class racism in America, David Roediger articulates, 'White labour does not just receive and resist racist ideas but embraces, adopts and, at times, murderously acts upon those ideas.'[56] In the scene just described, whiteness works as a powerful way to respond to ethnic and working class members at the same time that it becomes fearful of dependency.[57] By this I am suggesting that with the shifting of Latinos to the middle and upper classes, whites are now being confronted with the notion of being economically overpowered by Latinos, thus the image of the astounded salesperson when she learns that Selena is 'superior.' In short, the sales person must serve Selena's desires, a notion very far from the idealistic racial identification of whiteness as all powerful and privileged. Here, 'Race disappears into the 'reality' of class,' as Roediger puts it, thus positing Selena's and Lopez' racialised bodies as glorified participants in the elite or upper class.[58]

---

[55] Valerie Babb, *Whiteness Visible: The Making of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture* (New York and London: NYU Press, 1998), p 10.
[56] David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and The Making of the American Working Class* (Revised Edition), (London and New York: Verso, 1999. First Edition 1991), p 12.
[57] Ibid., p 14.
[58] Ibid., p 8.

No longer positioned as a working class immigrant crossing US borders, Lopez' next character is an international 'agent' hoping to film a tribe in their native environment. In her second major film role, Lopez portrayed Terri Flores, a native Los Angeles documentary filmmaker visiting Brazil in quest of 'the Shirishama Indians,' or 'the people of the mist.' Travelling on a riverboat with a six-person crew, Terri takes charge after her boyfriend is attacked by an anaconda. When overtaken by Paul Sarone (Jon Voight), a Paraguayan the crew rescued days earlier, she and the others are shocked to discover that Sarone is an obsessed snake hunter with a mission to capture alive a 40-foot anaconda. As they journey deeper into the Amazonian jungle, Terri decides to put up a fight with the help of her cameraman Danny (Ice Cube), and what follows is a battle to the death between her, Sarone and the reptile.

The placing of Lopez in Brazil offers a more exoticised image of the actress, thus affirming her character as Other and not 'American of no particular race'[59] as the actress insisted in a 1996 interview. Making it clear that she did not want 'to be typecast in "Latino roles",' the actress 'sought out distinctly different films after *Selena*.'[60] For this reason I offer a discussion on the film since her role in *Anaconda* would mark her transformation to mainstream films and a whiter image. In *Anaconda*, the narrative stresses her voice as non-accented and unable to communicate in Spanish thus possibly convincing Lopez that the role was different/non-Latina. However, while the film possibly promotes Lopez as being 'less-Latina' by projecting her character as one of few in the film who does not communicate in Spanish, the film still places emphasis on the actress's ethnic identity. Lester D. Friedman explains how 'Hollywood films assign easily recognizable signs (e.g., speech, dress, food choices, and mannerisms) which when taken together function as overt codes that apparently signify divergent ethnic cultures.'[61] The construction of Lopez' character embodied signs of *latinidad* (e.g., curly/frizzy hair, the name Terri Flores), making it rather obvious that Lopez' role functioned as another Latina character even though the actress resisted the classification. In fact, since the beginning of the film Lopez is eroticised and racialised, revealing her backside through a transparent nightgown The name of the character and her hairstyle may be identified as mild markers of Latinaness but it is clearly the actress's bottom which points up her Puerto Rican identity thus eroticising her body.

As discussed throughout this research, Puerto Rican identities are always associated with blackness, and the fact that Ice Cube (a former gangsta hip hop artist) appears opposite ('fly-girl') Lopez affirms the ethnic and cultural relationship of these two actors. Significantly, unlike any of

---

[59] Castro, p 44.
[60] Clehane, p 16.
[61] Lester D. Friedman, 'Celluloid Palimpsests: An Overview of Ethnicity and the American Film,' in *Unspeakable Images, Ethnicity and the American Cinema* (1991), p 22.

the other characters in the film, Lopez and Ice Cube are recognised by the spectator as marginalized figures from the ghetto who have transformed themselves into stars. While the linking of these two characters on screen articulates the intermingling of both ethnic groups and their embodying of a lower class identity, it is perhaps their ghetto 'attitude' which seems to prepare these two to fight the anaconda. In other words, the association between LA and the Amazonian forest can be linked to perilous/ghetto surroundings only Latinos and blacks can handle. *Anaconda* should therefore be read for the way it articulates race and ethnicity as dominating untamed space and even whiteness. Lopez takes control of the situation with Ice Cube's help thereby gaining power over whites now projected as weak; they either die or get hurt only to recover after the anaconda is killed. In this manner the film constructs Lopez and Cube as the subjects of control or agency and perhaps rightfully so since the Latina is the star of the film. Thus if there is an absence of white power it is because the film structures the ethnic characters as challenging and dominating whiteness.

As the last Latina role she would play for several years and the last time we would witness her portray a strong Latina image, *Anaconda* is a significant as it serves Lopez as a 'transitional' move towards mainstream roles. Despite harsh reviews *Anaconda* actually proved to be 'a big box-office success'[62] with revenues 'grossing more than '$100 million worldwide.'[63] Stewart Edwards has stated in *Film Review* magazine that, 'it's her work in the US number one smash *Anaconda* that has sent her career into orbit.'[64] While *Anaconda* continued to promote Lopez as an ethnic figure, the film nevertheless offered the Latina actress mainstream recognition. In the following section I want to examine Jennifer Lopez' crossover success as a mainstream star and explore how ethnicity is still an evident factor in her star text.

Cross-over Success with a touch of Diva

In an article profiling Jennifer Lopez' career, *The Puerto Rican Herald* discusses the actress's cross-over success as follows:

> Performers are touted as "cross-overs" when they expand their repertoires to reach new audiences in new genres. Jennifer Lopez is a cross-over talent in the fullest sense of the term. She has with seeming effortlessness jumped from dancing to acting to singing, from television to film to concert hall, *and from Latino to mainstream audiences.* [my emphasis]. The breadth of her performance is no accident.[65]

---

[62] Stephen Rebello, 'The Wow,' *Movieline*, February (US, 1998), p 50.
[63] Ibid., p 52.
[64] Stewart Edwards, 'Snake Charmer,' *Film Review*, July, Film Review of *Anaconda* (UK, 1997), p 49.
[65] *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 'Puerto Rico Profile: Jennifer Lopez,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 8 September (Puerto Rico, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2002.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n36/ProfileLopez-en.shtml

As, until recently, Lopez is the only performer to continuously shift back and forth between her ethnic roots and 'Americanised' persona it is necessary to take a look at her more successful non-Latina roles and how her image changed to reflect the industry's 'new American Face.'[66] Examining her achievement as a crossover artist in film and music, I now look at the first successful film in which the actress does not portray a Latina character. Later on I discuss two music videos featuring the Puerto Rican 'diva'[67] in order to explore how the actress maintains an ethnic identity despite whiter features. Following my discussion of the transformation of her image, I will move on to publicity discussing Lopez' crossover success before analysing her next non-Latina role and development of a white persona.

Based on Elmore Leonard's novel, *Out of Sight* (1998) stars George Clooney and Jennifer Lopez as bank robber Jack Foley and federal marshal Karen Sisco. A charming but unlucky criminal (his getaway car stalled), Jack stumbles upon Karen during his escape from a Florida prison; Karen was there for a meeting with another inmate. Forced into the car boot by Jack's friend Buddy (Ving Rhames), the federal marshal ends up sharing the tiny space with Jack, and as one film critic writes: 'a funny thing happens: a first date.'[68] By the time the two are released from the trunk they seem to be smitten with each other and during the next two hours, Karen ends up in love and confused.[69]

One of the ways in which *Out of Sight* emphasises Lopez' character as non-Latina is to give her a seemingly Italian-American background: her surname is Sisco and her character's boyfriend's surname is Nicoletti. More importantly, any obvious signs of *latinidad* in this film are characterised by fellow Puerto Rican actor Luis Guzman in his portrayal of the Cuban convict, thereby minimising evidence of Latinness which could possibly be linked to the actress's character. Comparing Guzman's accent and use of Spanish words (e.g., *mira, este*) to that of an earlier

---

[66] Handleman.

[67] Throughout this research Lopez has constantly been referred to as diva and has been selected as one of many divas as in *Elle* magazine's list of 'notoriously' famous women. In Sarra Manning, '*Elle* Diva Special: J.Lo,' *Elle*, October (UK 2001), p 93.

[68] Janet Maslin, 'He's a Thief, She's a Marshal, They're an Item,' *The New York*, 26 June (New York, 1998), p E14.

[69] It should be noted that the car scene in *Out of Sight* is considered to be a memorable momentin cinematic history. Peter Travers from *Rolling Stones* writes, 'The trunk scene is classic - funny, fierce and oddly moving,' and Martyn Palmer of *Total Film* echoes a similar opinion in his article on the actress's performance: 'There's a memorable sequence in *Out Of Sight* when Lopez and Clooney are shackled together in the boot of a car. Everyone who's seen the film singles this scene out as one of the sexiest on-screen moments ever.' Peter Travers, *Rolling Stone*, 9 July, Issue 790/791 (New York, 1998), p 145. Martyn Palmer, *Total Film*, December (1998).
[Online] Accessed December 2002
http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/totalfilm1298.htm

sequence with George Clooney, his accent is much thicker when appearing opposite Lopez. Furthermore, the film suggests that the character might be gay thus alluding to his manly inability to take on Lopez, as shown when she knocks him down to the floor and handcuffs him. Thus, less attention is drawn to the actress as possibly portraying another Latina character since Karen does not 'mimic' Chino's appearance or accent. [70] In stark contrast to his character's criminal record, thick accent, shabby appearance and dark features, Lopez' federal agent character is projected as a light-skinned, non-accented, clean-cut 'American'.

Lopez' taking on an (Italian) American role allows the actress to embody privileges of whiteness. Discussing how whiteness is created in the film *Dangerous Minds* (1995), Henry A. Giroux writes 'it articulates and reproduces whiteness as a form of racial domination within the public space of the inner-city [...].' [71] In *Out of Sight* the narrative positions Lopez' character as not only taking on an ethnically white persona but controlling public spaces from crimes committed by blacks, Latinos and (dare I say) whites thus putting the star on a superior level racially and gender-wise; she is literally on a manhunt.

Throughout *Out of Sight* Lopez' character is taken to different US cities such as Miami and Chicago. While the actress's connection to Florida can be linked to her role as Gabrielle in *Blood and Wine* the film does not associate the actress with an established regional identity as with Perez in her films. The film does, however, link Lopez to regions highly populated with Latinos and blacks which is consistent with the actress's previous films. But instead of Lopez taking on a Cuban or Mexican character to represent a more authentic portrayal of Latinos in areas such as Florida and Texas, her character's Italian-American background is situated in regions which reinforce Lopez' non-Latina persona against Latino and black characters. It is perhaps no surprise then that the blacks and Latino characters in *Out of Sight* mainly serve as criminals to Lopez' FBI agent.

Another manner in which the film also shows a contrast between Lopez' 'white'/American identity and other racial characters is through class. As Karen, Lopez is seen sitting with her on-screen father in a lovely spacious home thereby suggesting middle to upper middle-class status. Guzman's Latino character is shown only in jail or on the streets indicating a poverty-stricken situation, much like one of the black characters, whose home is quite dilapidated. In this film, as in *Anaconda*, Lopez' identity serves as crossing over to whiteness by perpetuating class structures in

---

[70] Guzman's thick accent evokes Lopez' characterisation of the Cuban character Gabriella in *Blood and Wine* (1996).

[71] Henry A. Giroux, 'Rewriting the Discourse of Racial Identity: Toward a Pedagogy and Politics of Whiteness,' in *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity*, Christine Clark and James O'Donnell, eds. (Westport, CT: Bergen and Garvey, 1999), pp 246-247.

terms of success. Roediger contends that 'race is constructed differently across time by people in the same social class and differently at the same time by people whose class position differs.'[72] In terms of economics, racial politics seems to take a back seat to class thus 'masking' Lopez' ethnicity in this film whilst also emphasising her legitimate power and crossing over to a higher social class on screen in persona and image. In other words, the visual emphasis of her character's class (she is seen wearing a Chanel suit while trapped in a car trunk) over the actress's racial features speaks of economic freedom.

Through her new-found non-Latina role there is a shifting which places Lopez on a higher level of racial hierarchy thereby challenging Bernardi's description of Latinos (as well as Asian and blacks) as at 'the very bottom of the racial privilege ladder.'[73] While I agree with Bernardi that Latinos, and particularly Puerto Ricans, have been placed low on the racial scale, I argue that Latinos, like other white ethnicities are able to shift from the bottom of the scale despite any obvious racial features, as in the case of Lopez' backside. Lopez' celebrity is an example of how the actress insists on the pleasures and powers of whiteness such as the 'process of inclusion and exclusion' often obtained when ordinary (and ethnic) individuals become stars.[74] In this way the actress's cross over success alters when she is granted privileges often reserved for whites, thus assuring her position on the privilege ladder.

It could be suggested here that the establishment of Lopez as a law enforcement officer also projects the actress as a white heroic figure. In his work, Bernardi discusses the myth of white superiority, writing:

> Like all myths, white superiority legitimises the ideological as biblical or evolutionary: the right of the chosen/survival of the fittest. Of course, the power of this myth is that it rests on the reciprocal ideology that people who do not count as white are divinely, biologically, or culturally inferior.[75]

What makes Lopez a challenging case is how the actress is positioned in this film and in the media as embodying notions of white idealism because of her stardom and ability to portray heroines of both white *and* Latina background (as in the case of *Selena*). Lopez clearly embodies the notion of being 'chosen' but contests the ideology of cultural inferiority, presenting an oxymoronic persona

---

[72] Roediger, p 7.
[73] Daniel Bernardi, 'The Voice of Whiteness: D.W. Griffith's Biograph Films,' in *The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema*, Daniel Bernardi, ed., (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p 106.
[74] Giroux, p 228.
[75] Bernardi, p 105.

and image. Thus, the myth of white superiority is decoded by a Latina star whose position is now seen as, in Bernardi's term, 'beyond the white "ideal".' [76]

While depicted as American, Lopez is still connected to a marked ethnicity in a later sequence with Clooney in which the two perform a playful 'strip-tease'. In contrast to the rest of the film, this sequence, a total of nine minutes, offers an eclectic selection of edits to build up the seduction between the two characters. The scene focuses on the bodies of both actors but only offers a frontal shot of Lopez' body in lingerie which avoids her most prominent feature, as in the rest of the film where her backside had been minimised by long tops. If we refer to McLean's work on Rita Hayworth, the author notes how the former actress's sexuality did 'not have to be "neither too attractive [...] nor so powerful as to demand its submission to a conquering North American male."[77] *Out of Sight* positions Lopez in a similar fashion in that her sexuality in the film seems to be 'toned down' by her less than revealing clothing and amusing (rather than pornographic) strip in which she is accompanied by Clooney. We cannot then dismiss the idea that the actress's body clearly draws upon the notion of 'Latin sexuality,' 'reconciling' the fact that although her character is American, she is also 'ethnic.' Discussing how a star's image can be 'related to contradictions of ideology,' Dyer explains how distinct terms such as 'sexuality and ordinariness' can be combined to describe a star despite such opposing meanings.[78] The manner in which the actress's character is constructed as reserved and tough contradicts the sexual display she offers; however, because it is Lopez, her body 'surfaces as a site of pleasure.'[79] Thus, although *Out of Sight* promoted her character as 'American', the film provided an occasion for her body to be simultaneously constructed as an ethnic site.

Adrienne McLean's work on Rita Hayworth is extremely useful here for its discussion on transformation and how the star's ethnic background was underscored in media texts. The mention of Hayworth's ethnic background in the press was considered to have reinforced the actress's 'genuine' portrayal of foreign roles without having to trade in the 'American' persona she established later on in her career. Yet, the combination of genuinely representing both an American and an ethnic persona became a paradox in Hayworth's stardom, in particular after her physical transformation to white femininity. It is after the alteration of her features when the star's body becomes the most obvious evidence of contradiction as it fails to reconcile her white features and Spanish-Irish roots. As McLean explains: 'The shadow presence of Margarita Cansino contradicts the notion that Rita Hayworth has been manufactured, even as it reveals the extent to which her

[76] Ibid.
[77] McLean, p 19.
[78] Dyer (1979), p 30.
[79] Muntaner, p 185.

physical appearance has been altered.'[80] In contrast to Hayworth, Lopez has not been able to embody the 'all-American' character precisely because her body cannot successfully conform to mainstream notions of the American woman as having a 'black' butt. Thus, Lopez may take on a non-Latina role but she must also assume an ethnic identity because she cannot convincingly portray white femininity in the same manner as Hayworth, or Cameron Diaz.

In McLean's work on Hayworth, there is no evidence to indicate whether the star had a large ethnic following, so the implication is that the actress's success was based on American supporters. In contrast, Lopez' path to fame began with a Latina role which attracted Hispanic audiences and because of this she depended on the Hispanic market to maintain her stardom even after crossing over to mainstream roles. This perhaps explains why the actress, as well as the studios, continued to market her identity as Latina, even when she wasn't portraying one. In discussing ethnicity Friedman explains how the personal identity of an individual begins with the interaction of the person 'with the unique values and history of his or her people.'[81] Throughout her publicity, Lopez, like Hayworth, has made a conscious effort to promote her ethnic background and has even performed her first concert in Puerto Rico, her parents' native land, during which she claimed was 'home'. For Lopez to foreground her Puerto Rican identity guaranteed her authentic ethnic status despite her taking on a more 'American' image on screen.

According to Werner Sollors, 'the central drama of American ideology, identity, ethnicity, and culture [...] pivot[s] on the conflict between consent ["relations we choose to accept"] and descent ["relations determined for us by blood or nature" [...].'[82] I would argue that at this stage in Lopez' stardom, descent and consent work together to reinforce an ethnic identity which speaks about Americanness at the same times that it also speaks about *latinidad*. Because Puerto Ricans are recognised as American citizens and Lopez was born in the Bronx there is no conflict of identity exhibited by the star, rather she negotiates which to exhibit in the media and in her films. Thus she can depict American culture whilst also engaging in Latino custom to appropriate a shared identity and ethnicity; one year after becoming a Latina star the actress appeared as an 'American' actress in *Out of Sight*.[83]

In her book on Jennifer Lopez, Lea Furman explains the impact *Out of Sight* had on her career, as well as mentioning the star's reaction towards Hollywood's 'acceptance' of her in a major non-Latina role: 'Hollywood is being more open-minded about casting. [...] I'm perceived as an actress who is Latin not a Latin actress as in one who just does Latin roles. I'm considered for roles

---

[80] McLean, p 12.
[81] Friedman, p 17.
[82] Ibid., p 19.
[83] McLean, p 15

that are not Latin, and that's a big step in the right direction for me.'[84] Her claim that she had been considered for roles other non-Latina actresses were getting was true. During the casting call for *U-Turn* (Tri-Star Pictures, 1997, US), director Oliver Stone wanted Lopez for the role of Grace but there was one problem, 'the studio wanted Sharon Stone for the role and Sharon Stone wanted megabucks. However, Lopez was the director's first choice, and eventually he won out.'[85] The fact that she began to take roles other prominent Hollywood stars were going after not only proved Lopez had made an impact on the film industry, but also that she was being promoted as a Latina actress capable of taking on 'non-Latina' roles. Furthermore, since receiving so much praise for her performance in *Out of Sight*, she had proved she was a *bankable* box office star:

> And Jennifer Lopez, an actress who can be convincingly tough and devastatingly erotic, uses the part of a law enforcement agent who only gets emotional about her Sig Sauer .38 to solidify her position as a woman you can confidently build a film around.[86]

With Lopez achieving mainstream success, her critics and audiences were surprised when she decided to change direction and become a pop singer.

Limiting her publicity and film work to endorsing products for Coca Cola and L'Oreal, as well as performing the voice of Azteca, a worker ant in the animated film *Antz* (Eric Darnell and Tim Johnson, Dreamworks, 1998, US), Jennifer Lopez began to produce her first album soon after *Out of Sight*.[87] Positioned as a crossover success, she was increasingly being promoted as a Hollywood star, but after her appearance in a 1998 interview with *Movieline* magazine the actress was figured as the film industry's most recent diva:[88]

> **Stephen Rebello**: Now that Lopez has edged up to what she calls "the bottom of the A-list of actresses," how does she view the women with whom she's been in contention for roles? Like, say, Salma Hayek?
> **Lopez:** "We're in two different realms. She's a sexy bombshell and those are the kinds of roles she does. I do all kinds of different things. It makes me laugh when she says she got offered *Selena*, which was an outright lie. If that's what she does to get herself publicity, then that's her thing. Columbia offered me the choice of *Fools Rush In* or *Anaconda*, but I chose the fun B-movie because the *Fools* script wasn't strong enough." Cameron Diaz? "A

---

[84] Furman, p 46.
[85] Martyn Palmer, 'Jennifer Lopez,' *Total Film* (1998).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/totalfilm1298.htm.
[86] Kenneth Turan, '*Out of Sight*: Wised up and Witty,' *Los Angeles Times*, 26 June (Los Angeles, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 2 February 2003.
http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-movie980625-5.story
[87] *Antz* will be analysed in the Appendix section of this thesis.
[88] Rebello, pp 48-53, 90, 93.

> lucky model who's been given a lot of opportunities I just wish she would have done more with. She's beautiful and has a great presence, though, and in *My Best Friend's Wedding*, I thought, 'When directed, she can be good.'" [...] Madonna? "Do I think she's a great performer? Yeah. Do I think she's a great actress? No. Acting is what I do, so I'm harder on people when they say, 'Oh, I can do that - I can act.' I'm like, 'Hey, don't spit on my craft."[89]

That Lopez criticises other actresses and passes judgment on Madonna suggests that her behaviour served as a publicity build-up to promote her as a diva. In fact, after the *Movieline* article the actress appeared in other 1998 articles with captions highlighting this notion : 'A Diva Is Born'[90] 'From Here to Divanity.'[91] Framing her as a 'diva' stirred negative reactions towards the actress as it seems that the 1998 interview 'had cast a pall over her acting career.'[92] However, this was not the case. After the *Movieline* interview Lopez began slowly to transform her image to that of more a 'white' look and as a result, began to receive film script offers which constructed her image and persona as 'representing' whiteness; in her next film *The Cell* (2000), she first appears as an angel.[93] For this reason, in the next section to be discussed I will look at the initial stages of Lopez' transformation to a whiter image and further analyse her crossover success, not only in film but also in music. It should be noted that while Lopez began to represent whiteness on screen, she also launched a music career which ironically projected her as 'representing' (an ethnic figure of) the ghetto. Therefore I will also briefly explore Lopez' musical career and discuss her shift to the realm of 'ghetto fabulous' as well as her involvement with gangster blackness.[94]

A Touch of Whiteness 'with a dash of "ghetto fabulousness": The Making of 'J.Lo' [95]

The year leading to her debut as a singer is a crucial point in this chapter as we see more drastic changes in her image:

---

[89] Ibid., pp 52-53.
[90] Handleman.
[91] Degen Pener, 'From Here To Divanity,' *Entertainment Weekly*, 9 October (US, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/ew100998.htm
[92] Furman, p 49.
[93] After her interview with Stephen Rebello, Lopez divorced from her first husband. Shortly after she was linked with Sean Combs.
[94] Ghettto fabulous is defined as the style of the nouveau riche who have grown up in the ghetto. These individuals tend to combine flashy and urban clothing, such as fur and outrageously gaudy jewellry with perhaps a pair of jeans or expensive trainers.
[95] 'With a touch of "ghetto fabulousness"', appears in Lynette Holloway's article, 'Keeping J. Lo in Spotlight Has Risks as Well as Rewards,' *The New York Times*, 9 December (New York, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/09/business/media/09LOPE.html?pagewanted=2

> What ever happened to Jennifer Lopez' butt? That's the question Tinseltown insiders are asking about the bodacious Bronx-born actress who has always boasted about her bounteous booty – a trademark akin to Dolly Parton's breasts or Tina Turner's legs. The sizzling star of "*Anaconda*" and "*Selena*" they say, has lost some of her curves.[96]

Just as accounts of Lopez' diminishing 'butt' served to reinforce her construction as an ethnic feminine figure, they also indicated the initial stage of the actress's transformation from her curvier frame in *Selena*, to a less ethnic look just one year after her first successful non-Latina role in *Out of Sight*. In 1998 Lopez' appearance went from projecting a 'too ethnic' looking image to, perhaps, a 'not ethnic looking enough' figure. In one image of the Puerto Rican star we see her standing amongst other well-known Latinos such as Emilio and Gloria Estefan, as well as her then (African-American) boyfriend 'gangsta' rap star Sean 'Puff Daddy' Combs. (See Photocopy).[97] The actress's dark brown eyes are highlighted with eyeliner and her dark wavy curls with copper highlights emphasise a more natural (Latina) image. Running in contrast to this image is another photo of the actress that same year (1998), as we see her straight, light brown hair with blonde highlights. (See Photocopy).[98] Further toning down her complexion is the silver dress worn by Lopez, which gives her a slightly golden look when compared to Clooney's pale features. Appearing excessively different from her earlier 'ethnic' image with Combs, Lopez' image with Clooney thus projects the Puerto Rican figure as having a 'more American' look.

After *Out of Sight* Lopez becomes an important commodity in the film industry hence her more than frequent appearances in magazine and newspapers. Her image begins to appear in media texts which consider the actress as one of the 'interesting people,' to garner attention in the film industry.[99] Other 'interesting' Latinas at the time of Lopez' initial popular success included Cameron Diaz whose performance in *My Best Friend's Wedding* garnered her a great deal of media attention. Charles Ponce de Leon discusses the importance of celebrities providing photo opportunities to the press, a scheme Lopez has employed in a number of magazines for both men and women. Drawing attention to her body has enabled Lopez to become more popular not only with Latinos and blacks but also with mainstream film-goers who now accept the Latina as an 'American' star.

---

[96] Faye Penn, 'Ifs, ands & butts!,' *New York Post*, 11 June (New York, 1998).
[97] Notably, at the same time that Lopez' association with these ethnic musical icons promote her as a very Hispanic figure, her relationships with Combs and (Emilio) Estefan play an important role in her musical career since they both produce at least one track from her first album. The photograph dated 1998 appeared in *People en Español*, August (New York, 2000), p 66.
[98] Furman, p 47. *Out of Sight* was released on June 26, 1998 and the film's premieres followed shortly after.
[99] Charles L. Ponce de Leon, *Self Exposure: Human Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p 63.

Figure 13. (*People en Español*, 1998, USA).

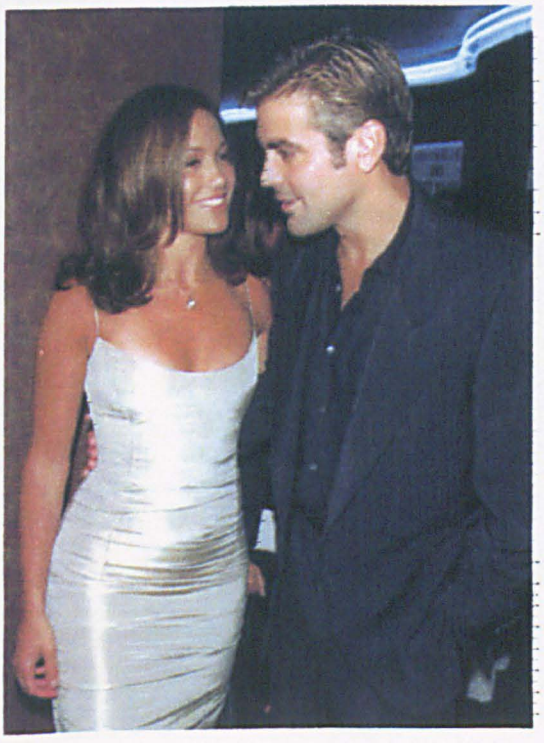

Figure 14. Jennifer Lopez and George Clooney at a premiere of *Out of Sight* (1998, USA).

During the early months of 1999 Jennifer Lopez embodied a 'less' ethnic look but signs of *latinidad* definitely emerged in her music (e.g., hip-hop and *salsa* rhythms) as she began to promote her debut album 'On the 6' (the number of the train she had taken during her early days as a struggling dancer in New York).[100] Discussing her move to singing, she talked about the impact of her role as *Selena* as well as other musical influences in her life:

> After I had finished filming *Selena*, I was really feeling my Latin roots. I cut a demo all in Spanish, but the big companies were more interested in doing an English record. So I decided the record would be a blend of all my influences. [101]

> "I was in third grade when The Sugar Hill Gang's 'Rapper's Delight' changed my life," she reminisces. It's difficult to imagine Lopez break dancing in her Jenny Jen graffiti sweatshirt, Lee jeans, Adidas sneakers with phat (cool) shoelaces, and big hoop earrings. [102]

Contending that much of Lopez' success as a musical artist had been the result of 'packaging' the Latina as more 'urban', Lynette Holloway relates that:

> Mr. Mottola and Ms. Lopez' manager, Benny Medina, have carefully cultivated and groomed her career, sprinkling her image with a dash of "ghetto fabulousness" here and a dash of middle-class respectability there to give her mass appeal. [...] She decided she wanted to sing, and Mr. Mottola became involved. He used her momentum to build a strong hip-hop fan base for her music among young blacks and Hispanics, especially in The Bronx. In 1998, Mr. Mottola had street teams generate a buzz about her coming album, "On the Six," in schools, restaurants and bars and on Spanish language radio stations. He reached out to P. Diddy, then known as Puff Daddy, to produce a track on the album, which was released in 1999.[103]

In addition to the emphasis on Lopez' 'ghetto roots', the writer also highlights her middle-class appeal thus indicating how the actress's cross-over qualities contributed to her success as an actress and singer. This is especially evident in the positive response to her first album which had simultaneous hit songs in English and Spanish, and triumphed in both Latin and American music markets. Elevated to another level of fame best described by *Hispanic* magazine as 'mega-stardom,'[104] Jennifer Lopez significantly became, as one reporter had written, a 'cross-over artist' and 'Latino music icon.'[105]

---

[100] Release date of 'On the 6,' 6 July (US, 1999).
[101] Michael A. Gonzales, 'Jennifer's Many Phases,' *Latina*, March (New York, 1999), p 70.
[102] Ibid., pp 70-71.
[103] Holloway.
[104] *Hispanic*, 'Leading the Way: These Latinos are Setting New Trends in America,' *Hispanic*, November (New York, 1999), p 44.
[105] Robert Dominguez, 'Lovin' *La Vida Loca*. Suddenly, America is becoming the world's longest Conga Line,' *New York Daily News*, 13 June (New York, 1999).
[Online] Accessed 22 November 2001.
http://www.nydailynews.com/1999-06-13/New_York_Now/Cityscape/a-31598.asp

Significantly Lopez' rise to fame coincides with that of the Puerto Rican singer Ricky Martin, whose 1999 Grammy Awards performance resulted in the transformation of American music to include and market Latino pop. Both Martin and Lopez have become marketable Latinos who not only serve Puerto Ricans proudly but also continue to draw interest from the press. However, Martin's *blanquito* (white) look, as Muntaner affirms, which entails 'perfect teeth, [...] 6'2" frame, and the ultimate sign of whiteness in Puerto Rican culture – good hair [...]' attracted American and international audiences who were witnessing and 'enjoying' a white body performing Puerto Ricanness (or a Puerto Rican performing whiteness).[106] Martin's stardom proved that Puerto Ricans, in particular 'whiter' looking *boricuas*, were garnering attention in American culture, specifically in the music industry, thus offering a commodity in both American and global markets. As a result Martin and Lopez were both positioned as crossover artists linked to the social scheme of the Latino boom in the 1990s. In large part their Puerto Rican identity engaged in the status of Latinos as assimilating in American culture and vice versa (Americans assimilating in Latino culture).

In his article 'Cross-over Mania,' Ernesto Lechner discusses the impact Latino artists have had in American mainstream:

> There's no denying the ubiquity of Latin music this summer. Ricky Martin and, to a lesser extent, Jennifer Lopez have transcended pop-chart success to become virtual media icons [...] The fact that such performers have conquered the American mainstream in the last year of the millennium has all sorts of symbolic connotations. At the very least, it indicates that Hispanic culture and its unique sensibility are finally being recognized as intrinsic components of the North American experience [...].[107]

Citing José Behar, president and CEO of music label EMI Latin, Lechner has made it clear that if a singer wants to be a cross-over success in the music industry, 'the artist needs to be bicultural, [...] he needs to live in both worlds, and understand both worlds.'[108] The inclusion of Spanish songs on her debut (and second) album[109] was a factor in Lopez' cross-over success, but the singer's declaration that she was not limiting herself to the Latino public showed her desire to also reach her American fans: 'My music is kind of a hybrid - the music somebody like me would like, who grew up in the Bronx, of Latin (Puerto Rican) descent but a *very American family* [my emphasis].'[110]

---

[106] Muntaner, 261.
[107] Ernesto Lechner, 'Cross-over Mania,' *Hispanic Business*, 26 May (New York, 2000). [Online] Accessed 27 November 2001. http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/news/newsbyid.asp?id=462
[108] Ibid.
[109] Besides 'No Me Ames,' Lopez included the Spanish Version of 'Waiting for Tonight' entitled 'Una Noche Más.'
[110] Sarah Gristwood, 'Screen: Mouth of the Border,' *The Guardian*, 20 November, Features (UK, 1998), p.4 [Online] Accessed 22 April 2002.

This positioning of Lopez as 'more American' clearly marked the second phase of her career in which the actress/pop singer shifted from her Latina identity and image.

No longer linked to her dark featured and extremely curvaceous body, the Latina actress reinforced the 'popular discourse' that, as McLean declares, 'one of the primary duties of [American women] is to transform themselves, to work not only to make the most of physical assets they possess but to alter or minimize features that do not fit the dominant (white) paradigm.'[111] Thus her transformation reflects a postmodern representation of 'achieving an ideal,' which included a 'contradictory mix of rigorous bodily control and playful experimentation with dress, make-up and accessories.'[112] This is most noticeable in Lopez' continual appearance in white clothing, a theme of her crossover success which will be discussed.

It is significant that the 'contradictory mix' of body control and image can be seen in Jennifer Lopez' music videos, including her first 'If You Had My Love'. The narrative shows her fans logging on to her website to get a glimpse of the actress-turned-singer in her home. The cast, predominantly olive-skinned Latinos, includes a chubby little girl looking at, then mimicking the singer, suggesting that young Latinas wish to be like Lopez. Meanwhile, the Puerto Rican figure, now with straight blonde hair, struts around (in her video) wearing predominantly white or silver costumes in an all white setting. Halfway through the video there is a medium close-up of the actress before a 'break' in the sequence where we see a zoom into a computer screen followed by images of wires and numbers. Next, we see her dancing hip-hop in street wear, then *salsa* in mini dress and high heels, before a zoom out to the singer returning to the pop sound of the song.

The manner in which Lopez seems to control her body within this white setting is of interest for she seems to limit her movements to walking around as if not to disturb its orderliness. During these instances her unusually white image can be seen as being synonymous with 'most refined,' as Dyer describes when referring to white women.[113] Only later on when the storyline shifts to a more ethnic beat and surrounding does she let loose to respond to the sounds in hip hop and *salsa* fashion, thus providing a more uncontrollable image of what dominant society would claim as ethnic 'behaviour'. Projected as having a very white look at the same time that signs of

---

http://guardian.chadwyck.co.uk/noframes/quick/fulltext?ACTION=byoffset&warn=N&OFFSET=187137724&div=0&FILE=../session/1019496815_27837.

[111] McLean is referring to Lois Banner's book, *American Beauty* (New York: Knopf, 1983), in her work, p 10.

[112] Myra MacDonald, *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media*, (London and New York: E. Arnold New York, NY. Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press, 1995), p 199.

[113] Dyer (1997), p 74.

ethnicity appear in the short dance sequence, Lopez insists on maintaining an urban and Latina identity, if only during a short break in the song.[114]

Central to the construction of Lopez' whiteness is the deconstruction of the 'black' features in her appearance. Discussing the deconstruction of 'blackness,' Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue that: 'Hegemonic norms of skin colour, hair textures, and facial features are expressed through euphemisms as "good hair" (That is straight hair) and "nice features" (meaning European style features).[115] And Muntaner offers an insightful observation of how one's hair colour and texture can mirror the skin 'and hence often symbolises the entire body's race.'[116] Her work on the *boricua* Barbie doll is of much interest here as she focuses attention on the doll's hair and the significance of such a white feature in Puerto Rican discourses. She notes that while doll's racial make up had been acceptable and considered beautiful, 'much of the U.S. discussion focused on a specific Barbie feature: its hair, or more specifically, the doll's hair *texture*, not colour (black) or length (long).'[117] If hair is what identifies whites as authentic non racial figures then Lopez, like the doll, denied the cultural standards attached to Puerto Rican identity. While I agree with Muntaner's emphasis on hair as a recognisable aspect of whiteness that distinguishes the 'wannabe' whites from the authentic white figure, she fails to give as much attention to Lopez' image and the importance of her blonde straight locks.[118] As noted in the publicity gathered, of Lopez' transformed image it is the actress's hair which has become the most dramatic 'symbol' expressing a change in her ethnic identity. What I am arguing here is that with Lopez trying to step away from indicators 'trapping' her to race and ethnicity it was necessary to alter her racial identity to include a less authentic Puerto Rican image and a more 'real' white look. Thus, Lopez' hair became the obvious line separating the actress from the Latina home girl image to 'wannabe' whiteness.

As a role model, Lopez has been criticised for her 'superficial' look and attempt to design clothes. For some Latinas, wanting to dress like Lopez means wearing 'skimpy clothes [...] and a lot of makeup that makes them look like a doll.'[119] While Muntaner asserts the notion of Lopez as a racialised body which has a tendency to get out of control (unless restricted by diet and exercise), she does not consider Lopez' transformation to a similar plastic version of American 'Barbieness'.

---

[114] This pause in Lopez' first video appears to become a 'trademark' in some of her other videos since a break sequence also appears in: 'Feeling So Good,' 'My Love Don't Cost a Thing,' and 'I'm Real.' 'My Love Don't Cost a Thing' and 'I'm Real' are on Lopez' second album 'J.Lo.' Released 24 July (US, 2001).
[115] Ella Shohat & Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (Routledge: London & New York, 1994), p 324.
[116] Muntaner, p 212.
[117] Ibid., p 211.
[118] Babb, p 3.
[119] Regina Montague, 'Where J-Lo Lookalikes Abound, Some Women Want no Part of It,' *The New York Times*, 17 June (New York, 2001).

Muntaner's work on the Puerto Rican version of the Mattel figure serves to compare the plastic Puerto Rican doll to Lopez' somewhat superficial Puerto Rican image after *Selena*. Thus both cases, Barbie and Lopez, represent notions of Muntaner's term 'de-ethnicification' or anglicised images of Puerto Rican features: straight blonde hair, pale skin and slender frame.[120] As noted on the first page of this chapter, Lopez was compared to the American icon, thus further condensing the actress's features into an artificial image. The association with Barbie not only posits Lopez as an icon of American culture, but also as having a 'purely plastic Puerto Rican identity' just like the doll.[121]

In her chapter on Lopez, Muntaner observes that,

> Although she embodies ideal *boricua* beauty (which Rosie Pérez seemingly "failed" to do) that is, neither too dark nor too light – the Puerto Rican label does not seem to stick to her in the mainstream media. A *People* magazine column, for instance, referred to her as "being of Puerto Rican ... descent."[122]

That the Puerto Rican label may not stick is important to note, in particular since the article was written in 1997, the year when Lopez decided to step away from Latina roles and take on non-ethnic traits. Thus, if Lopez began to represent Americanness it is because she adopted whiter features which have made it possible for her to cross over into mainstream roles. This is not to say that Lopez began to turn her back on her ethnic background, as she still played Latina roles, but rather that the mainstream accepted her decision to modify her ethnic features to comply with the dominant notion of whiteness, and in doing so came to terms with the actress' Puerto Rican background.

Towards the end of 1999, Lopez had already begun to project fairer features, including blonde hair. Despite her new 'American' look, she continued to have the support and respect of Latinos, and proof of such support is the *ALMA* (American Latino Media Arts) award she received in 1999. But following the showcasing of Lopez in the later months of 1999, including reports of her body being insured for one billion dollars, the actress faced a media frenzy and scandal when she was taken into police custody with her then boyfriend Sean Combs. Although both were released from custody the following day, the actress developed a 'bad-girl' image after her 1999 arrest and association with the rap star. Ironically this bad girl image surfaces at the same time Lopez went 'white.'

---

[120] Muntaner, p 214.
[121] Ibid., p 225.
[122] Pam Lambert and Betty Cortina, "Viva Selena," *People*, 24 March (1997), pp 160-161, p 160. Cited in *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture* (New York University Press, New York and London: 2004), p 230.

Leon writes that the spouses of celebrities are more important than the star's parents.[123] When Lopez and Combs began an intimate relationship they drew the attention of the press to their every move, the most publicised moment being after their arrest for leaving the scene of a crime and gun possession. Combs, already associated with gangster rap, projected the image and attitude of rebellious and dangerous black men as celebrating, according to William E. Perkins, 'hustling, street crime [...] and the gun as social equalizer.'[124] As a result, when the rapper became involved with Lopez, the Latina star (already popular amongst Latino audiences) eventually began to shift towards authentic (black) ghettoness.

At the risk of losing fans, Lopez remained in the relationship with Combs and reportedly 'earned street credibility'[125] thus explaining the sudden description of her new image as 'looking like a glamorous gangster.'[126] Looking 'ghetto fabulous'[127] during events such as the 2000 *MTV* Video Awards Show, the Latina actress continued to maintain her 'white image' by wearing a white bandana with silver studs, large hoop earrings, a white tank top and matching hip huggers.[128] (See Photocopy). Much more risqué and street, she begins to wear excessive amounts of gold and diamond jewellery, petite midriff tops, studded bandanas and fur coats to add a more ghetto fabulous look, items as William E. Perkins observes, 'gangsta females wear' to further establish an authentic bad girl image.[129]

With her appearances in the magazines *Vibe*, *XXL* and *Ego Trip*, Lopez drew the attention of blacks whilst being positioned as an authentic hip hop figure.[130] Discussing the contribution New York Puerto Ricans have made to hip hop culture, Raquel Z. Rivera briefly comments upon Lopez' status as a genuine hip hop figure by detailing how the actress's well-renowned backside often became the subject of discussion in hip hop magazines. Significantly, Lopez' most 'symbolic' image epitomising a celebrity gangster look was on the March 2000 cover of *Talk* magazine, in which the actress, wearing a white outfit and sombrero, faces the camera and cocks her finger as if holding a gun.[131] (See Photocopy). The picture, taken ten days before the arrest, surprisingly combines Lopez' blonde look and white fashion to project an ethnic/urban icon. The importance of

---

[123] Leon, p 122.
[124] William Eric Perkins, 'The Rap Attack: An Introduction,' *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 19.
[125] Holloway.
[126] *Hispanic*, 'Jennifer Watch,' *Hispanic*, Panorama Section, October (New York, 2000), p 20.
[127] *Looks*, 'Looks Celebrity Romance Special: Who's the Perfect (Style) Match?,' *Looks*, March (UK, 2001), p 44.
[128] Rocío Ayuso, 'El efecto Jennifer,' *El Pais Semanal*, 29 April, N° 1.283 (Spain, 2001), p 49. Photographs by Sante d'Orazio.
[129] Perkins, p 264.
[130] Rivera, p 117.
[131] Bob Morris, 'Could This Be Love,' *Talk*, March (UK, 2000).

Figure 17. Cover of *Talk* (March 2000, UK).

Figure 16. Jennifer Lopez and Sean (P.Diddy) Combs at the *MTV* Video Awards Show (2000).

this is that while her image could have been 'tarnished' within the media her bad-girl image had served as another feature of her multifaceted-persona.[132] If only for a short period, this seemed to warrant her status as a 'true' ghetto fabulous icon after her arrest with the rap mogul and surprisingly, *after* her transformation to whiteness.

Donning blonde locks and blue contact lenses, Lopez sparked extensive discussion of her ghetto standing and whether she could salvage her wholesome Hollywood image. On the verge of losing her Hollywood status as one of America's sweethearts she ended her relationship with Combs but by this time, Lopez' musical career had been carefully planned out to restore her reputation as a genuine hip hop representative. This is evident two years later when she released the new version and video of her single 'I'm Real' (2001). Singing opposite rapper Ja Rule, Lopez re-associated herself with gangster blackness and positioned herself 'in the hood'; a predominantly black and Latino neighbourhood.[133] Appearing unusually tanned and wearing a pink velour sweat shorts outfit with her 'ghetto iconography like street hoops,'[134] the singer gave an authentic 'home-girl' image to add to her hip hop identity. Moreover, through her Bronx upbringing and physique, Lopez had been able to translate her image to reflect a legitimately ethnic and racial product, hence her ability to cross over between Latino and black culture. So why then was Lopez accused of not being 'real'/ghetto?

In tune with their political hold and resistance to 'Latino power' in the United States, Blacks have unwillingly integrated Latinos as part of the hip hop experience whilst continuing to resist and maintain a strong hold on this culture as their own creation. Affirming this notion is Rivera's definition of hip hop authenticity as based on 'class-identified Blackness/nigganess,' and the reinforcement of Black ownership via the use of the word 'Nigga' in many lyrics.[135] There are two accounts of the term 'Nigga,' which denotes, as Robin D.G. Kelly contends, 'a condition rather than skin colour or culture [based on] a collective identity shaped by class consciousness, the

---

[132] While reports of the couple's every public appearance surfaced in the media, their arrival at the 2000 Grammy Awards caused pandemonium when the actress appeared in a revealing dress which made fashion history. Wearing a tropical print, bright green coloured, low-cut *Versace* dress, she caused much controversy over the exposure of her body; a brooch held the dress together just slightly below her navel where her undergarment could be seen under the transparent frock. The dress not only promoted the actress as 'one of the biggest fashion icons of the 21st century, but also, it became 'front page material the world over.' Katie Fraser, 'Living La Vida Lopez,' *Looks*, March (UK, 2001), p 14. 'J.Lo TV Moments,' narrated by Michael Hannon , *VH1*, Aired 15 February (UK, 2003).

[133] The naming of her album 'J.Lo' is also reflective of 'the hood'. As Lopez declared, 'It's kind of a street terminology, and it kind of caught.' Lydia Martin, 'Lunch with "J.LO": Jennifer Lopez, Riding High,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 24 January (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2002.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n305/JLopez-en.shtml

[134] Lucy Kaylin, 'Jennifer Lopez is awfully talented...,'*GQ*, December (US, 2002), pp 246-247.

[135] Rivera, p 101.

character of inner-city space, police repression, poverty, and the constant threat of inter-racial violence fed by a dying economy.'[136] Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, on the other hand, associates the word 'nigga' entirely with Blacks, suggesting that it has a friendly connotation amongst them unless used in a negative way, in which case it 'may be taken as abusive.'[137] This negative connotation was the case with Lopez.

The reaction towards the remixed version of Jennifer Lopez' single 'I'm Real' is an example of how the use of the word 'Nigga' by a Latino can cause controversy amongst the African American community, in particular amongst Black rap artists. Ja Rule, the African American rapper who wrote the lyrics of the re-mix was not questioned about his participation in the song or his decision to have Lopez vocalise the word instead of singing it himself. However, the song caused outrage amongst the Black community because Lopez was not considered authentically 'Black enough' to use the word. In other words, while Lopez' 'Black ass' might be key to African American's standards of authentically racialised bodies, her light features 'spoke' a Puerto Rican identity to which blacks were unreceptive; upon hearing her utter the word 'Nigga' they felt racially attacked.[138] In fact in an article entitled 'Deejays tell Jlo: Watch your Mouth,' Lopez received harsh criticism and racial attack for her usage of the 'N' word. Accused of not being authentically ghetto, Lopez is put forward as an example of black resistance towards Latino participation in rap:

> Jennifer Lopez may have to mend fences with the black community for using the N-word on her new album. She was roundly blasted yesterday after her new single "I'm Real" aired on Hot 97. On the track, the Latin diva sings: "People are always asking me what's up with so and so [a thinly veiled reference to ex-boyfriend Puffy Combs]."I tell those n----s mind their business, but they don't hear me, though." [...] Star, whose real name is Troi Torain, branded Lopez "common Bronx trash" and a "rice-and-bean-eating [bleep]" on the air. He followed that tirade by slinging racial slurs of his own at Lopez. "She's a sp-- princess," Star told us afterward. "I'm sure a lot of young Spanish kids use the N-word, but when you reach her level — a level where you have a platform — why is she using a word that's derogatory to blacks? If you're a so-called role model, don't spit in the face of African-Americans." Star believes Lopez's use of the N-word is a lame attempt to retain her "ghetto pass." Industry insiders say that rapper Ja Rule and producer Irv Gotti, who are both black, wrote the track. But Star avers that Lopez is "on the pop side of the tracks, [she should] stay there. Stop trying to be down with the "hood."[139]

---

[136] Robin D. G Kelly, 'Kickin' Reality, Kickin' Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Postindustrial Los Angeles,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 137. Cited in *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone*, p 98.

[137] Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, "Signifying, Loud-talking, and Marking," p 328. Cited in Juan Flores' chapter 'Puerto Rocks: New York Ricans Stake Their Claim,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, p 137.

[138] Rivera, p 131.

[139] Rush & Malloy, 'Deejays tell Jlo: Watch your Mouth,' *Daily News*, 4 July (New York, 2001). [Online] Accessed December 15, 2001. http://www.nydailynews.com/2001-07-04/News_and_Views/Daily_Dish/a-117178.asp

Torain's description of the Latina singer as being more 'pop' is true, in part because the original version of 'I'm Real' was a pop tune later remixed with Ja Rule appearing on the more 'street' version of the song and video.[140] However, the racial attack on Lopez challenges her identity as genuinely 'street.' In other words, while "I'm Real' reflects an authentic racial approach based on her relationship with Combs and her Bronx upbringing (where hip hop began), the consequences of her transformation to a whiter 'pop' image and persona violated the boundaries of her affiliation to blackness and the ghetto. Her Puerto Rican identity remained constant for many Latinos but her relationship with gangsta blackness faded along with blacks' acceptance of her as a legitimate representative of the 'hood'. No longer 'ghetto fab' (to more authentic hip hop fans), Lopez continued to build on her film career and transformation to a whiter image and persona.

In the analysis that follows I explore whiteness in one of her most successful 'cross over roles' and how she began to personify extreme cases of whiteness in her publicity. I look to Negra's work on Sonja Henie to examine Lopez' racial white image but before doing so I consider the author's discussion on Cher, as the singer exemplifies a comparable case study of 'self-transformation'[141] to Lopez' stardom and promotion of J.Lo goods.

Lopez: The New Cher?

Negra states that the body of singer-turned-actress Cher 'challenges conventions of whiteness' and that the actress (following codes of the 'star paradox'), contradicts as well as confirms both ethnic identity and assimilation.[142] Cher then, may have represented the hippie movement in the 1960s but a decade later she promoted family values on her comedy show with then husband Sonny Bono. And when her presence in Armenia stirred much attention in the press as they followed her to her 'native' land, not much thought was given to Cher's body which offered no physical indication of ethnicity let alone heritage. Lopez made a similar return to her ethnic roots and offered a synthetic version of whiteness when, in 2001, she performed her first concert in Puerto Rico, her parents' native land. During the performance she exemplified whiteness to the degree where her body, draped in a white evening dress, hovered over the Puerto Rican audience. This image of Lopez as a 'white angel' is of interest as it emphasises the singer's rise above the common people at the same

---

[140] The original 'I'm Real' single appeared on Lopez' second album 'J.Lo' (2001). At the time the album was released, the actress-turned-singer was presented as a Latina phenomenon with the simultaneous release of the album and her latest film *The Wedding Planner*; she is the only woman to have 'both the number one album and movie in the United States in the same week.' Réne Rodriguez, 'J.Lo: Success Makes the Best Revenge,' *Hispanic* Magazine Online, June (New York, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 19 July 2002.
http://www.hispaniconline.com/magazine/2002/june/ConverStory/index3.html.

[141] Negra, p 177.

[142] McLean, p 12.

time that she is lowered to greet her fans from a raised platform. The adoration of the singer by native *puertorriqueños* brings to mind the acceptance of Selena by Mexicans at her Monterrey concert, thus affirming Lopez's status and acceptance as a genuine Puerto Rican star. Ironically, the fact that Puerto Ricans of distinct 'shades' are looking up to this white image encourages the notion that only a light-skinned Latina can look down over a genuine *boricua* crowd. But then again, Lopez carefully disseminates the image of true whiteness when she performs a Diana Ross song while wearing an Afro wig during an earlier performance, thus generating a more appropriate ethnic image for her fans. In this manner Lopez shows control over her body by showcasing a chameleonised image of Puerto Ricanness using costumes to characterise a 'black' and 'white' body.

While it may be difficult to understand why she turns down unsuitable roles for money while appearing in infomercials selling beauty products, Cher, like Lopez, has raised her profile and increased her stardom in this way. Indeed, Cher's aim is to help individuals meet their goals whether through inspirational books, interior designing or blemish free skin, whereas Lopez only seems to provide customers with the opportunity of wearing her scent or imitating her look. After reaching international stardom, Lopez became a marketable commodity which she controlled and '(re)manufactured.' She began to endorse herself as a fashion and perfume authority, inviting young women, particularly *ethnic* individuals, to dress and 'smell' like the actress. I stress ethnic since Lopez' inclusion of rap styles (a mix of urban and glamour) clearly targets a younger, urban and more voluptuous/ethnic consumer. A symbol of Hispanic entrepreneurship, Lopez made this extravagant claim at a press conference:

> It's time for the world to wear my look [..] From little to voluptuous everybody gets to be sexy. [...] Even before I learned to dance and sing and act in films I was just redesigning clothes ...I found that there was not exactly what I needed that fit me at the time [...]. [143]

Lopez' venture into fashion designing contributes to a resistance against standards of Caucasian beauty by creating clothes for women of all sizes and ethnic backgrounds. This corresponds to Molly Hite's assertion that 'A woman, conventionally identified with her body, writes about that identification, and as a consequence, femininity – silent and inert by definition – erupts into patriarchy as an impossible discourse.'[144] By taking complete control of the clothing she

---

[143] Sarah Tippit ' Jennifer Lopez, Hillfiger Unveil "J.Lo" Fashions,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 26 April (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 23 April 2002.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n19/JLoClothes-en.shtml

[144] Molly Hite, 'Writing and Reading – the Body: Female Sexuality and Recent Feminist Fictions,' *Feminist Studies*, 14, No. 1 (Spring 1988), pp 121-122. Cited in Susan Bordo's work, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley, LA and London: University of California Press, 1993), p 269.

helps to create and produce for women, Lopez breaks away from patriarchal discourses by establishing herself as the source of the male gaze, communicating to women what she likes to see on their bodies. Indeed, this behaviour runs parallel to egotistical attitudes often personified by men but the importance here is that Lopez speaks out as a feminine figure asserting her own ideas and thoughts on female sexuality. Working to promote her body as sexy and 'typical' for Latinas the actress offers a level of positive self-perception about ethnic femininity. Embodying, as Bordo confirms 'the new postmodern heroine,' Lopez draws attention to her body in interviews and the form-fitting clothing she wears thereby affirms her control and exploitation of her own sexually charged image.[145]

By controlling her continuous shift between crossover status in film or music, Lopez demonstrates either a Latina identity or a white (ethnic) image depending on which is required to maintain her star status. As noted above, Lopez' identification with blacks and Latinos occurs when she portrays a more hip hop image, in particular when appearing in musical events such as the *MTV* awards. Such events tend to promote Lopez as a voluptuous ethnic female entertainer, an image she cultivates with her revealing wardrobe. In contrast, the construction of white characters personified by Lopez suppresses the obvious ethnic feature of her body hence decoding her image as pure fantasy. On film she is glorified as a white ethnic character while in her music videos she is the ghetto queen acknowledging her roots. Thus the manner in which Lopez seeks to control the terms of her own fetishism is of extreme significance as the star sets her own standards of beauty, regulating the terms of her display as a sexual object.

Because of the constant dialectical shift between Americanness and *latinidad* in her persona and image, Lopez has been able to create a self identity based on this crossover success, simultaneously recommending her body to both an ethnic and a blue-collar audience, as well as the white upper-class. Serving as a 'reconciling' role between culture and whiteness, Lopez has transformed her body into a reference point for both the ordinary and extraordinary as an authentic site of consumption and revenue. In other words she is both the object and subject of consumption in cultural and mainstream fashion. Proof that Lopez is posited in this way is evident from her website, where fans can read updated news on the singer or purchase clothing from her J.Lo fashion collection. Thus the elements of Lopez' stardom are spelled out with the interplay between her association with material culture and her dependence on both ghetto and glam wear.

Muntaner comments on feminist views on the focusing of the body as 'another way of enslaving women to their bodies and linking Latinos to stereotypes of hypersexuality.'[146] I disagree

---

[145] Bordo, p 268.
[146] Muntaner, p 237.

with this notion since Lopez' celebration of her body positions her as an empowered figure taking control of the image she projects in the media. Admittedly, Lopez' body motivates the male gaze for sexual pleasure, but she is apparently liberating in that she too glorifies her own image as a sexual and cultural icon thus taking on a postfeminist approach to how she emphasises and promotes herself. In short, Lopez is not concerned with patriarchal approaches to defining her body and image because she has already narrated the manner in which she wishes to be showcased on as well as off screen. Furthermore because of her pride in her body, which provoked discourses on racial and ethnic bodies after her performance in *Selena*, Lopez began to call attention to the rising number of full figured Latina women now forming part of the largest ethnic group in the United States. I would go further to suggest that unlike many racialised Latinas, including Rosie Perez, Lopez has been able to influence dominant whites to mimic her image, style and body (via fat injections in the buttocks) thus remoulding the image of racial others into a postmodern white look.[147] On an interesting note, mannequins in New York City may not showcase the actress's clothing but her lower torso is apparent in window displays exhibiting hippier and well-rounded lower torsos instead of the usual slender curve free plastic models; the image itself is a paradox as Lopez' 'real' curves seems to be moulded in plastic.

Far from personifying 'anti-fashion,' as Negra describes Cher's attire at the 1998 Academy Awards, Lopez has become a trend setter and fashion queen, even modelling for one of haute couture's gurus: Louis Vuitton. Appearing slender and rather exotic, Lopez is almost unrecognisable and much lighter than the male models behind her. (See Photocopy). With her famous curves neatly tucked under a pastel green suit Lopez, far from personifying whiteness, appears as a glamour girl and icon for the upper class to mimic by means of expensive clothing. Significantly, this exoticisation and presentation as a glamour girl runs parallel to her image in the August 2003 *Esquire* magazine, in which she poses as a pin-up star of Hollywood's glamorous past. Wearing a flowered bathing suit, with a large flower in her hair and a Chinese parasol in her hand, Lopez' body expresses a Hollywood glamour similar to that of Rita Hayworth. (See Photocopy). In these images, Lopez wishes to assimilate not only into the mainstream but also into discourses of Hollywood glamour which positions her in such a way that she does not disrupt the conventions of ethnic femininity. For this reason I would contend that almost a decade after her first appearance on film, Lopez' body is just as significant as Cher's in terms of transformation and chameleonisation as celebrated responses to the construction of ethnic identity in relation to whiteness. Both women

[147] In several website pages including www.oyster.com, there are discussions of the increasing demand for buttock augmentation apparently provoked by the attention attracted by Lopez' bottom. Described as a painful operation with healing process lasting up to six weeks, the operation is quite costly at $4-5000 per cheek.

Figure 13. Louis Vuitton advertisement (USA, 2003).

Figure 14. *Esquire* (USA, August 2003).

control their bodies, constructing and deconstructing them accordingly. But instead of 'resisting' white femininity as Cher does, Lopez seems to embrace it.[148]

The 'White' Persona

If we continue with Negra, her work on the former skating star Sonja Henie is also useful for her discussion of what whiteness meant to the skater's persona: 'Whiteness was an on-going thematic intertext for Henie's persona, referencing both the white accessories of her sport and her Nordic ethnic status. And indeed, even the star's fetish for material whiteness was a celebrated feature of her persona.'[149] I look to the stardom of Henie to understand how whiteness is constructed in Lopez' image and persona, specifically after the actress crosses over from Latina to mainstream/'American' roles. I also explore how 'Henie's stardom,' as Negra claims, 'was founded on a nationalised version of whiteness,' to consider the manner in which Lopez' fame was based on both a white and Latina version of ethnic femininty.[150] In many respects, if Henie's status as an ethnic white star helped to shape the concept of her foreignness as an acceptable interpretation of ideal femininty, then Lopez' emphasis on whiteness (on screen as well as off screen) functions to demonstrate the *boricua*'s desire to be featured as aesthetically white.

Lopez' white outfits in her video performances, her 2001 concert in Puerto Rico, and her publicity inform us that the actress has a passion for whiteness even in her surroundings - 'the rooms must be painted white before she enters;'[151] 'her primary residence [has] 10,000 square feet of glacial marble, white walls.'[152] In his study of the emergence of celebrity, Leon notes that to expose the real self of the artist details must be examined including their physical aspects, intimate relationships with partner or family and the home, as it is the one place stars can escape to without having to be subjected to public scrutiny. Thus if details are to be interpreted as Leon suggests, then the white décor of Lopez' home is of much interest as it visually cloaks or 'masks' the actress with whiteness. Dyer talks about the visual implication of whiteness when aligned with blackness, which is seen as 'lacking a virtue,' 'racially inferior' and a sign of 'failure.'[153] For Lopez to have any hint of colour in her home would be to visually shatter her portrayals of whiteness not only because of the notion that too much Latina (or black) ethnic background in her possession could endanger her successful crossover shift to American roles, but also because of the idea that the

---

[148] Negra, p 180.
[149] Ibid, p 88.
[150] Negra, p 22.
[151] Chrissy Iley, 'I've Found my Perfect Match,' *Glamour*, September (UK, 2001), p 68.
[152] Kaylin, p 247.
[153] Dyer (1997), pp 62-63.

actress may not be morally fit to portray a white (ethnic) female. What I am suggesting here is the fact that Lopez draws attention to whiteness in other areas of her life beside the more obvious physical transformation reinforces her conscious efforts to generate whiteness in her stardom.

With Lopez appearing in more non-Latina roles and her skin becoming much lighter, the promotion around her later publicity (after *Out of Sight*) foregrounds a very 'white' figure, such as her appearance in the September issue of the Spanish film magazine *Fotogramas* (2000). With large white-feathered wings looming from behind her nude figure, she crosses her arms over her chest while one of the wing tips covers her crotch. (See Photocopy).[154] The actress's body seems to have white paint on certain areas such as her thigh and stomach, further emphasising a white/virtuous image; her nakedness and past (history with Combs) indicate the contrary. In the publicity poster for her next film *Angel Eyes* (Luis Mandoki, Warner Brothers, 2001, US), Lopez' features are almost translucent as we see the faint outline of her nose and lips, while her eyebrows and hair seem to be softly sketched in; the actress's brown eyes offer a more natural look. (See Photocopy).[155] In another publicity photo, this time promoting her perfume 'Glow,' the actress's figure is covered with transparent material thereby producing a faint pale image somewhat similar to her extremely white face in the publicity of her film *Angel Eyes*. (See Photocopy).

The idea of Lopez' body as representing an extreme image of whiteness coincides with Dyer's description of such representation as 'exceptional, excessive, marked.'[156] These aspects of whiteness in her publicity (and her music videos) are articulated in images in which the star appears as an angel (*Fotogramas*) or a 'ghost' (translucent face in *Angel Eyes* publicity). In the publicity for her 'Glow' perfume,[157] Lopez presents an extremely white identity produced by the lighting in the photo. Thus, if she 'glows,' it is because, as Dyer explains, 'the light within or from above appears to suffuse the body'[158]; enhancing her glowing, soft focused image is the lighting above her blonde hair. What is particularly interesting about those images which promote an extremely white image of Lopez is her exposed body. In one article which focused on the actress's skin, Lopez is described as being 'porcelain white in real life, bronzed up for the camera with buckets of fake tan.'[159] However, as stated earlier, her ethnicity remains a parallel issue in her career even when she is

---

[154] Johanna Schneller, 'Jennifer Lopez: la actriz latina mejor pagada calienta el otoño,' *Fotogramas*, September, N° 1.883 (Spain, 2000). Photographs by Tony Duran.

[155] *Angel Eyes* official Website.
[Online] 7 March 2003.
http://angeleyesmovie.warnerbros.com/index_flash.html

[156] Dyer (1997), p 222.

[157] Significantly, Lopez' perfume 'Glow' was promoted at the same time that her third album, 'Jenny from the Block', debuted.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Anthony Noguera, 'For Your Eyes Only,' *FHM*, October (UK, 2001), 158.

Figure 18. *(Fotogramas*, September 2000, Spain).

Figure 19. Publicity Poster for *Angel Eyes* (USA, 2001).

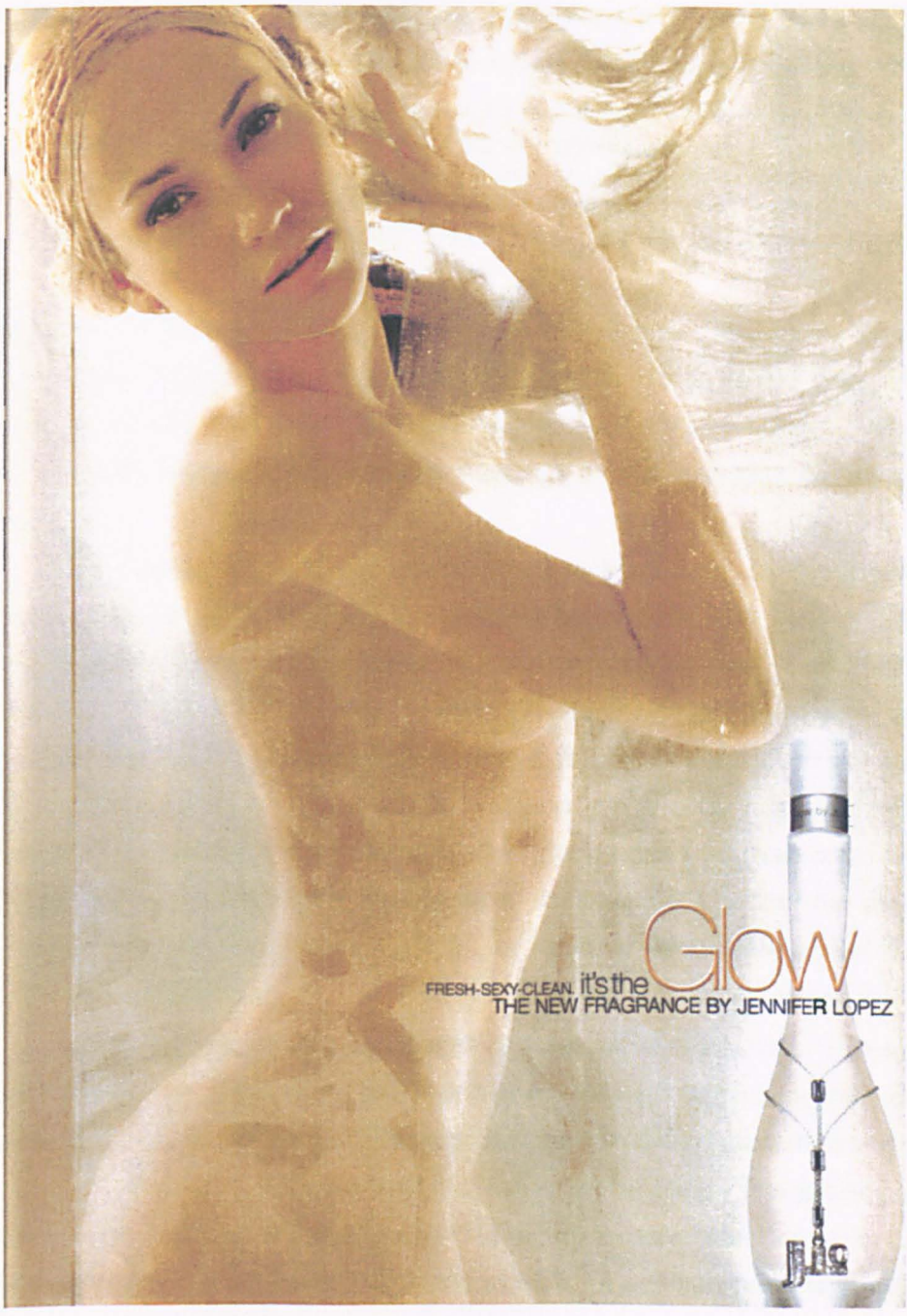

Figure 20. Advertisement for 'GLOW' perfume
(*Fotogramas*, January 2003, Spain).

promoted as 'a national sweetheart, a living embodiment of the American dream.'[160] In the next film to be analysed the actress is projected as such an 'ideal' character that one critic writes:

> So bless her for trying something really daring: a sweet romantic comedy. Lopez' role in *The Wedding Planner* is as far from her typical persona as Doris Day is from Gladys Knight. [...] *This is Lopez' whitest movie yet - white gowns, white tie, white-collar, white bread* [my emphasis]. And darned if she can't play perkily yuppish. Her Mary is smart, nice and sexy; if boys dreamed of future brides and not of instant hookers, she would star in a million fervid fantasies. [161]

Unlike her previous films, *The Wedding Planner* promotes the actress as an 'ideal,' i.e., 'manufactured' WASP image by presenting her in bridal attire. Unlike Diaz, who is repeatedly dressed in wedding attire in her films, thus epitomising whiteness, Lopez is here situated for the first time as *the* image of white femininity hence my election to explore the scene to be discussed next.

The Wedding Planner stars Jennifer Lopez as Mary Fiore, another Italian-American, the most successful wedding planner in San Francisco but with the least romantic life. On the day of landing an important account she gets her heel stuck in a manhole and is unwilling to surrender her Gucci shoes. While she's struggling, a runaway dumpster approaches and she is rescued by Steve (Matthew McConaughey). Pinned underneath him, she realises that she had just met the man of her dreams, until she finds out that Steve is actually the groom at her next wedding. Because he is unavailable, she decides to marry someone else. Standing in a restroom in the courthouse, Mary looks at herself in her tight satin wedding dress; the camera tilts up from her stomach to her face and we see her reflection. Placing the veil over her face, she stares at herself for seven seconds before turning around to leave. Exiting the restroom, she walks away, in long shot.

In her essay on the relation between costume and narrative, Jane Gaines writes that 'star designing effects the synthesis between character and actress, intermingling traits in such a way that the two become indistinguishable.'[162] Lopez' unadorned wedding gown reflects the simplicity of the scene – a bride looking at herself moments before her wedding - thus providing an exceptional example of how the actress's body can be read as 'representing' a white identity (at least on film). Moreover, because bridal wear, as Dyer discusses, is an explicit case of whiteness,[163] we can say

---

[160] Louise Gannon, 'Billion Dollar Babe,' *Elle*, July (UK, 2000), p 61.
[161] Richard Corliss, 'No Butts About it. Jennifer Lopez has it all: a pretty new movie, a salsa-hot CD and a potential appearance at Puff Daddy's trial,' *Time*, 29 January (New York, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 6 February 2003.
http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/from_redirect/0,10987,1101010129-96169,00.html
(2001).
[162] Jane Gaines, 'Costume and Narrative: How Dress Tells the Woman's Story,' in *Fabrications: Costume and The Female Body*, Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds.) (London: Routledge, 1990), p 200.
[163] Dyer (1997), p 76.

that the actress's image bespeaks the 'absence' of ethnicity as her face is literally 'guarded' with a white veil. The extended length of time she stands in front of the mirror not only showcases her disguised (ethnic) features, but also operates as a reminder that the actress can convincingly incarnate non-Latina roles. Thus, *The Wedding Planner* serves to show how the actress's light-skinned features were able to 'blend' in with her white costume and bridal look.

Interestingly, to provide for a more 'white' setting in the film, director Adam Shankman changed the locale from New York to San Francisco, since the city provides a more European scenery. Unlike any of the other locations Lopez has appeared in, the actress is placed in what seems to be a Latino-free milieu thereby disassociating her with any evidence of *latinidad*. To further support her white 'identity' she is linked to the dominant power relations structured in discourses of whiteness. Framed as the subject of control throughout most of the film Lopez' authority is shown when she is placed in charge of organising the wedding ceremonies of affluent whites. In this manner the actress's character is constructed as successful and respectable within privileged society thus indicating that only a white woman could have such influence.

As with *Out of Sight*, there is a parallel level of class identity to *The Wedding Planner*. The wearing of a Chanel suit in the earlier film immediately categorises the actress's character as upper class. Lopez' appearance in other haute couture apparel by Armani and Gucci in *The Wedding Planner* also positions the character as affluent thus indicating a major economic shift in Lopez' characters compared to earlier roles. Significantly, Lopez' image as consumer and star commodity coincides with the release of *The Wedding Planner*, which articulates her own rise in income per film; she earned $9 million for this last movie.

In an interview with the actress on her role in *The Wedding Planner*, Lydia Martin observes:

> For this role Jennifer loses the street thing, and the Latina thing. Instead she plays a run-of-the-mill American girl whose family happens to be Italian. You've gotta wonder if it's the Jennifer Lopez machine trying to take her further into Middle America.[164]

As with *Out of Sight*, although Lopez loses 'the Latina thing,' ethnicity as such is still a factor in her image as her character is a first generation Italian American - her character's parents arrived in America by boat. Thus, her position in non-Latina roles echoes McLean's argument regarding Hayworth, that 'even when visual or narrative signifiers of ethnicity are missing from the discourse about the Americanized Hayworth and from her film roles, much of the signified remains.'[165] Citing Dyer in her work on Hayworth, McLean writes, 'a star succeeds in reconciling contradictions

---

[164] Martin.

[165] McLean (1992-1993), p 19. McLean cites Friedman in his essay, 'Celluloid Palimpsests: An Overview of Ethnicity and the American Film,' p 22.

through "magical synthesis," a synthesis or unity made possible because the star is in the end only "one person" with a "real existence" as an individual in the world.'[166] Certainly Lopez' image over the last few years projects an image of contradiction as the 'I'm Puerto Rican and will be until I die'[167] figure is repeatedly compared to blonde icons like Madonna[168] and Marilyn Monroe.[169] The very presence of Lopez in The Bronx or singing about her past offers some ways in which the actress attempts to promote a more ethnic identity despite her features or 'star behaviour.' Thus, signs of ethnicity consistently appear in her images and persona because of the way in which Lopez continuously 'recycles' her Puerto Rican roots.

This recycling also plays a part in Lopez' persona as she then returned to a Latina role after five years of portraying non-Latina roles. Another modern-day version of *Cinderella*, *Maid in Manhattan* (Wayne Wang, 2002, US) stars Lopez as Marisa Ventura, a single mother from The Bronx 'who is mistaken by a handsome playboy politician (Ralph Fiennes) for a wealthy socialite.'[170] While wearing a *white* couture outfit, her character is assumed to be a hotel guest. The point to be made here is that Lopez returned to her ethnic roots on-screen, shifting from her non-Latina persona, if only temporarily, to demonstrate to her audience that she had not forgotten her Latina roots. Thus, at the same time that she was claiming to still be 'Jenny from the Block,' Lopez was also promoting her Bronx character from *Maid in Manhattan* as if to re-acknowledge her Latina persona.

'Jenny From The Block' returns to Latina Roles

In a *New York Times* article on Lopez' intention to consolidate her ethnic roots (in order to maintain her fans), Holloway observes how the lyrics from her single "Jenny from the Block" were certainly 'calculated.' What follows is an excerpt from *The New York Times* article:

> Some music critics say Ms. Lopez' soaring popularity on the pop charts, her glamorous roles in mainstream movies and her highly publicized personal life, highlighted by her engagement to the actor Ben Affleck, have jeopardized her following within her core fan

---

[166] McLean, p 12. She refers to Dyer's book *Stars* (1979), p 30.
[167] Castro, p 44.
[168] Louise Gannon, described Lopez as 'the new Madonna,' in 'Learning Curves,' *Looks*, April (UK, 2000), p 88.
[169] Sean Macaulay, 'Star of the Week: Jennifer Lopez,' *The Times*, 28 November (UK, 2002). [Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,2099,00.html
[170] Rebecca Murray and Fred Topel, 'Jennifer Lopez Talks About *Maid in Manhattan*,' romanticmovies.com, 10 December (US, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://romanticmovies.about.com/library/weekly/aamaidinmanhattaninta.htm

> base: the black and Hispanic hip-hop community. Her handlers have sensed the danger, Mr. Mottola said. They came up with an idea for a new single, "Jenny From the Block," that essentially tells her fans that she is still a home girl even though she is "bling-blinging" wearing expensive diamonds and furs.[171]

Despite the fact that during this period (late 2002), Lopez' new video game 'Jen Saves Ben' became another commodity in the growing empire of 'J.Lo' goods (clothes, perfume, web page with fourteen international sites), Holloway's observation of how Lopez' engagement to Affleck may 'jeopardise' her fan base also emphasises the actress's association with a more 'ideal' American image.[172] Significantly, the writer's comment on the Latina's attempt to rebuild her fan base appeared at the same time that the actress featured in the December 2002 issue of *Latina* magazine. The article, an interview by Lopez' sister Lynda, takes a look at their childhood holidays in The Bronx with the inclusion of photos of Jennifer Lopez and her sisters as toddlers and young girls.[173] Unlike in other interviews, the actress's decision to offer such an intimate portrait emphasises her intention to rekindle the interest of Latinos in her by sharing a more personal side of herself *just* with her Latina followers. Accounts such as this reinforce the notion that in 2002, eleven years after her 'Fly Girl days,' Jennifer Lopez needed to emphasise her Puerto Rican roots, on-screen and off, to demonstrate and re-promote the return to her Latina/ethnic persona.

Returning to her Bronx roots, and another maid role, Lopez portrays a working class Latina, similar to many Hispanic women in film. Thus, her positioning as an employee in a posh NY hotel works to show an obvious division between classes that is immediately established in *Maid in Manhattan*. During the opening credits we see a graffiti-covered building in Lopez' low income neighbourhood, then the affluent setting of New York's Park Avenue where most of the narrative takes place; Puerto Ricans are shown in a small three room apartment in the Bronx whilst whites roam in a swanky five star Manhattan hotel with suites twice as large as Bronx residences. Another sign indicating the gulf between the classes is Lopez' character taking public transportation to make her way to the basement of the Beresford hotel where she changes into her uniform. In the meantime, the more well-to-do guests such as Assembly Man Christopher Marshall and Sotheby's Curator Caroline Lane (Natasha Richardson) are escorted to the front entrance of the hotel by private car services prior to settling in penthouse suites. The obvious message here is that whites tend to be politically, economically and socially more worthy than Latinos who can only hope to serve privileged whites.

---

[171] Holloway.
[172] After breaking up with Affleck in January 2004, Lopez re-married for the third time to Puerto Rican singer Marc Anthony five months later. This marriage undoubtedly further authenticated Lopez' Latina image.
[173] Lopez, pp 80-85.

Giroux explains that 'whiteness has become more visible as a privileged signifier of racial identity and, consequently, has come under attack in many quarters.'[174] And Dyer contends,

> Power in contemporary society habitually passes itself off as embodied in the normal as opposed to the superior (Marcuse 1964). This is common to all forms of power, but it works in a peculiarly seductive way with whiteness, because of the way it seems rooted, in things other than ethnic difference.' [175]

The discursive context of whiteness in the film engages with European colonialism as the rule of power which defines 'other' as the marginalized and oppressed. In *Maid in Manhattan* whites maintain dominance and power but to do so they must rely on ethnic help (or paid slavery) to preserve those privileges. In this manner the film tends to celebrate and justify the structure of whiteness and the need for unequal treatment towards Latina and blacks 'masquerading' as the help. Whiteness then stands to diminish anyone who is not a member, and an example of this is when Lopez' character is fired after having been perceived to have stepped out of her place and into the 'white world' of wealth and politics.

Characterising the social and political experiences of Latinos as struggling or non-existent, *Maid in Manhattan* offers two scenes where Lopez' character voices a genuine Hispanic response to dominant society. The first scene works to support Lopez as an authentic Bronx representative when her character tells Chris (Fiennes) about 'realness.' Questioning his 'telling people in the Bronx about the projects', Marisa provides a genuine response to politicians wanting to do the best for Latinos without asking their opinion. She states: 'Maybe you both should spend some real time in the projects and then you wouldn't have to make up speeches and then have to memorise them. You know? It'd be coming from some place real.' When questioned by the politician's assistant as to how she would know, Lopez rightfully claims, 'because I grew up there. I lived in a four block radius my whole life.' It is at this point in the film where Lopez' status as real is confirmed by Christopher, who states 'she isn't a phoney.' Lopez' claim to have grown up in a small radius is true and her questioning of the politician's motives is offered as a genuine concern for 'her' people in her neighbourhood. The speech then succeeds not only in making the politician conscious of the housing situation in the borough, but also in making dominant society attentive to what kind of help is actually needed by the residents. Thus, if Lopez is not seen as being fake it is because she embodies an authentic and ethnic Bronx identity on-screen as well as off-screen.

The second speech Lopez makes in the film is just as crucial; in it Marisa reminds Chris of how whites perceive Latinos. Moments after Marisa's true identity is revealed, Chris asks her if

---

[174] Giroux, p 232.

[175] Dyer refers to Herbert Marcuse's work *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), in 'White,' *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p 142.

any of their relationship was real, to which she replies 'yes,' but that he would not have noticed her had he really known who she was. As she frustratingly explains to him: 'You think you would have taken a second look if you knew that I was the maid? Come on! I don't think so.' He then questions her judgment of people and her perception that she too is also being judged, to which she responds: 'and you think they're not [judging me]. Come on, half the time I'm some stereotype that they're making fun of and the other half of the time I'm just invisible, you know? [...] Maybe that's the point. The first time you saw me I was cleaning your bathroom floor, only you didn't *see* me.' The scene is pivotal as Lopez provides and confirms the conceptualised image of Latinos in the media as a stereotypical portrait construed by whites. More importantly, the scene responds to whiteness and its codes of discrimination by offering a genuine Latina voice to contest the presentation of Latinos by mainstream society. In this case Lopez morally rehabilitates a white politician's concept of Latinos.

Although the film projects a realistic image of unequal racial structures between whites and all 'Others', it is useful for endorsing a binary image of Lopez as both ghetto and glamorous. A sequence of the actress transforming into 'Cinderella' illustrates this clearly. The ethnically diverse staff gather to assist Marissa in the preparation for the big gala, helping her find a gown and getting a Winston Diamond necklace on loan. After her transformation, one of the supporting characters tells her that, 'for one night you are living it for all of us ... this is who you really are.' Personifying a visual image of whiteness via her glamorous look, Lopez' transformation reflects the actress's own shift from 'fly-girl' to major Hollywood star. Significantly in an interview with Ralph Fiennes the actor discussed the commotion Lopez stirred after her transformation to glamour queen and states,

> We were shooting on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum one night [...]. It was lit romantically, and Jennifer was wearing an evening gown, looking incredibly stunning. Suddenly there must have been a thousand people screaming her name. It was like witnessing this icon.[176]

The scene, clearly one of the unforgettable instances in Lopez' film repertoire, provides a transformation of her character from working girl to socialite. Put forward as both street and glamorous in the film, the actress offers an authentic image of both, thus being able to cross over clear boundaries maintained by the intrinsic notion of whiteness.

It is necessary to stress that the theme of glamour and value as being associated with whiteness is established when Lopez is accidentally mistaken for an 'important' person whilst

---

[176] Dana Kennedy, 'Homegirl, Working Woman, Empire Builder,' *New York Times*, 3 November (2002). [Online] Accessed December 2002.
http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/03/movies/03KENN.html?pagewanted=2

trying on a costly (Dolce and Gabana) white pant suit. It is after wearing this white 'disguise' that her character is treated on a different level, as when the paparazzi attempt to take her photo in the park whilst she walks alongside Fiennes. Mistaken as the latest possible love interest of the rising politician, Marisa becomes the target of attention and respect by those unaware of her real identity. Thus only when Lopez' character is transformed into literally reflecting whiteness is she considered as a potential hotel guest and member of the elite.

Along with Lopez' transformation to 'whiteness' the narrative considers the economic shifting of Latinos from working to middle class. In this regard, the ending of *Maid in Manhattan* reasserts a new social order of Latinos shifting between classes thus instigating and supporting fear amongst middle class whites who are now seeing themselves rubbing elbows with other ethnic groups. For this reason the transformation of Lopez and her character from working to middle and upper class gives way to the debates involving the rewriting of privileges often reserved for whites, and the possible turning of the tables on this 'colourless' racial group as representing the next 'minority'.

Conclusion

In this analysis of Jennifer Lopez' star image I have focused on her features by showing how the former 'Fly Girl' from The Bronx transformed her persona and image from that of Latina to white (ethnic) femininity. To explain what whiteness has meant in Lopez' transformation to mainstream stardom, I looked to the work of Diane Negra and her analysis of Sonja Henie's stardom. I also considered the author's discussion of Cher and the singer's transition into actress and entrepreneur in order to explore Lopez' own shift between music, film and her 'J.Lo' empire, as well as her evolution from the ordinary to iconic 'ethnic' figure and commodity.

In mapping out the transformation of Lopez' body, much of my research clearly parallels Adrienne L. McLean's analysis of Rita Hayworth's stardom. Whereas the contemporary star's image has so far primarily served as that of a Latina figure (unlike Hayworth who played more 'American' roles), both 'Latina' figures were 'manufactured,' and 'commodified'[177] by the Hollywood industry. McLean's account of Hayworth's discourse reveals the star's willingness to undergo painstaking methods in order to become a star while Lopez' transformation seems to have been a gradual process initiated by her but supported and 'rewarded' by the industry with offers of non-Latina roles. As a result of Lopez' decision to go after non-Latina roles, we 'witness' the actress's initial exposure to fame in her dark featured, voluptuous Latina image. Yet it seems that

[177] Mclean, p 21.

her later image 'collides' with her claim to be a *genuine* Latina figure: how was it possible that a light-skinned Puerto Rican like Lopez was able to continuously transform her ethnic image without sacrificing her Latina identity and public?

Discussing whiteness as an 'unstable' skin colour, Dyer writes that it can 'be presented as an apparently attainable, flexible, varied category, while setting up an always moveable criterion of inclusion, the ascribed whiteness of your skin.'[178] It seems that Lopez has used this ideology to her benefit, for she has been able to produce a shade of whiteness which has allowed her to be included in themes of privilege, power and wealth at the same time that she claims to be a *genuine* Latina representative. Lopez' transformation to whiteness may well reflect the assimilation of Latinos in American culture in the 1990s and the cultural consciousness of some Latinos taking up a white ethnic identity. As Muntaner claims: 'a whopping 80.5 percent of Puerto Ricans considered themselves white, while only 8 percent identified as black [in the US 2000 Census].'[179] When faced with the racial dichotomy of black vs. white it is perhaps not unusual that Puerto Ricans preferred to be linked to whiteness instead of clinging to the black traits inscribed in their ancestry.

Discussing Stuart Hall's notion of ethnicity, Antonia Darder has observed that it 'provides us with a framework upon which to rethink the analytical value of ethnicity with respect to biculturalism, particularly as it relates to identity formation.'[180] The ideology of ethnicity, as Giroux informs us, processes biculturalism in a postmodern context which consolidates race and culture in a complex debate of ongoing contradictions. He writes: 'the new ethnicity defines racial identities as multiple, porous, complex, and shifting.'[181] In her discussion of the body as a mediator of consumption and cultural identity, Elizabeth Jaggar opines that the continuous altering of identities is 'saturated with cultural signs with fixed referents, producing multiple, shifting identities.'[182] If actress Rosie Perez represents a predictable version of Latina ethnicity embodying an authentic yet racial typecast, Lopez represents a more diverse 'contemporary' ethnic identity which is both Latina/'brown' and American/white. Thus from 1998 up until the present, Lopez'

---

[178] Dyer (1997), p 57.

[179] Institute for Puerto Rican Policy (IPR), "Puerto Rico: 2000 Population and Racial Breakdown," no. 25, April 2001. Cited in Frances Negrón-Muntaner, *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture*, p 212.

[180] Antonia Darder, 'The Politics of Biculturalism: Culture and War Difference in the Formation of Warriors for Gringostroika and The New Mestizas,' *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 131.

[181] Giroux, p 236.

[182] Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory* (London: Sage, 1993)is cited in Elizabeth Jagger's essay, 'Consumer Bodies,' in *The Body, Culture and Society: An Introduction*, Philip Hancock, Bill Huges, Elizabeth Jagger et. al. (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open Universityh Press, 2000), p 46.

white image reflects the pattern of postmodern ethnicity in which the actress experiences 'a provisional and partial site of identity which must be constantly (re)invented and (re)negotiated.'[183]

After *Out of Sight* in 1998, the actress became ethnically cautious, shifting and reinventing her image and persona between *latinidad* and whiteness thus offering a chameleonic transformation on her own terms. In renegotiating her ethnic image and persona Lopez becomes more sought after by the film industry after her success personifying white (Italian) characters. She becomes the ideal 'white' girl in 2001, only to return to a Latina role one year later.

Although in my next chapter on Cameron Diaz I will look at the dilemma of a genuinely 'White' Latina in Hollywood, it may seem that Lopez' 'whiteness' is tolerated by the Hispanic community because there has always been a desperate need for Latino representation. If we consider Edgar Morin's notion that 'it is neither talent nor lack of talent, neither the cinematic industry nor its advertising, but the *need* for her that creates a star,' perhaps we can understand the consistent promotion of Lopez' Puerto Ricanness. [184] Although Jennifer Lopez altered her look, she continues to promote her Latina identity supported by the Hispanic community who continue to reinforce her status as a Puerto Rican figure.

Frances Negrón Muntaner and Mary C. Beltrán have also noted in their work the support Lopez has received from the Latino community, in particular because the actress called attention to Latina bodies as a postmodern image of mainstream beauty. Mainly focusing on Lopez' stardom prior to her physical transformation to whiteness (around 1998), Muntaner and Beltrán respectively offer rich discussion on the actress's performance in *Selena* and the media's reaction to the Puerto Rican star's curvaceous figure. My own research takes into consideration the work of both authors as well as building upon the construction of transformation in Lopez' stardom by examining the actress's white image (post 1998), and her cross over to mainstream films and pop music. It is in my discussion on Lopez as a pop singer that I turn to Raquel Z. Rivera's discussion of the actress as being representative of hip-hop and how the actress's body became a celebrated feature in Afro-diasporic discourses. Thus, while the work of Rivera, Beltrán and Muntaner is limited to exploring the sensation Lopez caused with her 'butt,' hip hop status, and early film career, I hope to have looked at all these aspects of her stardom in order to understand how a Puerto Rican from the Bronx became an international superstar and conglomerate.

---

[183] Opcit., p 236.

[184] Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), p 199.

5

Cameron Diaz: The 'All-American' Latina

> All my life, because I'm blond and blue-eyed, people who aren't Hispanic can't believe that I am. And people who are Hispanic always think I'm not, because I don't look like them.
> Cameron Diaz [1]

> As much as we might not like to admit it, our first impressions of others are strongly influenced by our stereotypes concerning both natural physical features such as gender, skin colour and body type....
> Paul S. Cowen [2]

> Even if a Latino brother or sister has supposedly white skin, he or she is still Latino in the eyes of the white privileged, you see.
> Cornel West[3]

The common belief that Latinas are 'slightly tan[ned] with dark hair and eyes'[4] draws attention to the distinct physiognomy of Cuban-American actress Cameron Diaz. Her 'white' features – blonde hair and blue eyes - contradict this typical image particularly when compared to other mainstream Latina actresses such as Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez.[5] In terms of her screen roles, the actress has not portrayed Latina characters thereby supporting the notion that she has not been perceived as

---

[1] Bob Strauss, 'Q & A with Cameron Diaz: On cigars, boyfriend Matt Dillon and 300-pound actresses with warts,' *E! Online* (1998).
[Online] Accessed 4 June 2002.
http://www.eonline.com/Celebs/Qa/Diaz/intrview2.html

[2] Paul S. Cowen, 'A Social-Cognitive Approach to Ethnicity in Films,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 355.

[3] Cornel West in an interview with Jorge Klor de Alva and Earl Shorris, 'Our Next Question: The Uneasiness between Blacks and Latinos,' in *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror*, Richard Delgado and Jean Stephanic (eds,), Chapter 77 (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1997), p 487. Original text appeared in *Harpers'* Magazine, 1996.

[4] Clara E. Rodriguez, *Latin Looks: The Image of Latinas & Latinos in the United States Media* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), p 1.

[5] Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), p 44.

an 'authentic' Latina. Perhaps Diaz' features are considered to be 'too different' to convince an audience that any portrayal as a Latina could be genuine.

The view that Latina women are all dark ignores the issue that some Latinas do appear to have 'Anglo-Saxon' features, particularly Cuban women. In their book *The Hispanics in the U.S.: A History*, L.H. Gann and Peter J. Duignan reveal: 'the white population of Cuba consisted, in descending order of social esteem, of *criollos* (old Spanish), *gallegos* (new Spanish immigrants, many of them from Northwestern Spain and *polacos* (Eastern European immigrants, many of them Jewish).'[6] In the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, it is argued that, 'because of the relationship between class and race in pre-Revolutionary Cuba, Whites are over-represented in the immigrant population [...] thus in the 1970's United States Census Bureau almost 95 percent of Cubans in the United States identified themselves as White.'[7] As a result, many members of the third largest Latino group in the United States[8] look White thus contributing to the diversity of the Hispanic population in 'race, colour and ethnic background.'[9] Cubans have been less stereotyped than 'other Latino groups,'[10] but this does not indicate that they have been exempt from stereotypical portrayal.

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the image of Cameron Diaz as well as explore how her 'unique physiognomy' initiates a discourse in non-stereotypical cultural analysis. Five of her films will be discussed in order to analyse the fabrication of ethnicity in her roles, as well as the distinctive position the actress occupies as a white Latina in Hollywood. The first two films, *The Mask* (Charles Russell, New Line Cinema, 1994, US) and *Feeling Minnesota* (Steven Baigelman, Fine Line Features, 1996, US), provide insight into how the film industry projected the actress as a sexually charged figure whilst promoting her ethnic background in the press. What I will argue is that despite the fact that her early roles were non-Latina the actress's body was quickly established as an authentic site of ethnic femininity. I will also contend that in foregrounding Diaz as a genuine site of ethnicity, the actress's publicity promotes the star as an exotic figure to justify the erotic and

---

[6] L.H. Gann and Peter J. Duignan, *The Hispanics in the U.S.: A History* (Boulder, CO and London: Westview Press, 1986), p 97.
[7] Stephan Thernstrom (ed.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1980), p 257.
[8] Ibid., p 104.
[9] Mireya Navarro, 'Latinos Gains Visibility in Cultural Life of U.S.,' *The New York Times*, 19 September (New York, 1999), p A24.
[10] David R. Maciel, 'Latino Cinema,' in *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the United States: Literature and Art*, Francisco Lomeli, (ed.) (Houston: Arte Público Press and Instituto de Cooperacion IberoAmericana, 1993), p 314.

sexual display of the actress's visibly white body. To analyse Diaz as a sexually exotic image is to examine how her films negotiate the actress's white and ethnic identity via dance performances across a number of her films. Thus if Perez' mouth and Lopez' backside have been the most recognisable physical aspects to underscore Latinness in their films then with Diaz, it is her dancing body which is projected as Hollywood's version of Latina performance. For this reason I look to the work of Linda Mizejewski and Adrienne L. McLean as both offer discourses on dance performance in the figure of the Ziegfeld Girl and Judy Garland.

McLean's work on Rita Hayworth is also critical to my analysis of Diaz since I consider the foregrounding of the star as both American and ethnic.[11] This recognition of whiteness and the representation of Americanness in her star image and persona will be read in more detail in the following two films, *My Best Friend's Wedding* (Paul J. Hogan, Tri-Star Pictures, 1997, US) and *There's Something About Mary* (Peter & Bobby Farrelly, 20th Century Fox, 1998, US). Diaz' image in *My Best Friend's Wedding* offers no evidence of the actress's ethnic identity therefore I refer to Richard Dyer's book *White* to carry out a reading of the construction of whiteness in this film, as well as throughout this chapter.

In the final film to be analysed in this chapter, *Charlie's Angels* (McG, Columbia Tristar Studios, 2000, US), I observe the way in which Diaz' body is projected as both an extremely white, American image *and* an ethnically diverse figure. My method of examining the construction of Americanness and ethnicity in her publicity and promotion thus resembles McLean's reading of the fabrication of ethnicity and transformation in Hayworth's star text. In weighing up the publicity of Diaz as a whole, I am interested in how she is promoted as a non-typical Latina as well as how she is projected as representing Latinaness in publicity geared towards Latinos. More importantly, I concentrate on those articles that 'recognise' the actress as a Latina in order to examine the context and type of publicity which emphasise her status as an ethnic figure, particularly in Spanish texts. What I hope to make clear is that because of her white image and ethnic background Diaz offers a unique and more complex way of examining Latina stardom. In what follows, I turn to the initial construction of her 'All-American'[12] star image and persona and how Diaz became a Latina representative in Hollywood, despite her white look.

---

[11] Adrienne L. McLean, 'Transformation, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in the Construction of Rita Hayworth, American Love Goddess,' in *Journal of Film and Video*, Fall-Winter, Vol. 44, No.3 (University and Video Association: 1992-1993), pp 8-26.

[12] Ivor Davis, 'Giddy, Gorgeous, and Just One of the Guys: Cameron Diaz,' *Biography*, April, Vol. 4, No. 4 (2000), p 74.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

The All-American and Latina persona

Cameron Diaz made her first appearance around 1988 when at the age of sixteen she was contracted by the Elite Modelling Agency. Born and raised in Long Beach California, Diaz, whose father is Cuban-American and whose mother is German, English and American Indian, began, 'earning $2000 a day and building a reputation as a sunny, all-American girl perfect for selling Calvin Klein jeans and Coca Cola.'[13] Appearing twice on the cover of popular American teenage magazine *Seventeen*, a young Diaz graced the July 1990 issue with star-spangled jacket, sports top and matching earrings to commemorate the Declaration of Independence.[14] (See Photocopy). Thus, in the first phase of her career as a model, she became a reference point for 'Americanness' with her white features. As we will examine later in this chapter, the association between whiteness and Americanness in her publicity is a central aspect of the actress's persona.

In exploring Diaz' youth, Karen Schneider and Elizabeth Leonard offer an insightful description of the actress as a seven-year-old in an article entitled 'There's Something About Cameron': 'The closest she came to displaying a wild side was on Halloween in second grade, when, Simms [Diaz' teacher] recalls, Diaz dressed up as Mae West: "She had jewels, a long dress, high heels. She was good. The dress didn't trip her."[15] This image of a seven-year old 'shapeless' figure intending to embody an incredibly buxom 1920's star reflects a less provocative image of the actress during her adolescence. More of a tomboy, her early years reveal no signs of tantalising behaviour as the article continues:

> In the streets of Long Beach she developed into something less angelic, playing asphalt ball games with tough guys who regularly pummelled her. A heavy-metal fan [...] she wore her jeans ripped, her eyes rimmed with black and her feeling on the inside. When kids taunted her with the nickname Skeletor for being so thin, she didn't show her hurt .. "I would kick the s—t out of them."[16]

While on the one hand her 'Skeletor' image contradicts the stereotypical notion of 'luscious Latinas,'[17] on the other, the actress's body had been described as symbolising a starlet image when 'dressed up'. The fact that her body proved susceptible to 'transformation' had been a characteristic

---

[13] Ibid.
[14] Diaz also appeared on the cover of the June 1991 issue.
[15] Karen S. Schneider; Elizabeth Leonard, 'There's Something About Cameron,' *People*, 17 August, Vol. 50, No. 5 (New York, 1998), p 74.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.
[16] Ibid.
[17] 'Luscious Latinas: The pros and cons of an Evolving Stereotype,' is the caption of an article written by Valerie Menard for *Hispanic* magazine, May (New York, 1997), pp 21-26.

Figure 22. Cover of *Seventeen* (July 1990, USA).

established early on in her publicity, and by the time promotion of her film debut surfaced, much emphasis had been placed on how the then model altered her slim physique to the overly shapely figure created in *The Mask* (1994). Required to 'dress up' again because 'the producers had in mind a more curvaceous type,' Schneider and Leonard confirmed that her enhanced features had been produced with the aide of a '$36 padded bra.'[18] As a result, the opening sequence of *The Mask* positions the actress as a sex object.

Wiggling her way inside the bank where Stanley Ipkiss (Jim Carrey) and colleague are standing, there is a long shot of Tina (Diaz) stopping, and then bending over to adjust her ankle strap. From a low angle the camera zooms in towards her ankle and moves its way up to reveal her leg and much of her breasts. This edit is accompanied by the non-diegetic sound of sultry music and soon we see a close up of her ample breasts as she straightens up and flicks her blonde mane sensuously. (Presented in slow motion the actress's dishevelled hair and parted red lips contribute to the sexually charged position, leaving both men flabbergasted.) Approaching Ipkiss she asks 'can *you* help me?' and, just before sitting down, she removes her jacket to expose more flesh as she begins to flirt with Ipkiss, in order to distract him from her real intentions: to videotape the guards for a bank heist orchestrated by her gangster boyfriend Dorian (Peter Greene).

Jim Carrey stars as bank clerk Stanley Ipkiss, who accidentally discovers an ancient mask that converts him into a 'cartoon-type'[19] superhero, somewhat like, as Joe Chidley describes, 'Cab Calloway on an amphetamine rush.'[20] Dumbfounded by Tina during her singing act, the animated zoot-suited character transforms into a caricature of a Tex Avery wolf minutes after she is introduced as 'the most beautiful flower of the Coco Bongo.' Presented to the diegetic audience after palm leaves open to reveal her figure, she is framed in a similar manner to that in the opening sequence: a long shot of her on stage is followed by a low angle zoom and tilting up of the camera. Singing the tune 'Ain't I Good to You' in a shimmery little dress, she starts to sway while caressing her body and shortly after we see her boyfriend Dorian smiling in her direction. From his point-of-view palm trees are situated around the diegetic platform while red hues light the stage floor during her performance. The Mask finally sees the singer and from his p.o.v we see a medium close-up of

---

[18] Schneider and Leonard.

[19] Calvin Demmon, 'Behind the Mask Lurks a Remarkable Morality Play,' *Alberta Report*, 6 March (US, 1995).
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

[20] Joe Chidley, 'Put on a Happy Face: Jim Carrey Pushes Physical Comedy to the Limit,' *Maclean's*, 8 August, Vol. 107, No. 32 (1994), p. 54.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

the actress leaning against a palm tree with right arm raised then slowly lowered as the camera follows it sliding over her body. As she finishes singing, the spotlight begins to dim and her silhouette is produced by the illuminated steps directly behind her figure. What follows is a flash of The Mask, literally, as he joins Tina on stage, then shouting out, 'let's Rock this joint,' to which a band member responds with the opening lyrics of the next song 'Hey Pachuco!' This introduction cues the green figure and Tina into performing an energetic dance sequence and 'the result,' as film critic Roger Ebert writes, 'is one of those scenes when movie magic really works.'[21]

The Mask promoted an array of Latino themes in connection with Diaz' ethnic identity. References to her as an ethnic figure are most evident during the dance sequence when band members dressed in zoot suits shout out 'Hey Pachuco!' a popular Mexican-American term associated with young men who dress in this way; Diaz and Carrey offer a brief performance of the Argentinean tango, and more specifically, Latino and Black audience members are shown in medium close-up shots enthusiastically responding to the diegetic swing music, a popular genre performed by Black musicians during the thirties. Significantly, the structure of the dance performance seems to depend on the presence of Latino and black viewers to add to the ethnic tone of the dance space as well as heighten Diaz' ethnic background as Latina. As a result even in contemporary films where a (white) Latina participates in the narrative, we continue to witness a marginalized treatment of Latinos against white culture. In this way, the sequence reflects Ella Shohat's analysis of ethnicity in musical numbers since:

> The presence of marginalized groups is largely felt through music and becomes largely the space of white action. [...] The presumed non-realistic status of the musical numbers provides a narrative license for displaying "exoticism," while allowing for subliminal eroticism via the safe channel of the "Other".[22]

Ironically, although Diaz is 'marginalized' in the performance, she is not limited to the dance number as she forms part of the narrative amongst 'white action.' Her participation in the musical number also presents the actress as an erotic image thus positioning her as a site of exoticism. Ana M. López discusses how Dolores del Río was considered as an exotic figure articulated with

---

[21] Roger Ebert, '*The Mask*,' *Chicago Sunday Times*, 29 July, *Film Review* (Chicago, 1994). [Online] Accessed 28 June 2000. http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1994/07/932743.html

[22] Ella Shohat, 'Ethnicities-in-Relation: Toward a Multicultural Reading on American Cinema,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester Friedman, ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 235.

sensuality, which was 'was located and defined on a sexual rather than an ethnic register.'[23] What I am suggesting is that, like del Río, Diaz' otherness is also defined on an exotic register.

It is paradoxical that Diaz' first film should be titled *The Mask* for the manner in which it is related to transitions of metamorphosis, not only in Jim Carrey's character but more importantly, in the ethnic and white formation of the actress's persona. Her sensual walk, the sultry music and the male reaction to her presence underlies an unsettling sexuality at the same time that it plays with the racial impact of the actress's whiteness. Thus I am persuaded to suggest that the shifting between whiteness and ethnicity in Diaz' films can be read as an overlapping of identities. W.T. Lhamon Jr., writes of masks worn by blackface performers in minstrelsy and notes that 'the mask, the doubling, all the performance protocols ensure the overlapping of several identities held together as one.'[24] The mask in Diaz' case holds together a Latina and white identity at the same time that it serves as a camouflage to which the actress can reveal (at simultaneous or different moments in narratives) the identity she wishes to expose. In Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis of the mask in carnivals, he states that the disguise is a 'violation of natural boundaries [...] [and] reveals the essence of the grotesque.'[25] I agree that Diaz' dance number in this first film can relate to such depictions for her body violates the nature of codes assigned to white women, in particular the flaunting and caressing of her body to the diegetic male clientele. However, I would argue that because evidence of Diaz' ethnicity is revealed in the media we do not witness the 'grotesque', instead we observe the film's desire to interpret a familiar depiction of Latinness through the mise-en-scène. Despite its banal portrait, the dance number conjures up an implied ethnic setting with palm trees (a common site in her paternal family's homeland), music and Latinos to produce a contemporary but nevertheless authentic ethnic character via a white body. But while the narrative and the role played by Diaz define her image as that of a WASP character, the erotic manner in which she moves her body signifies that aspect of ethnic femininity that pronounces, according to Ella Shohat, a Latina 'swaying the hips or "going native."'[26]

It should be noted that the placing of Diaz's character in California not only situates her in her native state but also underscores the ethnic and racial relations between Latinos, in particular

---

[23] Ana M. López, 'Are all Latins From Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism,' in *Unspeakable Images, Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 410.

[24] W. T. Lhamon, Jr., *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip-Hop*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p 175.

[25] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p 39 cited in W. T. Lhamon, Jr., *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip-Hop*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p 139.

[26] Shohat, p 238.

Mexicans and mainstream America.[27] As mentioned in chapter two, the largest concentration of Latinos resides in California, with Mexicans dominating the Latino population. In fact, more than half of the Latino population in the United States is of Mexican descent thus offering some explanation as to why the dance number Diaz performs to makes reference to this Latino group. I would contend then that with the rise of the Latino population in California as well as across the country it would only seem 'natural' to place a Latina, despite her white body, providing an authentic interpretation of Latin 'swing'. Sarah Rubidge contends that 'the term 'authentic' in the performing arts holds that the site of authentic performances is the performer.'[28] The continual emphasis of Diaz' Cuban background in the media and the actress's affirmation of her Latina identity became two ways in which the press depicted an authentic portrait of *latinidad*. Thus, by the time we witness Diaz dance we have already been revealed the 'truth' about the actress, making her more accessible and recognisable to other Latinos whatever their native origins.

It could be argued that Cameron Diaz' ethnic identity and white features have been re-written to capitalise on the Latino boom. In this manner the positioning of Diaz responds to the industry's perception of Latinas as musical entertainers, at the same time that her image in dance sequences encompasses the shaping of the actress as racially and ethnically desirable. Writing on Judy Garland's dance performances in several of her films, Adrienne L. McLean observes that the body ultimately transmits linguistic expressions which are activated by several connotations including the visual and non-verbal. 'In short,' as the author claims, 'bodies never are "simple objects of thought," but complex corporeal sources as well as manifestations of many levels of meaning.'[29] If we pay attention to Diaz' gestures and movements, in her first dance number, we can understand how her body is linked to social representations of *latinidad*. Put forward as a modern version of the cantina girl whose duties, as Gary D. Keller explains, involve dancing and singing

---

[27] It should be mentioned that with Diaz' films we see no consistent pattern of location setting as in the case of Rosie Perez whose movies were situated in New York. Of the films to be looked at in this chapter only two are set in California: *The Mask* and *Charlie's Angels* (2000). *Feeling Minnesota* changes locale to Las Vegas towards the end of the film whereas in *My Best Friend's Wedding* Diaz' character is a native of Chicago. *There's Something About Mary* initially placed Diaz in Rhode Island before moving her character to Florida where she works as a dentist. Thus, Diaz's films tend to shift across states such as Utah (*Very Bad Things* 1997) and even off the continent such as in the case of her animated character Fiona in *Shrek* (2001) who briefly resides in a castle in a fictional land; interestingly Lopez' animated character in *Antz* (1998) lives underground and Perez' animated character Chel in *The Road to El Dorado* (2001) lives in a legendary village in Mexico thus affirming that even in animated films Diaz' characters are still upper class.

[28] Sarah Rubidge, 'Does Authenticity Matter? The Case for and against Authenticity in the Performing Arts,' *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*, Patrick Campbell, ed. (New York and Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp 224.

[29] Adrienne L. McLean, 'Feeling and the filmed Body: Judy Garland and the kinesics of suffering,' *Film Quarterly*, Spring (2002).
[Online] Accessed 23 November 2004.
http:www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1070/is_3_55/ai_85465100

(usually in Westerns), Diaz personifies the Latina stereotype and further assumes the sexuality of the character by offering gestures such as puckered lips and come hither looks throughout her performance.[30] Thus we tend to find moments of conflict in the narratives of Diaz' films because the actress's body is consciously projected as both white/virtuous and ethnic/exotic/sexually pleasing.

Significantly, such contradiction also appears in the publicity of the actress where she is often described in terms which mark her as erotic and white. Early on in her career the surfacing of Diaz' Latina identity in images which produce extreme representations of whiteness is present in the publicity of the actress. On the August 1996 cover of *Detour* magazine, we see Diaz surrounded by a soft body of light making her skin appear somewhat translucent. (See Photocopy).[31] The image suggests celestial connotations in its caption: '*Vaya con Diaz*' however, because the original saying is *vaya con Dios*, which is Spanish for 'Go with God,' Diaz' ethnic otherness is denoted with a religious undertone thereby reminding the viewer of her origins. In other words, although the star's body 'speak[s] whiteness'[32] she nevertheless incarnates Latinness.

In another image of Diaz, set against a pale blue background, the actress is wearing a low-cut white dress and diamond bracelet. (See Photocopy).[33] What is unusual about the dress is that the lower half is made of white feathers, some separated and appearing to float, like her wispy blonde hair; some of her blonde streaks are almost white. There is a connection between her blondeness and the white dress in that the actress appears to have a certain 'glow' that can be linked to, as Marina Warner suggests 'heavenly effulgence.'[34] Here, Diaz' glowing image not only represents 'a key quality in idealised representation of white women,'[35] but also, her figure can be linked to an angelic image because of the feathers on her dress.[36] Then again, the feathery angelic look is somewhat deceptive since we can see her cleavage and a part of her breasts, slightly eroticising her body. This kind of 'carnal' insistence can be detected on the March 1997 cover of

---

[30] Gary D. Keller, *Hispanics and United States Film: An Overview & Handbook* (Bilingual Press, 1994), p 40.
[31] *Detour*, 'Cameron Diaz: *vaya con* Diaz,' *Detour*, August (US, 1996).
[Online] Accessed 10 September 2001.
http://www.cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover24.jpg
[32] Negra uses this term when discussing Sonja Henie and Shirley Temple in her work, p 89. Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), p 115.
[33] *Cosmopolitan*, April (UK, 2001), p 44.
[34] Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), p 366. This quote appears in Dyer's book *White*, p 124.
[35] Dyer (1997), p 132.
[36] In his discussion on the relationship between whites (in particular men), and enterprise as well as imperialism, Dyer discusses how whites are associated to material goods and the image of Diaz promotes that of an affluent white figure. pp 30-40.

Figure 24. Cover of *Detour* (August 1996, USA).

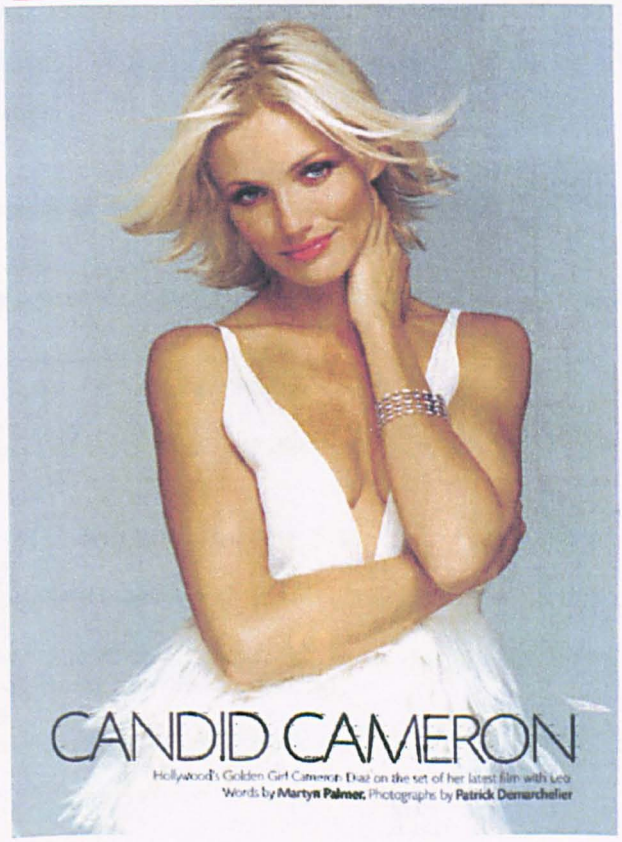

Figure 25. Cover Story in *Cosmopolitan* (March 2002, UK).

Screen Babes[37] and a 1994 *Playboy* issue.[38] (See Photocopies). With the caption 'Sheer Sex Appeal: Cameron Diaz,' *Screen Babes* presents a sultry Diaz with dark make-up, ruffled blonde hair and an off the shoulder black dress. In *Playboy*, she is pictured raising her blouse but stopping short of exposing her breasts, which are partly revealed. It is in these that Diaz' body is promoted as sexually charged, 'transforming' her look from the more 'virtuous' images discussed earlier. This is key to her persona especially since the sultry transformation of the actress in her debut film provoked much attention in the media. Considering that her publicity consistently draws upon her ethnic background, the actress's sensuality is 'guaranteed' as authentic rather than fabricated.

Diaz' features and character name (Tina Carlyle) indicate otherwise, but visual evidence suggests *The Mask* acted as a vehicle to foreground her Latina heritage. Moreover, when she debuted, some articles, such as Christa D'Souza's review, concentrated on the actress's 'sexuality' and/or ethnicity as early as the caption 'Cameron Comes On: Fresh from her dazzling debut in *The Mask* Cameron Diaz *vamps it up* [my emphasis] in beguiling fashion.'[39] Linking the actress's sensual portrayal to her background, the article continues, 'Her father, an oil-man, is Cuban, which explains the surname and fiery on-screen presence.'[40] This is significant, as the actress's sexually desirable figure was associated with a stereotypical image of Latina women: the vamp. Perhaps because the actress's background had been recognisable, she could be linked to 'the most common female Hispanic type.'[41] What is clear is that the promotion of her as Latina in the early period of her career pointed up her ethnic background: 'Diaz, with exotic Cuban-Native American looks,'[42] 'her father... is a second generation Cuban.'[43] This is crucial as her *latinidad* becomes increasingly endorsed throughout her film career.

---

[37] *Screen Babes Monthly*, 'Cameron Diaz: Sheer Sex Appeal!,' *Screen Babes Monthly*, March (UK, 1997). [Online] Accessed 8 June 2000.
http://www.cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover31.jpg

[38] *Playboy*, 'The World's Most Beautiful Woman: Cameron Diaz Unmasked,' *Playboy* (Australia, 1994). [Online] Accessed 8 June 2000.
http://www.cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover38.jpg

[39] Christa D'Souza, 'Cameron Comes On,' *Esquire*, February, Vol. 123, No. 2 (New York, 1995), p 130. [Online] Accessed 8 March 2000.
htttp:ehost13.epnet.com/ehost1.asp/key=204.179.122.140_8000_1227691901&site=ehost&return=n

[40] Ibid.

[41] Keller, p 44.

[42] Melanie Cole, 'Generation X: '30 Under Thirty,' *Hispanic*, August, Vol. 8, No. 7 (New York, 1995), p 22. [Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site=ehost&return=n

[43] Tom Gliatto and Maria Speidel, 'Unmasked: Cameron Diaz is the Beauty who Tames Jim Carrey's party Beast,' *People*, 22 August, Vol. 42, No. 8 (New York, 1994), p 51.
[Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site=ehost&return=n

Figure 28. Cover of *Screen Babes Monthly* (March 1997, UK).

Figure 29. Cover of *Playboy* (1994, Australia).

Cameron Diaz' star persona was thus established as sexualised. With publicity concentrating on her sensual debut, the actress began receiving recognition as 'a genuine sex bomb with a gorgeous face.'[44] In fact, critics praised her interpretation of the 'gorgeous dopey bimbo,'[45] and considered the actress 'the most promising blue-eyed blonde [...] opposite Jim Carrey,'[46] as well as 'a true discovery.'[47] Identified, as 'as the sultry female lead' whose 'status as Hollywood Super Babe was all but guaranteed,'[48] the actress began turning down roles declaring that 'she didn't want to be cast as a floozy.'[49] Apparently there was a reaction to her decision to step away from this type of 'sexual' character as Schneider and Leonard write: 'not everyone understood her desire to shed the sexpot image for heavy drama.'[50] In renouncing this image, Diaz was possibly 'shedding' another image with ethnic connotations; her next role was as a sexually repressed psychology graduate student in Stacy Title's film *The Last Supper* (Sony Pictures, 1996, US). Despite the fact that a shift in character image began for her, the actress's Cuban-American heritage had been reinforced in her early publicity. It is important to bear in mind that, throughout her career, other writings concentrated on her family and background, in particular during interviews with the star. This is significant in that interviews are, as Andrew Britton argues, 'access to [...] extraordinary lives.'[51] What is more, 'the intimacy of the relation mediates the star's otherness: both the mode of address and, [...] the fact that some aspects of the "private life" may appear as a paradigm of the reader's experience or aspirations, serve to bind star and audience together.'[52] In the following section I wish to look in more detail at how the actress reveals her own upbringing within a Latino

---

[44] Jancee Dunn, 'Hot Phenom: Cameron Diaz,' *Rolling Stone*, 22 August, Cover Story, Issue 741 (New York, 1996), p. 50. Film critic Roger Ebert had been cited on his opinion of Diaz.
[Online] Accessed 8 March 2000.
htttp:ehost13.epnet.com/ehost1.asp/key=204.179.122.140_8000_1227691901&site=ehost&return=n

[45] Janet Maslin, 'Wild Card Game in a Game of Dirty Tricks,' *The New York Times*, 29 July (New York, 1994), p C16.

[46] *Mr. Showbiz*, 'Cameron Diaz,' *Mr. Showbiz* Celebrities Biography of Cameron Diaz on the *International Movie Database* (IMDB).
[Online] Accessed 4 March 2000.
http://mr.showbiz.go.com/people/camerondiaz/content/bio.html.
[Online] Accessed 4 March 2000.
http://mr.showbiz.go.com/people/camerondiaz/content/bio.html.

[47] Ebert (1994).

[48] Schneider and Leonard.

[49] Cole (1995).

[50] Opcit.

[51] Andrew Britton, *Katherine Hepburn, Star as Feminist* (London: Studio Vista, 1995), p 38.

[52] Ibid. Britton is citing Richard Dyer.

(specifically Mexican) community and her discussion of her Cuban roots, in order to emphasise how her publicity established Diaz as a Latina figure so early on in her career.

A Latina Upbringing

With Diaz openly discussing issues concerning her family's class and growing up in a predominantly urban Latino environment, we can interpret a willingness to associate herself with the Latino community. That specific interviews discussing her background emerged early in her career confirms the projection of the actress as a Latina figure even when her roles are not particularly ethnically defined. If we look at two excerpts from interviews with the actress, we are presented with evidence of this. The first is from an interview with Lawrence Grobel:

> **Q:** **Was it (Long Beach Polytechnic) a good high school?**
> **A:** It's a big school, basically in the ghetto, next to the projects.
> **Q:** **How in touch are you with your various ethnicities?**
> **A:** My father's Cuban and Spanish. My mother's German, English, American Indian. Growing up I felt my family was different from everybody else. I didn't know any other Cubans and there was a cultural difference from the Mexican families I grew up with. I thought we were freaks.
> **Q:** **Is there a sense of superiority that Cubans feel over Mexicans?**
> **A:** Yeah. I think the Cuban culture thinks they're better than everybody. [Laughs] Educated Cubans who came here are complete elitists. The Cuban people are generous and wonderful and warm, but when it comes down to pride in their heritage, they're incredibly proud.[53]

In the following, the actress offers Gail Buchanan a somewhat similar outlook:

> "I always felt our family was different in our own way," she told me. "I'd learned about Cuba from my grandparents – the food, the language and, above all, the attitude- and I grew up around Mexicans, who have their own culture. By the time I went to high school, I didn't feel like an outsider. There were so many ethnic groups in the inner-city school I went to."[54]

In his book, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of Identity*, Richard D Alba, believes that, 'The level of ethnic experience is also strongly associated with the salience of ethnic identity, the degree of importance an individual attributes to his or her ethnic background.'[55] It is clear then, that Diaz demonstrates a desire to give herself a level of authentic ethnic identity through her upbringing and cultural experiences which have been handed down to the actress by her Cuban grandmother.

---

[53] Lawrence Grobel, 'Candid Cameron,' *Movieline*, March (US, 1997), p 54.
[54] Gail Buchalter, 'Cameron Diaz,' *Parade* Magazine, 21 October (New York, 1997), pp 12-13.
[55] Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), p 83.

Thus if 'ethnic identity,' as Alba claims, 'is first and foremost, a matter of ancestry' then Diaz began to preserve her Cuban cultural roots at a very early age, explaining her self-perception as belonging to a Latino or ethnic group and not feeling 'like an outsider.'[56] Having learned, established and appreciated a connection with her heritage, she projects herself to the public as having a common culture with other Latinos, in particular Mexicans. Thus I would argue that Diaz not only reveals the 'truth' about her ethnic roots but also 'reinforce[s] a strong sense of cultural consciousness,' as observed by Antonia Darder, which implies an authentic notion of *latinidad*.[57] Moreover, if we consider Stephen Thernstrom's analysis of Cuban families, it seems that Diaz' relationship with her family denotes Latina 'behaviour': 'Cubans still place a great value on family ties; the family is usually viewed as stable and strong.'[58] In some of her publicity we learn of her strong ethnic ties with her family, as revealed in an interview with Paul Fischer:

> But the Cuban thing is still inherent in her [Diaz]. Her family, she recalls, came from Spain via Cuba, and despite the cultural mix, she admits to having a cultural connection with her Cuban roots. "My father's family settled in Miami's Ebor City, which is a very Cuban community, where they rolled cigars, so the food, language, cigars and culture were always there with me as a child."[59]

In their discussion on Latinos in the United States, Frank D. Bean and Marta Tienda define ethnic groups thus: 'sharing common cultural norms, values, identities, and behaviours, and who both recognize themselves and are recognized by others as being ethnic.'[60] With Diaz openly discussing her youth and cultural experiences in publicity the actress substantiates her relationship with her inherited Cuban culture. That she visits her paternal family in what is known as the 'capital' for most Cubans, further bonds Diaz with her father's heritage thus adding a genuine identification with her Latino family.[61] The importance of such an affirmation not only emphasises and reinforces the actress's image as a Latina figure, but also underscores the fact that Diaz views

---

[56] Ibid, p 164.

[57] Antonia Darder's chapter, 'The Politics of Biculturalism: Culture and War Difference in the Formation of Warriors for Gringostroika and The New Mestizas.' In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 132.

[58] Thernstrom, p 259.

[59] Paul Fischer, 'Diaz, Cameron: *A Life Less Ordinary* A GAL MOST EXTRAORDINARY,' urbancinefile.com (Australia).
[Online] Accessed 6 July 2000.
http://www.urbancinefile.com.au/scripts/cinefile/Interviews.idc?Article_ID=594

[60] Frank D. Bean and Marta Tienda, *The Hispanic Population of The United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1987), p 14. Bean and Tienda refer to Joan Vincent's essay, 'The Structuring of Ethnicity,' in *Human Organizations* 33 (1974), pp 375-379.

[61] Gann and Duignan discuss the immigration of Cubans to the United States and recognise Miami as 'the second largest "Cuban" city in the world after Havana.'

herself as having experienced life within a Cuban culture. Diaz may pass for white but her roots are very much a part of her identity, as Bob Strauss has pointed out:

> **Strauss:** Surely your heritage influences some of your attitudes, such as your response to the current cigar-smoking fad?
> **Diaz:** Yeah, it's *in the blood* [my emphasis]. I smoke cigars occasionally, but I don't really like the social cigar smoking that's happening. They have all these cigar bars all over now--everybody sits around smoking, and they don't even know what they're doing. They don't know how ridiculous they look.[62]

Central to the last response is the actress's (if I dare say) *Cubana* attitude; emphasis on her cultural connection seemingly making her an expert when it comes to cigar smoking.

As Diaz began making a name for herself in Hollywood, her ethnic heritage remained a constant feature in the press. Also present in her publicity is the ascription of exoticism to describe the ethnic figure with 'ideal' features. Therefore what I wish to examine in the following section in more detail is the construction of exoticism and whiteness in Diaz' persona and publicity, as well as how her portrayal of WASP characters elevated the actress to stardom. Following this discussion is the second film to be examined in this chapter, *Feeling Minnesota* (1996).

Whiteness and Exoticism in the Persona and Publicity of Cameron Diaz

Shortly after her film debut, Diaz was consistently described in her publicity as having an exotic image. This type of publicity is essential to her stardom, for 'exoticism' became another manner of describing her ethnic identity in texts geared towards both Latinos and non-Latinos. For example, in an article by Melanie Cole for *Hispanic* magazine, the actress was described as 'an exotic Cuban-Native American.'[63] Six years later in the April 2001 edition of *Cosmopolitan*, with Diaz gracing the cover, Martyn Palmer wrote: 'She can thank her parents, too, for the exotic genes – her father is Cuban descent and her mother has German, English and Native-American ancestry – which have provided those striking looks.'[64] *Cosmopolitan*, a beauty magazine distributed worldwide, has featured Diaz on their cover on at least four different occasions and the actress was selected as 'the perfect woman'[65] to adorn their anniversary issue in March 2002. In Lilly Gonzales' article on Jennifer Lopez, the writer commented upon her unusual look while also comparing her to the Puerto Rican diva:

---

[62] Strauss. The third page of this interview is on the following website.
http://www.eonline.com/Celebs/Qa/Diaz/intrview3.html
[63] Cole (1995).
[64] Martyn Palmer, 'Candid Cameron: Hollywood's Golden Girl Cameron Diaz on the set of her latest film with Leo,' *Cosmopolitan* (UK, 2001), p 46.
[65] *Cosmopolitan* cover story celebrating the actress's and magazine's 30th birthday, 'Playing it Cool: Cosmo Chills Out with Cameron Diaz,' March (UK, 2002), p 42.

> Why is this Puerto Rican from the Bronx, whose natural hair color is as dark as mine, walking around with blonde hair? Did she feel she could only attract a mainstream audience if she didn't look so threateningly Latina? **Yes, Latinos come in all different colors, but you don't see Cameron Diaz dropping a bucket of black paint on her head to win acceptance.** [...]. Hollywood just doesn't accept females who look "too ethnic." We don't fit into that little mold of what Hollywood considers beautiful. *Exotic* [my emphasis], yes. Beautiful, no.[66]

While Gonzales recognises the industry's continuing projection of contemporary Latino images as ethnic but not 'too ethnic' despite the fact that, 'an unprecedented array of political and pop cultural figures have helped normalize the image of Latinos in the mainstream imagination,'[67] she has observed the notion of exoticism as reflecting Hollywood's idea of promoting ethnic bodies. This is significant since the writer raises the issue of how Latinos have different features, such as skin colour.

The fact that Latinos are racially diverse is a signifier that Diaz' whiteness in her films reveals a complex and challenging profile for which viewers, in particular Latinos, may find it difficult to recognise or relate to the actress's ethnic identity. Among Latino groups, Cubans/Cuban Americans are often recognised as being racially white due to their European/Spanish background thus disregarding the infusion of African heritage in their racial male-up. Usually characterised as 'white, conservative, and middle-class,'[68] *cubanos* can be described as the Latino version of the average American, a depiction which is consistently endorsed in the stardom of Cameron Diaz. Homi K. Bhabha observes that skin as a visible fetish, is a 'key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, [...] and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies.'[69] Because of Diaz' racially white features, the actress has been positioned as representing whiteness which has clearly signalled to mainstream audiences and Latinos that Diaz is 'legitimately' white/American. It is then difficult to associate Diaz with an ethnic image despite her publicity promoting the star as an exotic Latina figure. Thus I would argue that because of her Latina background, the narratives of her films tend to rely on ethnic stereotype

---

[66] Because of the importance of physiognomy to this thesis, I have highlighted Gonzalez' statement on distinct Latino features. Lilly Gonzalez' Column, 'Lopez sold out Latina heritage to make money,' *The Daily Northwestern*, 11 April (North Carolina, 2002). This column is found in Northwestern University's newspaper.
[Online] Accessed 3 June 2002.
http://www.dailynorthwestern.com/daily/issues/2002/04/11/forum/f-gonzalez.shtml

[67] Gregory Rodriguez, '150 Years Later, Latinos Finally Hit the Mainstream,' *The New York Times*, Week in Review Desk, 15 April (New York, 2001).

[68] María de los Angeles Torres, '*Encuentros y Encontronazos*: Homeland in the Politics and Identity of the Cuban Diaspora.' In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 50.

[69] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The other question: the stereotyp and colonial discourse,' *Screen* , Vol. 24, No. 4 (1983), p 376.

such as the dancing figure, to underscore the actress's ethnic identity despite portraying WASP characters. This was the case in *The Mask* (and *Feeling Minnesota*) for the actress became marked as representing a cultural (Latina) stereotype charged with a threatening sensuality that disturbed colonial discourses. For this reason, I would argue that Diaz' body became part of a cultural rather than a racial drama which evoked a specific image of otherness. That her exoticism was spliced with the image of the star attached to a palm tree merely emphasised Diaz' image and dance performance as an ethnic site of pure fantasy.

> Commenting upon the concept of exoticism in Latina/o white bodies, Neil Foley reports,
>
> to identify oneself today as Hispanic is partially to acknowledge one's ethnic heritage without surrendering one's 'whiteness.' Hispanic identity thus implies a kind of 'separate but equal' whiteness with a twist of salsa, enough to make one ethnically flavourful and culturally exotic without, however, compromising one's racial privilege as a White person.[70]

Diaz' Latina identity may be called into question but the fact that she is continuously referred to as an exotic/ethnic figure insists upon the way her *latinidad* compliments her whiteness rather condemning it. This is evident in the star's publicity which never fails to mention, and therefore promote, the Latina figure as one of Hollywood's highest paid ethnic stars and screen darlings. Indeed, as a result of Diaz' white ethnic body, the actress has been able to shed a more positive light on Latinos thus provoking an awareness of cultural and racial dynamics in the United States. For this reason, Diaz is considered as representative of Latina splendour in that her white features enhance the racial gamut of Latinos thereby questioning stereotypical discourses on ethnicity. This is not to say that the actress has not been linked to ethnic stereotyping as noted above, or that she has not tantalised the notion of white femininity in her films as in the following to be discussed, rather that Diaz has not been typecast in roles as strictly Latina/ethnic as fellow Latina actresses Perez and Lopez.

Diaz' early career had, for the most part, been built upon a succession of independent films which featured the actress as a WASP character. Having gained some level of popularity in *The Mask* playing the bombshell figure, Diaz returned to a recreated, and crude version, of her 'vamp' role in her fourth film. In the independent film *Feeling Minnesota* (1996), the actress not only represents a

---

[70] Neil Foley cited in Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), p 12. Foley, 'Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and the Faustian Pact with Whiteness,' *Reflexiones 1997: New Directions in Mexican American Studies*, Neil Foley, ed. (Austin, Texas, 1997), p 53.

sexually charged character often associated with ethnic femininity, but, once again, she performs as an exotic dancer.[71]

There are several reasons why *Feeling Minnesota* serves as a useful film to analyse when looking at the stardom of Cameron Diaz. First, the transition from a mainstream to independent film is of interest as the actress stepped away from a Hollywood bombshell role to a less glamorous part. Second, the repeat performance of Diaz in a dance number is significant as her body is again put forward as part of a dance spectacle in which she is scantily clothed. Lastly, and more importantly, the film challenges the way Diaz' is positioned in another WASP role in that she plays a prostitute, thus complicating the framing of her visually white body whilst also instigating notions of Latina stereotype in film. In other words, as in *The Mask*, there is a certain amount of contradiction in the film as it seems to portray Diaz as representing whiteness at the same time that she conjures up images of ethnic and exotic sexuality. Thus, it is my intention to analyse how the actress's body disputes discourses of whiteness in this film as well as look at the dance performance of Diaz as an ongoing trait in her films.

In a no-name town in Minnesota, crime boss Red (Delroy Lindo) forces Freddie (Diaz) to marry Sam as settlement for a supposed debt owed by her brother. Before Freddie can reveal that her 'husband' is the culprit responsible for the gangster's financial loss, she begins an adventurous romance with her brother-in-law, jJaks just minutes after saying 'I do.' *Feeling Minnesota* stars Keanu Reeves as jJaks, a former felon who returns to his hometown to attend his brother's wedding and ends up running off with the bride. Vincent D'Onofrio co-stars as Sam, the groom-to-be and shady accountant who 'wins' his bride Freddie, while Dan Aykroyd offers a supporting role as a corrupt detective.

Feeling Minnesota presents Cameron Diaz as a bride who, as the film opens, is literally on the run. An extreme long shot of a running figure in a wedding gown is followed by a long shot of her being chased by three men in a car. We later learn that the ringleader is her black pimp (Lindo) who has been sitting on the window of the passenger side shouting 'yahoo!' to which Freddie gives him the finger and yells, 'Fuck you Red!' As she runs across train tracks her followers give chase on foot and an overhead long shot of the four figures shows her in the lead, until she is tackled by the gangster and dragged back to the car. It is then we learn of her deal to cover her brother's supposed debt, and when Freddie tries to escape again Red pulls her back and punches in the stomach before warning her:

---

[71] It is important to emphasise that Diaz' portrayal of a woman of ill repute in *Feeling Minnesota* also confirms the establishment of the 'whore' motif created in her previous film *She's the One* (Edward Burns, 20th Century Fox, US, 1996), and continued in later films such as in *Gangs of New York* (Martin Scorcese, Miramax, 2002, US).

> I'd hit you in the face but it's your wedding day. [...] Shit you lucky you gotta nice piece of ass [...]. I don't even wanna think about it. Now you're gonna marry that little fucker Sam, and you're gonna cook and you're gonna clean and you're gonna suck his cock and wanna know why? Cause that's the worst thing that I can do to you, that's why.

Hauled to her wedding, Freddie wastes no time in seducing her brother-in-law jJaks and soon the two are on the run. Eventually escaping the grasp of her husband and pimp (after they are killed), she heads out alone to fulfil her dream of becoming a Las Vegas showgirl. Once in Vegas, she contacts jJaks, and in the final sequence to be examined we see a glimpse of the former bride performing in a nightclub. Minutes before she appears on stage, we see images of several other fair-featured women (including a topless dancer with similar features to Diaz), who look a lot like Freddie. Seconds before the finale, she walks into the frame from the right of the screen wearing a red sequinned feathered headdress, matching long gloves and a shiny red fan in front of her body; a tattoo of a rose now replaces the 'Slut' once branded across her arm. Meanwhile, jJaks looks towards the diegetic stage where she and the other dancers are all dressed in similar costumes. We then see a medium close-up of Freddie's right profile which draws attention to her red-feathered headdress. Several moments later when she enters from the right of the frame, the blonde look-alike topless dancer stands to her left, which marks the dancers' finale.

The manner in which Diaz' whiteness is framed early on the film immediately raises questions about her body as representative of whiteness at the same time that it provokes discourses on Latinas in film. David R. Maciel reminds us that since the early years of cinema Latinas were reduced to portraying 'secondary roles such as prostitutes, servants or altruistic mothers.'[72] While this description has often been associated with Mexican and Puerto Rican women, Diaz' Cuban identity supports the ongoing relationship between ethnically marked Latinas and such roles, despite their racially desirable body.

Thus, 'if race is always about bodies,' as Dyer contends, and the 'reproduction of those bodies through heterosexuality,' Diaz' association with blackness provokes a certain level of anxiety about whiteness throughout the film despite her character's transformation by returning to the white (male) race.[73] Discussing inter-racial relationships, Dyer has noted:

> Inter-racial hetero-sexuality threatens the power of whiteness because it breaks the legitimation of whiteness with reference to the white body. [...] if white bodies are no longer indubitably white bodies, if they can no longer guarantee their own reproduction as white, then the 'natural' basis of their dominion is no longer credible.[74]

---

[72] Maciel, p 314.
[73] Dyer (1997), p 25.
[74] Ibid.

That Diaz' character Freddie maintained sexual relations with an African American male clearly threatens the reproduction of whiteness thus supporting Dyer's argument. Further evidence to suggest Diaz as failing to guarantee whiteness is shown when her character is not only physically dominated by Red but also forced to succumb to his every command, including being physically traded off as a favour. Such control over a white body perpetuates the idea of whiteness as being positioned as inferior to blackness thereby indicating an unequal representation of both racial groups. As a result, instead of a white male keeping Freddie in place her black pimp takes command thus showing resistance to white politics.

As Freddie, Diaz is sexual and scandalous, two traits which oppose the structure of white femininity. Minutes after her marriage, she has sex with her brother-in-law on the bathroom floor during the wedding celebration. Although her sexual act with a white man may be seen as a slow transformation to produce a more stable heterosexual relationship to which whiteness can then be confined and upheld, Freddie's obvious pleasure in the act only suggests that her character is a 'fallen [white] woman.'[75]

Through Diaz' relationship with several men in the film, race and gender are undoubtedly overlapped and imbued with other issues. In this manner the film attempts to secure the control of white men over their women and the construction of white heterosexuality. Evidence to support the latter is Diaz' character remaining with jJaks and perhaps more importantly, the killing of Red by the legitimate husband of Freddie. Here, I would suggest that only through the elimination of blackness in the narrative can we consider the idea of Diaz' body as representing a somewhat believable white identity in this film.

In her work on the Ziegfeld Girl, Mizejewski discusses the transformation of ethnic figures into 'Glorified American Girls' 'who' as the author defines 'is tall, leggy, and light haired.'[76] According to the author the body of Ziegfeld's dancers were presented as racially ideal despite being linked to marginal and working class members. Undergoing, as Mizewjeski writes, a 'production of whiteness' which eliminated or minimalised any notion of racialised features, the Ziegfeld girl became an exemplary case of gender and race. Clearly part of Diaz' appeal derived from her mixed background, which assured an authentic image of ethnicity at the same time as her physique and birthplace tended towards a recognisable American type. But while Diaz' look embodies the notion of belonging to the 'American race', her exotic and erotic framing, along with her ethnic background, seem to engulf her version of white femininity, thereby contesting her

---

[75] Ibid., p 28.
[76] Linda Mizejewski, *Ziegfeld Girl Image and Icon in Culture and Cinema* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p 166.

interpretation of an authentic white girl. Conjuring up the image of the cantina as in *The Mask*, Diaz physically teases men whilst on stage thus creating the fantasy that she might provide men with sexual favours. Moreover, consistent with musical performance in this last film is the exotic framing of Diaz in *Feeling Minnesota* as she wears red feathers while gliding across the stage. This image of the actress's body being watched by a diegetic male audience positions her as a sexualised object on display (i.e. a showgirl), thus upholding Hollywood's image of 'exoticised' figures providing spectacles within the narrative.[77] And with Diaz' ethnic background remaining a constant factor in her publicity, in particular in the Spanish-language press, her body is ultimately 'guaranteed' exotic as a means for justifying an authentic sexual display via her white character and features. Thus, when we witness Diaz' body during her performance as a Las Vegas showgirl in the final sequence of *Feeling Minnesota* we are presented with a particular type of 'American' girl, one whose erotic image depended on an authentic ethnic identity.

To some degree, the construction of Diaz as an exotic/erotic image, it seems, ran parallel to her positioning as an ideal White figure, as in the case of Rita Hayworth. In Adrienne L. McLean's analysis of Hayworth, she writes that the discourse of ethnicity and transformation was a constant factor throughout her career.[78] The Spanish-Irish ethnic background of the star served as a 'guarantor of her authenticity - as a dancing talent, as an erotic symbol, and equally important, as an American woman.'[79] McLean's work provides an essential reading of how ethnicity became a paradoxical element in Hayworth's image and films at the same time that it ensured a genuine figure of Americanness. What is also of much interest is how Hayworth's background was continuously accentuated in her publicity, thus affirming, as McLean argues, that just as much effort went into manufacturing the star as an image of ethnic femininity as well as an American goddess.[80] This construction of ethnicity and Americanness is of extreme importance as I argue in my own work on Cameron Diaz that reference to the star's Cuban American background is simultaneously promoted across her publicity with descriptions of her white features. Thus like Hayworth, Diaz' ethnic background has been promoted to posit, as stated by Richard Dyer, 'a "real" that is beneath or behind the surface represented by 'the individual.'[81]

---

[77] Shohat (1991), p 235.
[78] McLean (1992-1993), p 11.
[79] Ibid., p 21.
[80] Ibid., p 15.
[81] Richard Dyer, 'A Star is Born and the Construction of Authenticity,' *Stardom Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill, ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p 136.

Discussing authenticity, Wahneema Lubiano writes that an individual of a group as well as the group itself 'can be recognized by the ways in which they are shown with some measure of the "real" or authentic or essential qualities of that group.'[82] Charles L. Ponce de Leon also observes that to expose the stars' "real self," celebrity journalism provided 'readers with authentic inside dope, material that was genuine and spontaneous [...].'[83] Since early on in Diaz' career, the media immediately provided references to her Cuban background to serve as evidence that the actress could guarantee sexual authenticity. Thus for Diaz to be shown as embodying characteristics of ethnic femininity her films drew upon the idea of sexuality for audiences to identify her body as a legitimate vision of desirability. Generally, the circulated image of Latinas in film at the time of Diaz' debut continued to depend on the notion of ethnic females as exemplifying uninhibited sexuality. But as Diaz' features challenged stereotypical notions of Latina looks, it was perhaps less complicated to link the actress with a more specific notion of *latinidad* such as that of the dance spectacle. In fact it seems that in Diaz' films where she is put forward as a dancing body her ethnic background explains, as it did for Hayworth, her 'natural' flair for dance. Diaz may not have trained as a dancer as did Hayworth, Lopez and Perez, but she is nonetheless projected as a 'bona fide' dancing talent across her films, despite her white persona.

While the positing of Diaz in these dance sequences serve as a reminder that signs of the star's ethnicity are often disseminated in her films, she has not been typed as a Latina as was the case with Hayworth. According to McLean:

> Because of the name she was born with and her initial adoption of the outward appearances of skin and hair colour that the name connoted, Hollywood "typed" Rita Cansino as a Latin, and being typed as any nonwhite nationality usually meant being confined to playing all-purpose ethnic, often foreign, film roles.[84]

Regardless of her surname, which clearly marks her ethnic identity, Diaz has not played foreign roles, as Hayworth did. However if Hayworth had to 'trade in' her ethnic identity to embody foreignness then she did so because her features prior to her physical transformation could not convincingly incarnate American roles. This was not the case with Diaz. Having been born with such extraordinary white characteristics Hollywood transformed Diaz to personify white characters and in doing so placed her in a starring role as early as in her debut film. Thus in contrast to Hayworth, Perez and even Lopez who initially appeared in low-budget films, Diaz' white features

---

[82] Wahneema Lubiano, 'But Compared to What?: Reading Realism, Representation, and Essentialism in *School Daze, Do The Right Thing*, and the Spike Lee discourse,' *Representing Blackness: Issues in Films and Videos* Valerie Smith, ed. (London: The Athlone Press, 1997), p 109.
[83] Charles L. Ponce de Leon, *Self Exposure: Human Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p 104.
[84] McLean, (1992-1993), p 15.

(and acting skills) made it possible for her to immediately move into the realm of stardom. That the presence of Diaz' ethnicity in *The Mask* allowed the actress to transform to more typical notions of *latinidad* without having to fabricate an ethnic identity to correspond to such image clearly suggested that Hollywood had found its ideal Latina figure without physical alterations.

Thus far, Diaz's roles have been identified as white although I have explored how her characters in *The Mask and Feeling Minnesota* may be read as a modified version of white ethnic femininity via an exoticised/eroticised body. In the following film to be looked at, *My Best Friend's Wedding* (1997), Diaz is valued as a genuinely white figure 'hav[ing complete] access to privilege, power and wealth [...].'[85] In fact her subsequent films also register Diaz as a privileged white woman although signs of ethnicity emerge. Drawing attention to whiteness and class, Dyer observes that,

> Class as well as such criteria of proper whiteness as sanity and non-criminality are expressed in terms of degrees of translucence, with murkiness associated with poor, working-class and immigrant white subjects.[86]

Once again Diaz is the image of contradiction in that the actress not only embodied a more working class character in previous films but also that she portrays of a wealthy socialite in the following film, *My Best Friend's Wedding*, thus adding some level of inconsistency to Dyer's argument. Significantly, the portrayal of Diaz as working class in earlier films runs parallel to the actress's claim to have come from a humble working class family. As Nancy Mills writes of Diaz, 'There are no trailing bodyguards or teams of assistants for this second daughter of working-class parents.'[87] This is noteworthy as Diaz has been able to genuinely represent the working class alongside Perez and Lopez. However, in contrast to the Puerto Rican stars, Diaz has been able to take on roles which classify her as a member of the elite, as in the following film.

Cameron Diaz: 'A great American type'[88]

No other film serves as a more flawless example of how the actress's body may be read as the ideal feminine White figure than *My Best Friend's Wedding* (1997). Employing her comedic talents opposite Julia Roberts, Diaz portrays debutante Kimberly 'Kimmy' Wallace, described by one film

---

[85] Dyer (1997), p 52.
[86] Ibid., p 113.
[87] Nancy Mills, ' A Down and Dirty Diamond,' *Daily News*, 28 January (New York, 2001), p 2.
[88] Dave Kehr, 'Cameron Diaz, Good Sport,' *The New York Times*, 30 April (New York 2000) [Online] Accessed 7 June 2000.
http:www.search3.nytimes.com.search/daily/bin/fastweb?getdoc+site+site35486+0+wAAAcameron%7Edi

critic as a 'hopeless birdbrain.'[89] Roberts stars in this comedy as Julianne Potter, a food critic and 'busy girl [...] [with] exactly four days to break up a wedding [and] steal the bride's fella.'[90] The groom is Julianne's best friend Michael O'Neal (Dermot Mulroney), who is planning to marry Kimberly.

The manner in which Diaz is introduced in this film offers an example of how her 'ideal' figure can be framed to give a soft pale radiance. In an extreme long shot the actress practically illuminates the centre of the screen, appearing under an archway of airport lights wearing a bright yellow dress. Because she stands still while others scuttle round the airport terminal, her whiteness seems to be further accentuated as the passengers are dressed in darker clothing. The way Diaz is positioned may be compared to Dyer's analysis of the way light is used to construct a more idealised image of white women, as he states, 'the photographic media, the apparatus and practice *par excellence* of a light culture, not only assumes and privileges whiteness, but also constructs it.'[91]

In his book *White*, Richard Dyer examines the construction of whiteness and writes that the photographic lighting of white figures transfers an angelic likeness hence positioning white bodies as almost divine. As he states:

> Those who can let the light through, however dividedly, with however much struggle, those whose bodies are touched by the light from above, who yearn upwards towards it, those are the people who should rule and inherit the earth.[92]

Such a depiction returns us to the framing of Diaz' body under glowing lights and how the actress is figured as possessing angelic traits precisely because the overhead lighting produces a halo effect above her head. In this context Diaz' body is symbolic of (white) spirituality thus upholding her image as the ideal representation of physical beauty. Thus, in contrast to Julia Roberts' dark features and uncontrollable red curls, Diaz is projected to look intensely 'white' throughout this film as the lighting gives her blonde hair and fair skin a glowing look.

If we return, once again, to Dyer's work on whiteness, he asserts that 'the image of the glowingly pure white woman' includes 'those radiant moments of adoration,' for example 'the bride, glowing in the light of her white gown.'[93] It is this image of the 'glowing' white figure which is significantly recreated later on in the film when Diaz, dressed in bridal gown, is depicted as another extreme representation of pureness. Situated as the ideal image, decent and chaste, Diaz'

---

[89] Janet Maslin, 'Something Borrowed and Blue,' *The New York Times*, 20 June, Film Review of *My Best Friend's Wedding* (New York, 1997), p C3.
[90] Julia Robert's dialogue within *My Best Friend's Wedding*.
[91] Dyer (1997), p 122.
[92] Ibid., p 121.
[93] Ibid., p 131.

appearance in the white garment with her natural white features heightens the representation of pure femininity. In short, the actress's body and garment seem to glow softly.

Seen as the identification of true whiteness, Diaz' body is celebrated as idyllic and moral, two traits which have not been passed on from earlier film roles. Although Diaz was cast in WASP roles prior to *My Best Friend's Wedding* her films hinted at her ethnic identity via dance performances or a relationship with a black male, thereby undermining her positioning as representing 'true' whiteness, as she does in this third film. In other words, because the actress's ethnic identity disrupts her representation of whiteness on screen, she has not been able to guarantee the portrayal of a genuine white character up until now.

Essentially, the promotion process around Diaz at the time *My Best Friend's Wedding* debuted frequently projected the actress as a celestial figure in her publicity. For instance, on the November 1997 cover of *Premiere* magazine the actress's face and hair are rimmed with light rays from behind; the image is a still from her film *A Life Less Ordinary* (Danny Boyle, Poly Gram, 1997, GB) (See Photocopy).[94] Although I will not be analysing this film, it stars Diaz as another rich WASP character, this time kidnapped by a disgruntled janitor (Ewan McGregor) with whom she falls in love with the help of 'angel police officers'[95] Delroy Lindo and Holly Hunter. Projected to exude wealth and power, Diaz depicts a privileged White character in *A Life Less Ordinary*, as well as in *My Best Friend's Wedding*.

Apart from transforming into the quintessence of white femininity, Diaz' character possesses all the economic privileges whiteness secures, thus offering another approach as to how her character is constructed as racially white. As the daughter of an affluent businessman, who happens to own a baseball team, Diaz' character is financially secure, positioned as heiress to a substantial fortune. Under these circumstances the economic situation of her character as prosperous serves as another means by which the actress's image is included within the category of whiteness. In *White*, Dyer emphasises that: 'A white complexion is a kind of promise to the bearer that he or she may have access to privilege, power and wealth [...].'[96] In these terms whiteness is equated to an unattainable lifestyle of which all Others fail to be worthy, hence the systematic positioning of those who are recognised as white as also being wealthy.

---

[94] *Premiere*, 'Cameron Diaz on love, drugs and *A Life Less Ordinary*,' *Premiere*, November (UK, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 10 September 2001.
http://www.cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover35.jpg

[95] Janet Maslin, '*A Life Less Ordinary*': Heaven-Sent Love with a Mean Streak,' *The New York Times*, 24 October (New York, 1997).
[Online] Accessed March 5, 2000.
http:///www.nytimes.com/library/film/102497life-film-review.html

[96] Dyer (1997), p 52.

Figure 23. Cover of *Premiere* (November 1997, UK).

While the actress has appeared in a number of movies as a bride, as mentioned in the analysis of the previous film, in no other film is Diaz' image presented as innocent, radiant, or 'perfect'. Julia Roberts' character's description of Kimberly in the narrative also reflects the notion of Diaz' features as being ideal, and, therefore, White: 'All that I am saying is that some people might find that kind of perfection boring day after day, year after year. How can you like someone that perfect?' In addition, the word 'perfect' had been used to described Diaz' role and performance:

> As the too-perfect fiancée of Julia Roberts' ex-boyfriend [...]: she is too blonde, too rich, and too sweetly accommodating to be true.[97]

> Cameron Diaz, who seems to improve with every role, plays it perfectly. [98]

This ascription of perfection is crucial at this stage since Diaz' persona now emphasises the capacity to project an exemplary white image; her publicity begins to endorse her as 'a great American type.'[99]

In her essay on Hayworth, McLean examines the fabrication of the Spanish-Irish American star and how the actress became an 'All-American glamour girl.' Enduring rigorous beauty treatments, Hayworth had an inch of her hairline removed and followed a strict diet.[100] But perhaps the most notable transformation of ethnicity was the changing of her given identity. Born Margarita Cansino, the actress decided to alter her name, shortening her first name and taking on her mother's maiden name of Hayworth. While Diaz' surname does act as an ethnic marker she was not required to alter her given name or identity. In contrast to Hayworth, the blonde blue-eyed actress did not endure beauty rituals to reconstruct her physiognomy because she already possessed 'ideal' features, a state which Hayworth had to strive to obtain. Yet, as McLean argues, Hayworth's ethnicity,

> provides a means by which she is able to integrate wholeness with eroticism in her film texts, and that is why she became such a popular American star.[101] [...] For one of the most significant paradoxes of Rita Hayworth in any incarnation is that she can be read as ethnic *or* American, but also ethnic and *therefore* American.[102]

---

[97] Kehr.
[98] Kenneth Turan, '*My Best Friend's Wedding*: Roberts Turns her Frown Upside Down,' *Los Angeles Times*, 20 June (Los Angeles, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 4 October 2002.
http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-movie970620-4.story
[99] Kehr.
[100] McLean, p 8.
[101] Ibid., p 9
[102] Ibid., p 14.

This same notion can be applied to Diaz; the Cuban-American actress can also be read as 'ethnic *or* American, but also ethnic and *therefore* American.'[103] Claiming both American and Latina status, Diaz discusses her ethnicity in an interview with Bob Strauss. In this article she clarifies her ethnic background thus:

> I think that now people are starting to understand that I am [...] of Latin heritage but I'm American. That's what I consider myself and I think a lot of Latinos who live here still consider themselves Cubans or Argentineans, or, you know, they still consider themselves of that nationality. [...] They take themselves back to that to their own country and they haven't yet totally accepted America as their country [...], which is fine, I mean that's what America is about. [...] My family chose to integrate and become American and that's where I was raised, that's how I was raised.[104]

Though it appears that Diaz promotes herself as American, she also endorses her Latina roots. In a sense, such effort to detail her family's decision to assimilate does not mean that she is 'less' Latina.

As Mireya Navarro argues in her article on Latinos in the United States, assimilation may signify a more diluted sense of the Hispanic culture but it does not make one less ethnic even if one is English speaking and also American:

> But the Hispanic population is likely to make its presence more deeply felt, these experts say, because Latinos make up the largest ethnic and linguistic group to arrive; they retain ties to their geographically close countries of origin, and the migration is continuing. All those factors reinforce Hispanic culture and the Spanish language while at the same time, assimilation dilutes them. [...] But because Hispanic people fall under many categories, many sociologists said, it is far from certain what kind of imprint their growth will make on the nation or how exactly they will broaden what it means to be an "American."[105]

That one's heritage may also be associated with Americanness is key in this chapter, yet what it is important to remember is that Diaz' features allow her access to roles not ethnically defined, thus attributing to her unusual position in Hollywood as a (White) Latina *consistently* portraying 'American' characters. This brings us back to how the actress, like Hayworth, was able to embody a more White/All-American figure in her films thereby providing a way in which her body became an 'acceptable vision/version of [...] ethnicity.'[106] In the next film to be discussed, *There's Something About Mary*, the issue of ethnicity is somewhat overshadowed by her performance as the

---

[103] Ibid., p 14.
[104] Strauss.
[105] Navarro.
[106] I am referring to the way in which Negra discusses Sonja Henie's body as an acceptable white ethnicity. p 89.

'perfect Mary' which not only guaranteed her star status, but also promoted the Latina figure as 'more' American.

There's Something About Cameron

If the early films of Diaz tried to mould the actress as a comedic talent, then her tenth film *There's Something About Mary* (1998) indicated that she possesses comedic talent *par excellence*. As 'the object of just about everyone's affection,' Cameron Diaz stars in the film *There's Something About Mary* (1998) in the title role opposite Ben Stiller as Ted Stroehmann, the High School nerd who almost takes the ever-popular Mary to the prom but has an unfortunate accident. [107] Matt Dillon also stars in the Farrelly brothers' comedy as the sleazy private detective hired by Ted to find Mary after several years. But Healy also falls under Mary's charms, sarcastically confessing: 'you were right man, she really is something else. She hasn't changed.' Vowing to conquer, as Bill Zehme writes, 'the eternal girl that got away,' Ted is in for a surprise when he discovers that Healy is not the only admirer who hopes to win Mary's heart. [108]

Presented as the 'ideal' woman in *There's Something about Mary*, Diaz not only portrays a beautiful woman men fall in love with, but also a tomboy image that men can relate to: a woman who enjoys settling down for the evening with a beer in front of the sports channel. Interestingly, press coverage of Diaz promotes the actress herself as having a similar image, saying: 'She drinks like a sailor,'[109] 'swears like a longshoreman' [110] and 'eats like a truck driver.'[111] The significance of this, as Kieran Scott informs us, is that 'according to *Entertainment Weekly*, Peter and Bobby Farrelly, the brothers who wrote the script and directed the film, did write the part with Cameron in mind.'[112] Thus, the film's narrative runs parallel to the actress's star image in that throughout the film we witness Diaz' character playing golf, racing cars or talking about football.

While this persistence of masculine behaviour briefly desexualises the actress as did her youthful 'Skeletor' image mentioned above, Diaz' is constructed to represent whiteness in a manner

---

[107] Jess Cagle, '*There's Something About Mary*: Farrelly Brothers laughing all the way to the bank,' *Cable News Network*, Film Review, TV, 27 July (New York, 1988).
[Online] Accessed September 29, 2000.
http://www.cnn.com/SHOWBIZ/Movies/9807/27/farrelly.bros/.
[108] Bill Zehme, 'Cameron Diaz loves you,' *Esquire*, April, Vol. 137, Issue 4 (New York, 2002), p 72.
[Online] Accessed 19 July 2002.
http://www.ehostvgw11.epnet.com/ehost.asp?key=204.179.122.140_8000_163527601&site=ehost&return=n
[109] Ivor Davis.
[110] Dunn.
[111] Schneider and Leonard.
[112] Kieran Scott, *Cameron Diaz: Latinos in the Limelight* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001), p 43.

which personifies just a few traits which are associated with the term, such as 'goodness'[113] and 'innocence.'[114] Notably, co-director Peter Farrelly describes Diaz thus: 'You don't even think about sex when you're around her [Diaz]; it's purer than that.'[115] The symbolism of her Christian name in this film (Mary) also seems to reflect this pure image. However, while this chaste portrait of the actress can be compared to Negra's description of former ice skating star Sonja Henie 'as sexually and ethnically innocent and ideally white,'[116] it must be clarified that Diaz' figure in this film is not positioned as being completely sexually (nor ethnically) innocent. This is not to say that the actress is constructed as a sexually charged figure, but that, despite her ability to project an exemplary white image her body is shown in lingerie (on three occasions) to several male characters, thus challenging the discourse of 'white femininity'[117] and 'white virtuousness.'[118] In the next scene to be discussed, we witness the manner in which Diaz' body is first shown to the diegetic and non-diegetic audience in order to explore how the actress remains a site of 'superiority' despite her physical exposure.

On the eve of the prom, Mary's parents and her date stand at the bottom of the stairs as she comes down to join them. Wearing a pale blue evening gown, the actress descends as non-diegetic music can be heard. Her point-of view shows Ted and her character's parents looking up at her in an adoring manner as she comes down the stairs. Moments later the strap of her dress tears and she goes upstairs to take it off and mend it. During this time Ted happens to be looking upwards from a downstairs bathroom window in Mary's house. We see two white doves and hear non-diegetic music in the form of The Carpenters' 1970 song '(They Long to Be) Close to you': 'On the day that you were born the angels got together and decided to create a dream come true, so they sprinkled moon dust in your hair of gold and starlight in your eyes of blue.'[119] We then hear the non-diegetic sound of a record being scratched, before we see Mary in lingerie as she turns and looks down in Ted's direction. She then covers herself while Ted, in embarrassment and confusion, has an unfortunate accident with his zipper.

---

[113] Dyer notes that 'purity, spirituality, transcendence, cleanliness, virtue, simplicity and chastity are those traits, which can be associated to whiteness. (1997), p 72.
[114] Dyer cites P.J. Heather who associates whiteness with 'honour, holiness and innocence,' in *White* (1997), p 73.
[115] *People*, 'Cameron Diaz Cover Story,' *People*, 28 December–4 January, Vol. 50, No. 24 (New York, 1998-1999), p 52.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.
[116] Negra, p 86.
[117] Dyer (1997), pp 74-75.
[118] Ibid, pp 72-77.
[119] Richard & Karen Carpenter's 'Close to You' Website: Lyrics: (They Long to Be) Close to You. Words and music by Burt Bacharach and Hal David.

Although the ideal image of Diaz is eventually 'scratched' when we see her body exposed, her figure is nevertheless projected in an elevated and adoring manner, being positioned at the top of the stairs and in an upstairs window; in other sequences the male characters also admire the actress's body from a distance and through an upstairs window. In this way, the film presents the actress as a romantic ideal men cannot help but fall in love (not lust) with. Supporting this notion, one film critic writes, 'Mary is pleasant and unassuming; but men follow her in adoring droves,'[120] and another describes the actress's character as the 'sweetly innocent Mary.'[121] Thus, the narrative serves to deflate any connotations of Diaz' body as being sexually charged whilst placing much emphasis on those unique features which position the actress as 'a "safe" ethnic status,'[122] and possibly, as 'more' American. In discussing the 'American girl' in her work on ethnic female stardom, Negra refers to Theodore Dreiser's description of the American girl: 'The clarity and lustre of skin and eyes, the perfection of form and manner! The world is literally agape and athirst over the beauty of the American girl.'[123] In an article, Diaz is again endorsed in a similar fashion: she 'was all cleavage and blondeness, eyes the colour of a Mediterranean summer sky and a 200 watt smile: 5ft-9 in of American dream girl.'[124] Significantly, the lyrics in this last scene not only associate the actress's figure with a celestial image, but more importantly, promote Diaz' as being able to represent Americanness.

In her research on the perception of race, specifically amongst White women, Ruth Frankenberg (1998), reveals that 'Whiteness and Americanness both stood as normative and exclusive categories in relation to which other cultures were identified and marginalized. And this clarifies that there are two kinds of Americans: those who are truly or only white, and those who are white but also something more – or is it something less?'[125] The author's examination of women's

---

[120] Gerald Kaufman, 'All in The Worst Possible Taste,' *New Statesman*, 25 September, Vol. 127, Issue 4404 (US, 1998), p 65.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

[121] Peter Travers, 'Movies: The Comic Art of the Gross-Out,' *Rolling Stone*, 6 August, Film Review of *There's Something About Mary* (New York, 1998) p 75.
[Online] Accessed March 8, 2000.
http://ehostvgw13.epnet.com/ehost1.asp/key=204.179.122.141_8000_1227691901$site=ehost&return=n
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

[122] Negra, p 88.

[123] Negra refers to Theodore Dreiser's article 'Hollywood Now,' *McCalls Magazine*, September (US, 1921), in her book. p 25.

[124] Palmer, p 45.

[125] Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (London: Routledge, 1993), p 198.

white identity offers much insight, as participants give distinct reasons for claiming whiteness while unanimously considering themselves to be racially privileged. While it is clear that at this stage of Diaz' career the actress was able to personify Americanness because of her white features, she also embodies 'something more' because of her ethnic roots, an aspect also 'recognised' in *There's Something About Mary*. In fact, although her character settles in Florida (home to many Cubans), and we see musicians dressed in ruffled shirts as they play the congas and maracas, to which Cuban dancers perform (as the film's credits inform us), it is the presence of her biological father, Emilio, in a cameo as a 'jailbird' which reminds us that Diaz is not 'truly' white, thus 'authenticating' the actress as an ethnic figure.

It should be mentioned that in *There's Something about Mary*, *My Best Friend's Wedding* and *Feeling Minnesota* we are not exposed to Latino or black cultures, as in the films of Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez.[126] In fact no other ethnic figures appear in the narrative of *My Best Friend's Wedding* although in *There's Something About Mary*, African American actor Keith David portrays Diaz' on-screen step-father Charlie Jensen while black actress Khandi Alexander has a couple of brief appearances as one of Mary's friends, Joanie.[127] Thus there seems to be an equal treatment of black and white groups while Latinos are mostly absent. In *There's Something About Mary*, Cubans appear in the typical dance number as well as a convicted criminal, portrayed by Diaz' biological father. Because Diaz is positioned as a white character her presence as also being Latina is not considered.

Even so, *There's Something About Mary* conforms to some level of stereotyping by placing her father in jail, whilst also challenging 'the paradigmatic image of Latinos,' by 'fit[ting Cameron Diaz as] the local idea of beauty.'[128] While the fact remains, as Valdivia reminds us, 'that Latinos come from a variety of backgrounds,'[129] one cannot help but wonder if Diaz is the response to Clara E. Rodriguez's question: 'No one person can represent the Latino culture(s) [...] but can one Latina represent the dominant culture?'[130] Whether or not Diaz can represent the Latino culture will be discussed below but, in *There's Something About Mary*, it seems the actress was framed to symbolise an 'exemplar feminine whiteness,'[131] making it possible to read her image as representing the dominant culture. For her part in *There's Something About Mary*, Diaz personifies white femininity in such an 'extraordinary' manner that the film elevated her into the realm of stardom:

---

[126] *The Mask* briefly entertains the notion of *latinidad* in the dance performance.
[127] Delroy Lindo has a large supoprting role in *Feeling Minnesota*.
[128] Angharad N. Valdivia, *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood: and Other Essays on Media Culture* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2000), p 146.
[129] Ibid., p 92.
[130] Rodriguez (1997), p 47.
[131] Dyer (1997), p 74.

> Diaz' turn as innocent Mary will certainly solidify her reputation as a comic actress—and may boost her to stardom once and for all.[132]

> Diaz, the babe supreme, plays Mary with the beaming sexiness and comic timing of a born star.[133]

It should be mentioned at this time that the actress's rise to fame was also applauded in the Spanish-language press, thereby highlighting her success as a Latina figure able to offer an exceptional performance of an 'ideal' American figure. This is an accomplishment few Latina actresses have yet to achieve. Moreover, not only was Diaz acclaimed as Latina despite her American persona, but the actress was also compared with other Latina stars the same year that *There's Something About Mary* premiered:

> Latino stars appear in some of this summer's blockbuster movies. The most obvious is Jennifer Lopez' star turn as George Clooney's love interest in *Out of Sight*. Others include [...] Salma Hayek as Mike Myers' wife in the August release of *Studio 54* [...], and Cameron Diaz in the silly kiddie farce *There's Something About Mary*.[134]

Significantly, two years later the Spanish media would continue to position Diaz as one of several successful Latina stars, whilst also recognising her performance in roles representing whiteness, including *There's Something About Mary*:

> Salma Hayek. Antonio Banderas. Jennifer López. Andy García. Cameron Díaz. Penélope Cruz. [...]. They are some of Hollywood's most popular Latino/a stars at present. Latino and non-Latinos can recognise them for their successful films, for having received praise from the critics, or both. *Desperado. From Dusk Til Dawn. The Mask of Zorro. The Cell. Out of Sight. Selena. The Godfather III. There's Something About Mary. The Mask. My Best Friend's Wedding* [...].[135] (Appendix C-2.1)

That Diaz is promoted in the press as a representative of Latinness may establish the actress as an atypical Latina representative thus not always convincing all Latinos and non-Latinos as the excerpt claims, of the actress's ethnic identity. What follows is a look at the publicity of the blonde, blue-

---

[132] Kendall Hamilton, 'There's Something in the Hair: Cameron Diaz' Career is starting to Gel,' *Newsweek*, 27 July, Vol. 132, Issue 4 (US, 1998), p 58.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n

[133] Travers.

[134] Melanie Cole, 'Reviews: Film,' *Hispanic*, July/August, Vol. 11, Issue 7/8 (New York, 1998), p 96.

[135] Arredondo, Editor de *La Vibra*, '"Latinos en Hollywood" en la pantalla grande y también en la chica,' *La Vibra* in *La Opinión*, 12 October (Los Angeles, CA, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 11 January 2002.
http://www.laopinion.com/archivo.html?START=1&RESULTSTART=1&DISPLAYTYPE=single&FREETEXT=%91%93Latinos+en+Hollywood%94+en+la+pantalla+grande+y+tambi%E9n+en+la+chica%2C%92&FDATEd12=&FDATEd13=&BOOLp00=&BOOLp08=&SORT_MODE=Relevancia

eyed actress and how she has been positioned as an authentic figure of ethnicity, and the response to her Latina status.

Publicity on Diaz as a Non-typical Latina

Over the years, publicity focusing on Cameron Diaz has relentlessly juxtapositioned her 'extraordinary' features with her Latina background and successful position in Hollywood. In an article on the Latin explosion in the media, Emma Forrest writes: 'The only Latino actress to genuinely make it huge in Hollywood is the Cuban Cameron Diaz, whose looks are remarkably Orange County (California).'[136] On the same subject, John Quiñones discusses the modest success Latinos have been achieving in Hollywood:

> [...] what we see at the local theater is in many ways like a mirror of how we see ourselves as a society. And in today's films, the image of Latinos too often does not reflect the reality. In fact, it's Latino actors who aren't perceived as all that Hispanic who've landed the greatest variety of roles [...] like Cameron Diaz, who's part Cuban. And then there's the Cuban-born Andy Garcia.[137]

It is clear Diaz' surname acts as an ethnic marker and has been emphasised in media texts but she has yet to play a Latina role. However, if she were to play such a role, would the Hispanic (and non-Latino) community accept her as a possible representative?

If we look at Cameron Diaz' body we can understand the difficulty some Latinos and the general public may have in identifying the blonde,blue-eyed star as Latina, in particular when the actress's persona embodies white/American characters. In fact, shortly after her debut when there was a great deal of hype about her Latina background, film reviewer Gene Wyatt recognised that:

> Diaz has become identified with efforts to secure a bigger participation of the Latino population in movies, although she herself is of mixed parentage. True her father family is Cuban origin, but decidedly European. Her mother's heritage is German, English and American Indian. Her blond hair and blue eyes have made it difficult for her to function as a spokesperson for Latinas.[138]

---

[136] Emma Forrest, 'The Banana Bunch,' *The Guardian*, 6 August (UK, 1997), p 6.

[137] John Quiñones, 'Latinos in the Limelight News Report,' 7 September, *ABC* Television Network (Miami, 1999), 10 pm.
[Online] Accessed 4 June 2002.
http://www.geocities.com/jetpack7/migloria/getrans/latinbeat99.rtf

[138] Gene Wyatt, 'Cameron Diaz plays down looks in "*Minnesota*",' *Tennessean*, 15 September (Tennessee, 1996).
[Online] Accessed 4 June 2002.
http://www.tennessean.com/sii/longterm/celebrities/profiles/camerondiaz/diaz91596.shtml.

The editor of *Hispanic* magazine received letters questioning the publication's promotion of Diaz as an 'authentic' Latina (January/February 1999) and recognised the polemic of her position as a Latina:

> When I realised that Cameron Diaz was placed in the Hispanic "trendsetters" group, I asked myself, "why could it be that her name is on the list?" She doesn't speak Spanish, nor practise her father's Cuban culture. We say Hispanic because of her surname. Well, she has the surname Diaz and nothing else. If this qualifies for being Hispanic, then there are many more Hispanics than the thirty million Spanish speakers within the borders of the United States.[139] (Appendix C-2.2)

> You seem to print articles on people you deem as Hispanic. For example, Cameron Diaz [...], les decimos hispanos por su apellido (we say Hispanic because of her surname), but [she is a] vanilla wafer.[140]

Such accounts serve as a reminder that Latinos as well as non-Latinos seem to also depend on racial difference to recognise *latinidad* thereby calling attention to the fact that not all Latinos are 'brown'. In another letter published in an entertainment periodical, a determined Latina sets out to correct columnist Marilyn Beck for making the assumption that Diaz is the highest paid Latina in Hollywood. According to the reader:

> The Hispanic community in the U.S. regards Jennifer Lopez as the highest paid Latina actress in Hollywood right now, not Cameron Diaz. Diaz, while of Latin descent, is not considered a Latina actress by the Hispanic community in the U.S. She herself, while admitting her descent, has never regarded herself a Latina actress. Diaz is a darling, but she doesn't even speak Spanish! [141]

Beck had referred to an interview with Bob Strauss, who questioned the actress's decision not to interpret Latina characters. Diaz' response included the above quote to which Beck refers,

> **Strauss:** We get the impression you don't like to be pigeonholed. Is that why you've yet to play an identifiably Hispanic role and are not publicly connected to the Hollywood Latino community?
>
> **Diaz:** I think there are enough stereotypes in this industry--and in society in general. Being Latin is part of who I am--and I bring that part to every role.[142]

---

[139] *Hispanic*, Letters to the Editor, Jan-Feb (New York, 1999). The original letter had been written in Spanish and is attached in the Appendix.
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.hispanicmagazine.com/1999/jan_feb/Letters/index.html.

[140] *Hispanic*, Letters to the Editor, 'Picking Leaders,' April (New York, 1999).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.hispanicmagazine.com/1999/apr/Letters/index.html.

[141] Marilyn Beck, 'Gossip: Ask Marilyn,' *E! Online*, 5 January (2002).
[Online] Accessed 5 June 2002.
http://www.eonline.com/Gossip/Marilyn/Archive2002/020105-07.html)

[142] Strauss, 2nd page of interview on the following website.
http://www.eonline.com/Celebs/Qa/Diaz/intrview2.html

In this interview with the actress, Diaz addressed the Latino community's reaction to her as a non-typical Latina:

> [...] the Latin communities [they] have been very supportive and the great thing is that you know they really have pride in their people [...]. I've appreciated their support, but I think that [...] once they've [...] associated the last name Diaz with something that's very familiar to them [...], they're figuring out that it's like I'm not so familiar to them as a Latina because I didn't grow up in a Cuban community like most of the Cubans who support the Cuban community, or Cubans who have come here very recently and they live very much in a Cuban community [...] [where] everybody speaks Spanish.[143]

Along with the actress's clarification of her decision, at present, to steer clear of Latina characters, she (once again) shows no hesitancy in claiming her ethnic background at the expense of being turned away by other members of the Latino community. As she states: 'I'm not going to crusade for anyone.'[144]

Alba reminds us that identity is not a matter of stating that your ancestors are from a specific country but acknowledging that one is a member of that ethnic group.[145] And Gina Marchetti also notes that: 'Ethnicity involves labelling and self-identity, represented and lived relations, dominant and minority points of view [...].'[146] Through Strauss' interview Diaz acknowledges and assumes her ethnic heritage as forming part of her identity thus contesting the belief that she is not Latina. While Diaz may have not lived within a Cuban community she did grow up amongst Latinos/Mexicans as well as experiencing her Cuban heritage through her grandmother and her visits to Miami since early childhood. (See Grobel, Buchalter and Fischer). This self-promotion of sharing a Latina identity and culture attributes to the actress's perception as a legitimate representative of Latino heritage. Thus the exposure of her ethnic identity through the media establishes an authentic portrait of her by which readers are made aware of her true celebrity profile.

Ilan Stavans, author of *The Hispanic Condition* has blamed the media for the 'melting pot' image of Latinos, positing an explanation of some Latino misconception of 'what it means' to be

---

(It should be noted that the original interview (in its full context) appeared in the *Los Angeles Daily News*, under the caption, 'Cameron Diaz Talks about Role Choices,' 9 September (Los Angeles, 1996).
[Online] Accessed 3 June 2002. http://diaz.all-pics.com/Articles/2.htm)

[143] This excerpt of the audio version of Strauss' interview had not appeared in the textual portion of the interview.
[Online] Accessed 4 June 2002.
http://www.celebs.cz/cameron/Audioclips/mary.shtml

[144] *Los Angeles Daily News*, 'Cameron Diaz Talks about Role Choices.' See Footnote 147.

[145] Alba, p 38.

[146] Gina Marchetti , 'Ethnicity, the Cinema and Cultural Studies,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman, ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 284.

Latino/a.[147] Responding to this notion of the media's 'lumping together' of Hispanics, Ed Morales states that 'we've had practice at being multicultural for a very long time and we have the ability to mix together many stories and many cultures. This genetic mix is evident in the features of Cameron Diaz [...].'[148] Taking up this issue of what is means to be a Latina representative in the media, Lilly Gonzales states that, 'just because the female lead in a movie happens to be Latina doesn't mean the storyline has to revolve around the fact that she is Latina.'[149] Diaz' connection to discussions of Latina representation has thus come to reflect how some members of the same social group have been influenced by the dominant mainstream into believing that Latinos generally have dark features and that we all speak Spanish. Furthermore, Diaz' decision to openly discuss her Latina roots and proclaim that she 'brings' her *latinidad* to every role, makes it clear that the Cuban-American is just as much as a Latina representative as Jennifer Lopez or Rosie Perez. This is not to say that Diaz can successfully sell 'Latinness to Latinos' as well as Lopez or Perez, but that she can sell herself as being part of Latino news.[150] In the following section I will analyse how publications geared towards the Latino community in Spanish and English have promoted Cameron Diaz as a Latina, and how *Latina* magazine promoted her in the final film to be analysed in this chapter: *Charlie's Angels*.

Diaz: una Latina más/one Latina more

Although the promotion of Cameron Diaz as a Latina in Spanish texts in the United States plays a vital role in this research, much more crucial is the recognition of the actress as a Latina by the Spanish-language press in Puerto Rico and Mexico. To offer a more 'genuine' Hispanic perspective on the actress, I include references from both territories (*El Universal* in Mexico and *Primera Hora* in Puerto Rico), as well as the 'American' newspaper *La Opinión*, to analyse how Spanish texts promote the star. Additionally, brief comments from other Spanish printed texts have been integrated to support my findings.[151]

---

[147] *BBC News* cites Ilan Stavans in 'Latin sensations rock US,' *BBC News*, 27 March, Arts Section, (UK, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 3 June 2002.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/entertainment/arts/newsid_1231000/1231942.stm

[148] Ibid. *BBC News* cites Ed Morales.

[149] Gonzalez.

[150] In her chapter on Colleen Moore, Negra writes how the Irish-American actress was capable of 'successfully selling Irishness to the Irish.' p 47

[151] It should be noted at this time, that throughout this research German publications were accessed in order to explore the promotion of Diaz as also being of German descent. Although her ethnic background is frequently mentioned, it seems that her German heritage is not stressed as consistently as her Latina roots. Moreover, the actress draws attention to her Latin ethnicity, as can be read in the above interviews.

When Puerto Rican newspaper *Primera Hora* asked readers to pair native pop singer Ricky Martin with a perfect film 'partner,' Jennifer Lopez was the first contender in the response poll. While Lopez was followed by Miss Puerto Rico/Miss Universe 2001, Denise Quiñones, perhaps the most unexpected nominee was the third runner-up: 'In third place was the Cuban descent actress Cameron Diaz with 13.7% (98 votes).'[152] (Appendix C-2.3). The fact that native Puerto Ricans opted for a White looking actress of part Latina origin when choosing a partner for a Puerto Rican pop star such as Martin is in itself interesting, but what is extremely important is the *recognition* of the actress as an authentic Latina figure by a genuine Hispanic establishment. The repeated promotion of Diaz as of 'Cuban descent'[153] in another of *Primera Hora*'s articles is noteworthy because of its reinforcement of this image.

It is crucial to point out that the promotion of Diaz' *latinidad* was not limited to the Caribbean island; the Mexican newspaper *El Universal* had also, on the one hand, recognised the actress as American, but, on the other hand, indicated her ethnic origins. In one particular article, the actress's name had followed that of native *cubana* Gloria Estefan: 'After Ricky Martín and Gloria Estefan, [...]. the American Diaz, whose father is Cuban descent [...].'[154] (Appendix C-2.4). To further emphasise her background, the newspaper had amorously linked the star to another Latino, 'Carlos de la Torre – also Cuban descent- whom she lived with' for five years. [155] (Appendix C-2.5). This focus on her association with Latinos, as well as the announcement of her first stable relationship with another Cuban seeks to endorse Diaz' Latina background.

Likewise, although Diaz has poor command of Spanish, it seems that her Spanish publicity offers a sense of 'absolution' of those characteristics failing to support the notion of her Latina

---

[152] *Primera Hora*, 'Jennifer Lopez como pareja de Ricky Martin,' *Primera Hora*, 22 May (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.primerahora.comnoticia.asp?guid=B9E5CBB44E5F11D5A2D000508B12482.html.

[153] *Primera Hora*, 'DiCaprio usa excremento de caballo para atacar fotógrafo,' *Primera Hora*, 2 February (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.primerahora.comnoticia.asp?guid=179658COF89411D4A2BE00508B124842.

[154] *El Universal*, 'Espectáculos,' *El Universal*, 8 February (México, 2000), p 2.
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.el-universal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia-busqueda.html.

[155] *El Universal*, '"Invaden" las reinas latinas a Hollywood: Penélope Cruz, Jennifer López y Cameron Díaz sólo una muestra,' *El Universal*, 26 December (México, 2000), p 14.
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.el-universal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia-busqueda.html.

identity. In the following excerpt from an article on the actress, her lack of Spanish began the text in bold letters, but it also emphasises her ethnic pride:

> **CAMERON DIAZ.... DOES NOT SPEAK SPANISH but she is Hollywood's golden girl.**
> [...] Proud of her roots, Cameron is "happy to have so much support from the Hispanic community in the United States as well as in the Spanish speaking community in general...although I speak Spanish very, very badly, and would be embarrassed to speak it in a film! But even so, I feel the warmth of the Hispanic community and it makes me feel very, very good." Well said![156] (Appendix C-2.6)

Such account serves to reaffirm the acceptance by the Spanish press of her as a Latina despite her limited Spanish. It is ironic however, that the Spanish press immediately accept Diaz as one of their own despite her poor Spanish whereas some English speaking Latinos fail to support the actress's Latina identity as noted in the editorial comments of *Hispanic* magazine on p 33. More importantly, compared to other testimonies by the actress, such as her 'learning' about Cuba from her paternal grandparents, here she informs us of being able to speak Spanish (although badly) and of her gratitude for the 'affection' she receives from the Hispanic community. This particular excerpt is of importance for the way in which Diaz 'creates' a stronger bond with fellow Latinos whilst also proudly declaring her ethnic roots.

By the same token, the description of Diaz in her publicity raises another question regarding the different images she projects. For example, how can she be Hollywood's golden girl when her body has been promoted through exoticism and sensuality, images often associated with ethnic, in this case Latina, figures? If we return to her Spanish language publicity, there is an emphasis and a comparison of her physical attributes and other voluptuous Latinas in the Spanish edition of *Gentleman's Quarterly* (*GQ*) magazine:

> How are Cameron, [...] Salma Hayek, Laetitia Casta, Jennifer Lopez [...] alike? They are leading examples of Latina sensuality. Their beauty and natural effervescence make them less prone to fall under the exaggerated 'retouches' of being 'made in the USA.' They inhabit all of our dreams and we can confirm that, with them, the Hispanic epidemic in the Anglo Saxon world is more than justified and it appears to be turning into a chronic illness.[157] (Appendix C-2.7)

Diaz' comparison to Lopez has not been limited to just the physical aspect, but is also connected to the power each actress wields in the film industry:

---

[156] Alejandra d'Aremberg, 'CAMERON DIAZ... NO HABLA ESPAÑOL pero es la rubia de oro de Hollywood), *Lavox.com*, 21 December (US, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 6 June 2002.
http://www.lavox.com/protagonista/12-21-2001.phtml

[157] This is the summary under the caption, 'Sin trampa ni carton,' in the Spanish edition of *GQ*, October (Spain, 2000), p 42.

> Actresses Jennifer Lopez and Cameron Diaz were the only Latina stars included in the list of Hollywood's 100 most powerful entertainers in the United States. Diaz, whose father is a Californian born Cuban, and Lopez, Puerto Rican, were respectively posted at 80 and 86 [...]. [158] (Appendix C-2.8)

What is noteworthy about the description of Latina actresses in the first quote is the consistent positioning of Diaz as a sultry figure. Moreover, while Lopez may no longer evade the label 'made in the USA', Diaz' 'ideal' physique is not considered (in the Spanish press a least) to embody the concept of being manufactured as an American 'product'.

Discussing how Hedy Lamarr's exotic persona was constructed through her publicity, Negra writes of a 'contradiction', which 'significantly complicated Lamarr's putative transformation from European exotic to simple American girl [...].'[159] This concept of contradiction is applicable to Diaz' publicity and roles since the industry seeks to promote her ethnicity, thereby 'permitting' her to defend her Latina status whilst at the same time *allowing* (instead of complicating as Negra writes) *a process of transformation* by which her persona also consists of Americanness; an example of such a transformation is the 'crowning' of Diaz as 'Hollywood's Golden Girl.'[160] But in this respect, her Spanish text goes further by accepting Diaz' American image on screen whilst identifying/recognising her as a Latina figure off-screen. The positioning of her as of Cuban-descent in Spanish texts has thus strengthened her association with Latinness despite factors which may 'complicate' her ethnic status, such as her poor Spanish. It seems that the actress's proclamation of Latina status as well as her acknowledgement of the Latino community for their support and warmth, has successfully assimilated her into Latino culture. What this means is that through her 'participation' in texts geared towards the Latino, in particular the Spanish-language press, Cameron Diaz has been able to embody the kind of ethnic femininity and Latina authenticity displayed by fellow actresses Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez.

Coverage of Diaz by the Latino press during the last decade has extended beyond reviews of her films. In 1996, the year Diaz debuted on screen, *Hispanic* magazine listed her as number 20 in their

---

[158] *La Opinión*, 'Jennifer López y Cameron Díaz son las únicas estrellas latinas que integran la lista de las 100 personas más poderosas del entretenimiento en Estados Unidos,' Servisios de *La Opinión*, 1 November (Los Angeles, CA, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 11 January 2002.
http://laopinion.com/archivo.html?START=6&RESULTSTART=1&DISPLAYTYPE=single&FREETEXT=Cameron+Diaz&FDATEd12=FDATEd13=&BOOLp00=&BOOLp08=&SORT_MODE=Relevancia

[159] Negra, p 103

[160] *Vogue* (1998) and *Cosmopolitan* (April 2001, UK) have both labelled Diaz as Hollywood's golden girl.

article on the '25 Most Powerful Hispanics in Hollywood.'[161] In the April 2000 issue, the actress was also in the headline: 'Veteran Latino Stars Take back the screen: New releases by Jimmy Smits, Salma Hayek and Cameron Diaz.'[162] Significantly, in a number of texts promoting Latina stars, Diaz' name is often mentioned in other publications geared to the Latino community such as *Estylo* (Latin Style), 'an English/Spanish language magazine focusing on Latino celebs such as Cuban-German actress Cameron Diaz [...].'[163] Diaz even appeared in the second issue of *Estylo* in 1994, in which other captions included the promotion of the magazine in Spanish as well as an article on Cuba. (See Photocopy).[164] She has also been associated with events dedicated to the recognition of positive images given by Latino stars. In the 2000 *ALMA* (American Latino Media Arts) award ceremony, she was nominated as best actress for her performance in *Any Given Sunday* (Oliver Stone, Warner, US, 1999).[165] That her performance overshadowed other prominent Latina nominees such as Mexican Salma Hayek, Puerto Rican Rosie Perez, and the Cuban born singer Gloria Estefan (in her film debut), is noteworthy. For Diaz, with her 'White' image in a non-Latina role, had been accepted and chosen over other Latinas in defined Latina roles by a Latino association. The significance of this recognition is that the Latino audience had identified Diaz as an actress of Hispanic heritage, despite the fact she didn't play Latina characters.

This simultaneous construction of her white image and Latina identity also appeared in *Latina* magazine in 1999 (geared towards New York City Latinas), in which a younger Diaz was shown alongside a teenage Jennifer Lopez in: '*Acto final*/Curtain Call. Blasts from the Past: Flash

---

[161] Alex Avila, '25 Most Powerful Hispanics in Hollywood,' *Hispanic*, April (New York, 1996), p 26. [Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site=ehost&return=n

[162] Diana A. Terry-Azios, *Hispanic*, April, Cultura (New York, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.hispanicmagazine.com/2000/apr/Cultura/books.html.

[163] Wendy Jane Carrel, '4TH ANNUAL LATINO ENTERTAINMENT CONFERENCE,' held at the Universal Hilton Hotel, 4 November (Universal City: CA, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 3 June 2002.
http://www.hollywoodnet.com/conferences/latin98.html

[164] Walter Martinez from *Latin Style* confirmed Diaz' appearance on the cover. The September issue was Vol. 1, No. 2 (US 1994).
[Online] Accessed 6 June 2000.
http:www.cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover66.jpg

[165] Ramón Inclán, 'Reconocimiento latino entre los ganadores de los Premios ALMA 2000 están Antonio Banderas, Jennifer López, Cristina Saralegui, Héctor Elizondo, Cameron Díaz y Christina Aguilera,' 18 April (Los Angeles, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 11 January 2002.
http://laopinion.com/archivo.html?START=49&RESULTSTART=49&DISPLAYTYPE=single&FREETEXT=Jennifer+Lopez&FDATEd12=FDATEd13=& SORT_MODE= SORT_MODE.

Figure 30. Cover of *Estylo* (September 1994, USA).

back to school with yearbook pics of these *estrellas.*'[166] Thus, although representing whiteness on screen, Diaz continues to be promoted as a Latina representative by the Spanish press. Surprisingly, when Diaz danced in *Charlie's Angels* the same magazine promoted her under the caption: 'Best Panty Dance: Cameron Diaz proved that dancing is *in her blood* [my emphasis] in *Charlie's Angels*, inventing moves we'd never seen before and wearing animal print undies we hope to see again.'[167]

Ethnic Transformation via a White body

To date, no other film starring Cameron Diaz builds up the actress's image with such extreme contrast from an All-American look to a more 'ethnic' figure than *Charlie's Angels*. The film, based on the 1970's television series, focuses on three women police officers turned private investigators who work for their mysterious boss Charlie. Drew Barrymore, Lucy Liu and Diaz are the new 'Angels' sent out on a mission to locate kidnapped millionaire Eric Knox (Sam Rockwell). Suspecting Knox's adversary Roger Corwin (Tim Curry), the Angels tap into Corwin's satellite communications system to seek proof of his wrongdoing. But when they learn that Knox devised his own kidnapping they also discover his attempt to locate and murder Charlie.

Charlie's Angels serves as a useful text to analyse how Diaz is posited as both an extremely white image and a figure of ethnic/exotic femininity. In contrast to earlier films where the actress's white image is uniformly situated across the narrative, *Charlie's Angels* provides for a continual switch of Diaz' image between whiteness and ethnicity as well as Americanness and foreignness. Moreover, the actress's body provides an assimilated version of white ethnic femininity in African American culture as displayed in the *Soul Train* sequence. It is my intention to analyse this last sequence, as it is the fourth dance number in which Diaz appears in, hence the importance of this film. Placed in four distinct dance performances ranging between (White) disco and (Middle Eastern) belly dancing as well as an attempted (African-American) 'hip-hop' performance, Diaz is projected as both white and ethnic.

The first musical number to be discussed presents Diaz dancing to the Tavares' 1976 record 'Heaven must be missing an Angel.'[168] With face blushed with touches of glitter and wearing a sparkling pale blue dress, we first see a medium close up of the back of her head turning to her left as she says 'Eduardo move me.' After a slightly high angle long shot of stairs we see a group of men dressed in black and as they start to turn around to reveal their faces, she emerges from the

[166] *Latina*, 'Blasts from the Past: Flash back to school with yearbook pics of these *estrellas*,' *Latina*, August (New York, 1999), p 120.
[167] Yesenia de Avila, 'The Second Annual Erik [Estrada] Awards,' *Latina*, March (New York, 2001), p 134.
[168] 'Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel,' appeared in the group's *Sky High* Album, 1976.

centre of the group and comes towards the camera before walking down glittery red steps. Several moves later she is carried down to the centre of the lighted dance floor as members of the audience cheer her on. Just before we hear 'Heaven must be missing an Angel' the camera tilts up and, shortly afterwards, Diaz is being twirled, then lifted up by her partners to face an overhead camera as silver glitter squares fly about. First smiling, then blinking slowly, the actress finally throws a kiss directly into the camera.

Although there is a fade to Diaz waking up from her disco dream, the actress continues dancing in a different manner as she punches and grinds about in a t-shirt and Spiderman underwear. While in the earlier scene she had been watched by a diegetic crowd, she is now her only spectator as she smiles, admiring her own grinding and rotating derriere in a closet mirror. When she faces the mirror she runs her hands along her body as she wiggles and waves her arms before we hear the sound of a doorbell. Showing no signs of inhibition, Natalie (Diaz) greets the delivery man who is somewhat dumbfounded by her look and dialogue: 'you know I signed that release waiver so you can just feel free to stick things in my slot.' As she turns around she bangs into the side of doorframe and when we see Natalie again in her room, she answers the telephone and responds, 'Hey! I'll be right in.'

The use of the song 'heaven must be missing an angel' again suggests that the actress's body can be linked to the 'embodiment of whiteness' because of its celestial connotations. The elevation of her white figure and its showering with silver glitter, as well as the focus on the actress's sparkling powdered face in the dance sequence, gives an image which evokes the notion of Diaz' figure as being associated with 'mysticism'. The final close-up of her face in this dream sequence also draws attention to her blonde hair and blue eyes, thereby contributing to the white/angelic image. The scene after her dream sequence briefly suggests innocence as she playfully dances about wearing a comic superhero image on her bottom, with the braces from her teeth and dolls on the windowsill. When her conversation with the deliveryman suggests sexual connotation, 'feel free to stick things in my slot,' her naïvety is further affirmed by her sincerity and awkwardness, demonstrated by her walking into the door while smiling.

On the other hand, the lack of inhibition Diaz demonstrates as she walks about in her underwear, showcases her as a 'sexual threat.'[169] Whereas her Spiderman pants do not portray the sexually aggressive look associated with the vamp figure, she continues to draw attention to her body when she looks at herself grinding and shaking her bottom; the bumping and grinding of the actress adds a voyeuristic tone to the scene. As a result, the scene partially deconstructs her heavenly white features by emphasising her erotic movements in front of the mirror.

---

[169] Negra, p 71.

In the third dance sequence to be discussed, Diaz is presented alongside Lucy Liu as another exotic figure - a belly dancer. Dressed in revealing garments, the actresses expose their midriffs while wearing sheer tops and pants. Both women have their features exaggerated with the use of body paint; Liu's skin appears more porcelain-like whereas Diaz is projected to have a reddish tan, Liu wears a blonde wig while Diaz' red hairpiece seems to match the Cuban-American's 'painted' skin. As the two dance, Barrymore is hiding behind a pillar, her face also concealed behind a veil and, as a result, Liu and Diaz are projected as exposed images of ethnic and exotic femininity.

In this last scene, Diaz' body acts as a site to which her ethnic identity is foregrounded as a means to authenticate her performances and persona as also being specifically ethnic. Showcased alongside Chinese actress Liu, Diaz' brief transformation to a more 'Asian' ethnicity can be seen as another means by which this film was able to fabricate and display her image as exotic; the harem setting also asserts her exotic status while emphasising her foreign femininity.[170] Contributing to this notion of exoticism is the framing of Diaz and Liu as fantasy figures via oriental costume and libidinous dance; they also appear as geishas in another scene.[171] While the harem setting emphasises them as inhabitants of an oriental fantasy, the wearing of a bindi on their foreheads accentuates their image as Middle Eastern figures.[172] (See photocopy). Significantly, while being depicted as a more ethnic figure, Diaz' whiteness is 'coloured' unlike Liu's body. This 'reddening' of Diaz' skin demonstrates Ian C. Jarvie's argument that the film industry is still 'centred around "colour" appearances' to represent portrayals of ethnic figures, or in his term, 'visible minorities.'[173] Negra also discusses the use of body paint in one of Hedy Lamarr's films and points out how it 'functions to "colour" whiteness' since 'her own whiteness [was] symbolically compromised through the application of body makeup.'[174] What this helps us suggest is that the representation of Diaz' ethnic image in this third dance performance reflects her persona, in that, although exotic, her whiteness must be eliminated in order to project an overtly ethnic figure.

---

[170] Ella Shohat & Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), p 163.

[171] Drew Barrymore also appears in this harem dance scene but the actress is hidden behind her veil thus concealing her body from the men, whilst further drawing attention to Diaz and Liu's bodies.

[172] Viswanathan, 'That Dot on the Forehead,' *Indolink.com*, 23 October (1999). It symbolizes the third eye seeking to help one find inner wisdom. Ironically, the bindi in this scene does not fulfil its purpose since it is supposed to distract the male eye from any erotic thought of the woman in his presence.
[Online] Accessed 24 March 2001.
http://www.indolink.com/Forum/Parents/index.html

[173] Ian C. Jarvie, 'Stars and Ethnicity: Hollywood and the United States, 1932-1951,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman, ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 94.

[174] Negra, p 116.

Figure 31. Cameron Diaz and Lucy Liu in *Charlie's Angels* (USA, 2000).

In the final dance sequence to be discussed, while Diaz does not transform into another exotic image as in her previous performance, her figure is positioned within an African-American setting: the television dance show *Soul Train*.[175] The introduction of the sequence presents Natalie and her date Pete (Luke Wilson) walking into the television studio. In an overhead shot of the two walking through the door, Pete asks, 'I hope you like to dance' as a young black man walks ahead of them. After she responds, 'are you kidding? I love to dance,' the camera moves behind them to show the 'S' & 'T' from the *Soul Train* lights. In slow motion we see her smiling and clapping as rap music begins to play. Next a black bouncer walks up to the couple and asks 'you, you wanna dance on stage?' Both surprised, Pete asks 'us?' and before the bouncer responds 'nah the stage is for the ladies,' Natalie is saying 'yes.' Nudged by Pete to go alone, she ecstatically declares: 'Oh my God, cause I've always wanted to go up there' as she laughs and jumps from happiness. We then see the *Soul Train* letters as we hear the diegetic voice of a woman saying, 'oh my god, take a look at her butt.' The actress is lifted onto a platform by two black bouncers as the dance floor fills up with African-American figures. Meanwhile her white features are emphasised by the stage lighting and soon the lyrics of Sir Prince-A-Lot's song, 'I Like Big Butts' begins as Diaz starts to rotate her hips as in the bedroom scene.

As we hear the diegetic song in the scene, there is a long shot of the actress on stage. The camera first zooms in to a medium close up of her rotating her bottom, then tilts up as Diaz turns around to look at her own 'butt', somewhat amazed at its gyrations. From her point of view we see the crowd looking up at her in bewilderment as the non-diegetic sound of crickets and her laughter reflect their reaction towards her dancing. Further supporting this reaction are the facial expressions of two black girls; one slightly squints her eyes in disbelief. Meanwhile Pete stands between two black bouncers and asks 'She's pretty great isn't she?' before two other African-American men stand in front of Natalie with intentions of taking her off stage. But before they make a move, she uses their shoulders to safely jump off stage and takes the dance floor by 'strolling' as the camera pulls back; the stroll allows dancers to show off as they walk down an aisle. One black girl begins to bounce her head and mouths, 'yeah' then 'she's alright,' before we return to Pete trying to establish some type of dialogue with the bouncers by commenting upon their bodies. The next time we see Natalie the crowd begins to join in with the dancing while continuously cheering

[175] As mentioned in my chapter on Rosie Perez, the dance programme had concentrated on black entertainment thus gearing towards a predominantly African-American audience. Ironically, as mentioned in the Perez chapter, the Puerto Rican actress appeared on *Soul Train* shortly before making her film debut, making her urban look, attitude and dance movements more appropriate for the show's format that Diaz' presence.

her on: 'go white girl!' As she finishes, Natalie waves to Pete before walking towards him through the now gathered dance crowd.

Treated in a comical fashion, the manner in which Diaz dances hip hop is contrary to the dynamic and aggressiveness of the dance. For instance, if we briefly compare Rosie Perez' performance in *Do The Right Thing* to Diaz' dance number, Perez delivers a fierce and aggressive succession of dance steps which sets up the tense narrative of Spike Lee's film. Diaz on the other hand, shakes her hips as if they've taken a life of their own, hence Natalie's own amazement at her gyrating torso. Furthermore because hip hop is male dominated as well as very ghetto, Diaz' feminine moves and very white body gives the dance a different, hysterical interpretation. Writing on hip hop dance, Robert Farris Thompson notes that 'electric-boogaloo, poppin' and tickin' moves arose in Fresno and Los Angeles (Watts, Long Beach, Crenshaw Heights).'[176] Because the actress is a native of Long Beach she is considered to present 'authentic' moves such as poppin' in the *Soul Train* performance thus positioning the actress as a genuine, although not convincing, performer of hip hop dance styles. Other genuine dance moves Diaz offers in this dance sequence are the robot, which became popular on the East Coast in the early 1970s, and more contemporary rap dances including the running man.[177]

Conversely, because Diaz' body is overtly white her appearance on the popular African American television program conjures up elements of minstrel performances, particularly as the construction of the actress's presence steps over racial boundaries to black entertainment. Eric Lott's work on minstrelsy discusses the white working class fascination and fear of black cultural practices. As he explains, through ridicule minstrel performers expressed their desire to 'try on the accents of "blackness"[178] but in doing so became guilty of 'cultural robbery.'[179] Thus, through music, dance and jokes, to name several elements of minstrel performance, working class whites embodied and intruded the racial politics of blackness and black performance. This was not the case with Diaz' '*Soul Train*' performance in *Charlie's Angels*. Granted, her white body is seen as a site of racial conflict which can be identified as mocking hip hop, hence the horrific reaction of blacks as they watch Natalie shaking her bottom to the lyrics 'I Like Big Butts.' However the actress is not considered as intruding on blackness but instead celebrating and participating in African American popular culture.

---

[176] Robert Farris Thompson, 'Hip hop 101,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 213.
[177] Katrina Hazzard-Donald, 'Dance in Hip Hop Culture,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, pp 225, 228.
[178] Eric Lott, *Love and Theft, Blackface, Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p 6.
[179] Ibid., p 8.

Moreover, her familiarity with hip hop dance is just one manner in which the actress identifies with common movements thus emphasising her knowledge and involvement in hip hop culture.

We can see how Diaz' figure is slowly 'assimilated' into her ethnic 'surroundings' and the first sign of this is her invitation onto the platform and not her (White) date. Surprisingly, although the bouncer states that the stage is for 'the ladies', the actress is the only figure dancing on stage, as well as the only person to declare her desire to go up on the *Soul Train* platform, thus establishing a certain degree of familiarity and association with African-American culture. Her willingness to interact with black figures further aligns Diaz' body within a context of ethnicity throughout the scene and evidence to affirm this argument is the mouthing of 'she's alright' by one black girl; this reaction sparks a unanimous acceptance of her white figure within the dominant black group.

Furthermore, whereas her debut film served to point up the actress's Cuban background by emphasising her ethnicity, Diaz' *Soul Train* performance provides a moment where her whiteness is literally shouted out, but, eventually *accepted* by other ethnic figures; it seems that her presence serves as a reminder of how many Cubans identify themselves as White, and are recognised as a Caucasian.[180] The initial reaction towards her body in the *Soul Train* sequence establishes a similar response from some Latinos who have insisted the actress is a 'vanilla wafer' and not Latina; however her presence functions as a reminder of how her features challenge the dilemma of representing an ethnic figure but with a comedic undertone, as noted in a film review:

> Ms. Diaz plays against her own sexiness, emphasizing Natalie's gawky cluelessness to good comic effect. In one scene, her love interest (Luke Wilson) takes her on a date to a taping of Soul Train, and Natalie bumps and grinds to Sir Mix-A-Lot's "Baby Got Back." The joke, about as subtle as they come in this movie, is that Ms. Diaz hardly conforms to the steatopygous ideal of female beauty the song celebrates, but Natalie is too goofily naïve to notice or care.[181]

Clearly, the celebration of racial and gender difference in this last dance sequence draws attention to how Diaz is *not* the epitome of black and Puerto Rican male desire. As noted in the Lopez chapter, both ethnic groups praise the female backside as a symbol of beauty especially when it is large, as in the case of the *Selena* star. Diaz' body parts are clearly not considered the

---

[180] The acknowledgement of being a Latina with white features has also sparked debate in pop singer Christina Aguilera's stardom. In the July 2003 issue of *Latina* magazine, it states that Aguilera was accused of 'just posing' as Latina. Proud of her Ecuadorian (and Irish-American) roots, the singer refused to change her surname to 'something less ethnic' when music executives approached the then budding star. What is more, she went on to record a Spanish album *Mi reflejo* and win a Latin Grammy as a result of her crossover album. Thus, like Diaz, Aguilera not only declared her Latina roots and showed herself to be proud of her heritage, she also became accepted by the Latino community and recognised as an ethnic figure. Aguila 'Christina Aguilera: Dirrty diva,' *Latina*, July (New York, 2003), p 88.

[181] A.O. Scott, 'Sleek, Tough, Frosted? Must Be Empowerment,' *The New York Times*, 3 November, Film Review of *Charlie's Angels*, (New York, 2000), p E16.

embodiment of 'Afro-diasporic standards of beauty,' but the actress shaking her (white) bottom for the public (on screen as well as off screen), does add to the comedic tone of the scene.[182] It seems that through humour and Diaz' body the scene also puts forth the notion of white bodies (despite ethnic background) performing dances which are ethnically and racially defined. Thus while the actress's body is 'marked' as the embodiment of white femininity for which black and Latino audiences may not connect the blonde star as 'representing' hip hop let alone an ethnic identity, she is nevertheless accepted as an 'authentic' participant of hip hop culture if only for the moment she struts her stuff on *Soul Train*.

While Diaz is positioned in four distinct dance scenes in *Charlie's Angels*, the most memorable performance being the *Soul Train* sequence, the film serves as an excellent example as to how her body was transformed in each performance to either ethnic/exotic or white. In one scene, the actress wearing an all-white costume with hood, literally blends into her sterile exterior in the hope of getting through a security alarm, hence her need to become 'invisible'.[183] Moreover, the film adheres to the promotion of her whiteness by positioning her in another scene as the All-American girl draped in star-spangled driving gear; this image may be compared to the photograph of Diaz' when still a teenage model in which she posed in a stars and stripes jacket and earrings. Her image is fabricated as so White she is 'invisible', so American that she is literally draped in the United States flag as part of her costume and car design, as well as so ethnic she can be 'manufactured' to look like a Middle Eastern belly dancer or Geisha opposite Lucy Liu. Thus, we are reminded of the Latina's ability to personify different identities in the narrative, not solely because the film calls for the 'Angels' to go in disguise, but also because her body can be transformed authentically into depicting both ethnic and white figures. In other words, the positioning of Diaz as both American and ethnic in *Charlie's Angels* corresponds to the ethnic identity of the star as that of an integrated white ethnic figure.

As she began to transform into one of Hollywood's major movie stars, Diaz received much recognition for her comedic roles which apparently paved the way to success. After her debut performance in *The Mask*, she was described as 'burn[ing]-up the box office playing opposite Jim

---

[182] Raquel Z. Rivera, *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2003), p 132.

[183] Interestingly, in the sequel to *Charlie's Angels* (McG, Columbia Tristar Studios, 2002, US) Diaz is introduced in an all white outfit as she walks into a foreign locale occupied by drunken men. Her image is extremely white in comparison to the surrounding tanned figures.

Carrey [...],[184] and in *Feeling Minnesota* she was praised as being 'the only actor who brings style to a comic road odyssey that thinks it's dark but is merely dense. [...].'[185] For her performance in *My Best Friend's Wedding*, Diaz was recognised as having Hollywood star potential as observed by Ivor Davis: 'When she showed up in her next mainstream movie, she almost stole the picture from Julia Roberts' nose.'[186] This was an indication of what was to come with Diaz' next role in *There's Something About Mary* in which she stepped across the threshold to 'A-league stardom.'[187] Further confirming the success of Diaz was the $176 million the film grossed in the box office and the actress's substantial salary increase.[188] Thus, despite a number of her films not receiving critical acclaim, like *Any Given Sunday*, the actress continued to earn several million dollars per picture.

Charles L. Ponce de Leon notes that 'celebrities who kept their balance were able to poke fun at themselves – a powerful antidote to the sense of self-importance to which they were particularly vulnerable.'[189] In several interviews on Diaz, the actress has made it clear that she is determined to not take her stardom too seriously. For instance, Norman Roy confirms the actress's attempt to portray a normal image of herself to fans: 'Diaz is constantly at pains to emphasise her ordinariness.' 'There's not a hint of star-like petulance to be had.'[190] What Diaz is clearly evoking in her interviews, as Leon details, are 'bonds of sympathy and identification' thereby making the actress more familiar and appealing to the reader.[191]

Of the three actresses looked at in this thesis, Cameron Diaz has been promoted (in the media) as a humble woman who has worked to become one of Hollywood's leading stars. It is not unusual that the identification of Diaz as friendly and open coincides with the cheerful characters she tends to portray (e.g., Kimmy, Mary and Natalie) and her consistent appearance in comedy films. Richard deCordova has written on the picture personality of stars and explains that 'the private life of the star was not to be in contradiction with his/her film image [...].'[192] Diaz' persona seems to have maintained a parallel depiction of her image, thus bearing out Nancy Mill's description of her:

---

[184] Jeanne Wolf, 'Diaz of Our Lives: On screen Cameron romps with Keanu Reeves, off screen with Matt Dillon,' *New York Daily News*, 15 September, Spotlight Section (New York, 1996), p 7.
[185] Peter Travers, 'Feeling Minnesota,' *Rolling Stone*, 3 October (New York, 1996), Issue 74, p 78.
[186] Ivor Davis.
[187] Riza Cruz, 'Their Brilliant Careers,' *Vanity Fair*, April (New York, 1997), p 26.
[188] Brantley Bardin, 'Who Says Comedy Can't be Pretty?, *Premiere* (UK, 2001).
[189] Leon, p 136.
[190] Norman Roy, *Empire*, December (UK, 1996), pp 99, 97.
[191] Leon, pp 69-70.
[192] Richard deCordova, 'The Emergence of the Star System in America,' *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p 27.

> Diaz, 29, may be one of Hollywood's biggest stars, but she is well known for not behaving like one. [...]. In real life, she seems as generically wholesome as her character in "*There's Something About Mary*," although a little more wised-up. [193]

Thus, if Diaz became a star because of her portrayal of Mary, it was most likely because the actress modified the character to herself thus contributing to the authenticity of her performance.

In *Stars*, Richard Dyer acknowledged how celebrities, despite appearing in distinct films, must 'stay broadly the same in order to permit recognition and identification.'[194] This account explains why the actress's performances in films *Gangs of New York* (Martin Scorsese, 2002) and *Any Given Sunday* (Oliver Stone, 1999) did not convince audiences of Diaz' acting skills. Of her performance in this last film, Stephen Holden of *The New York Times* wrote, 'Ms. Diaz, who can be such a winning comedian, is not up to the dramatic demands of her unsympathetic character.'[195] Not carrying over traits from her more popular films such as *There's Something About Mary* and *My Best Friend's Wedding*, Diaz failed to offer more 'authentic' performances perhaps because her dramatic roles did not exemplify the persona and image of the actress cultivated thus far.

There is a level of contradiction in Diaz' stardom which is not consistent with Leon's analysis that: 'For celebrities, achieving true success was therefore a heroic struggle, making their ability to do so all the more impressive – and the rewards that they received all the more deserved.'[196] In her interviews, Jennifer Lopez has repeatedly informed her fans of her deep desire to become a star as well as how her training as a dancer served as a stepping-stone to that. As for the publicity of Perez, her difficult upbringing in and out of orphanages reflected hardship and ambition which motivated the actress to seek out acting roles. Diaz informed Lawrence Grobel of her future plans thus: 'To just not make a complete asshole out of myself every time I go up for a part [*Laughs*].' [197] Thus with Diaz there is no indication of hardship, struggle or ambition to become a star. As she merely claims, 'I was just a model. I had no aspirations to be an actress.'[198] 'In my case, getting to read for *The Mask* was luck.'[199] As such, in contrast to Lopez and Perez, Diaz failed to experience the usual trials and turbulences that have to be overcome to find fame, making her stardom not as 'heroic' as her fellow Latinas, but just as memorable.

---

[193] Mills, p 2.
[194] Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI, 1979), p 111.
[195] Stephen Holden, 'Any Given Sunday': End Zone as War Zone... Hut!,' *The New York Times*, 22 December (New York, 1999).
{Online} Accessed 6 June 2000.
http://search1.nytimes.com/search/daily/bin/fastweb?getdoc+site+site+28205+9+wAAA+Cameron%7EDia
[196] Leon, p 112.
[197] Grobel, p 100.
[198] Ivor Davis.
[199] Opcit., p 52.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the construction of Cameron Diaz' whiteness and ethnicity across her films. I have demonstrated that although the actress personifies white characters on film, in contrast to the persona of Jennifer Lopez and Rosie Perez, there is an underlying presence of ethnicity in the roles the actress takes on. More specifically, despite representing whiteness, Diaz' body has been linked to ethnic femininity via her 'authentic' interpretations of dance. Diaz has not trained professionally as a dancer, unlike Lopez or Perez, but it is significant that the white Cuban-American star has been featured in musical performances which have served to define the actress as a genuine site of ethnic performance. Thus while Hollywood has focused on Perez' mouth and Lopez' backside as exaggerated sites of ethnic femininity, it seeems that the film industry rooted the body of the Cuban-American star as an 'authentic' dancing figure. This image clearly corresponds with stereotypical notions of Latinas as subliminal erotic figures which merely serve as dancing spectacles in the narrative.[200]

Significantly, despite Diaz' self-proclamation of being Latina the actress has not always been accepted by the entire Latino community. While she has for the most part been supported by Latinos and promoted in Spanish-language texts as a bona fide Latina figure, the actress has been rejected by some who accuse her of being 'vanilla' and not portraying *hispanas*. Thus instead of recognising Diaz' whiteness as another example of how Latinos are also racially 'mixed', some members of the Latino community have set Diaz aside in favour of a more typical darker featured Latina stars like Jennifer Lopez, Salma Hayek or Rosario Dawson. This however is a mistake.

As I have argued, Diaz stepped away from portraying Latina roles because she did not want to be typecast the way Lopez and Perez were although she has been linked to Latinness through her role as a dancing figure. But this does not mean that Diaz was trying to hide her Latina roots as Raquel Welch did in the early 1970s, or anglicise her name as Rita Hayworth did during Hollywood's Golden years in the 40s and 50s. Throughout the publicity gathered on the actress, Diaz has made it clear that she is Latina and American, statuses also ascribed to Rosie Perez and Jennifer Lopez. However because Diaz is recognised as possessing white features, she has become more of the girl next door then the stereotypical caricature of Latina women in film.

While it is clear that Diaz' heritage has been a constant presence throughout her media hype, I have also shown different stages in the actress's career when her Latina status has been overshadowed by accounts of her being 'more' American. When she debuted, the actress was promoted as an ethnic/exotic figure despite her white image. It was shortly afterwards, when she

---

[200] Shohat, p 235.

began to characterise WASP roles, that there is a shift in her publicity to further promote her as American, at the same time that her Latina image is 'deconstructed'. This perhaps contributes to the recogniton of Diaz as non-Latina by the general public in that after becoming a star she is promoted as 'more' American. Of course, that the actress personifies white characters and has yet to take on an ethnically defined role complicates the recognition of the star as genuinely Latina. However, even when Diaz transforms in order to project images of extreme whiteness, such as in *There's Something about Mary*, evidence of her Cuban background surfaces in her star texts, seeking reconciliation (or creating 'conflict') between her American image and Latina status. This is central, in that her white features and American persona challenge studies on ethnic stardom.

Notably, in looking at the films discussed in this chapter, I have been able to emphasise how Diaz' body functions as a continual site of transformation across these: *The Mask* – 'more' Latina; *Feeling Minnesota* – exotic; *My Best Friend's Wedding* and *There's Something about Mary* – 'more' white; *Charlie's Angels* - exotic and white. By doing so, I have been able to explore her unique persona as a combination of sensuality, suggestive dancing and sexually alluring behaviour (associated with ethnic femininity), with a bridal image (often linked with the concept of purity). My reading of Diaz also proves that because of the actress's costumes, the Latina star has been able to promote a very visible white image without evidence of ethnicity, in particular in *My Friend's Wedding*. If we refer once again to Jane Gaines, we can observe that via costumes Diaz has been positioned to 'transform' or 'reconstruct' her body (either by erasing or promoting signs of ethnicity) in order 'to tell the story.'[201] Thus, in arguing Diaz' ability to 'authentically' represent both ethnic and white figures, it became challenging to consistently reaffirm her *latinidad* when circumstances around her elevation to stardom ran parallel to her embodiment of WASP characters in *My Best Friend's Wedding* and *There's Something About Mary*. The former film pushed Diaz to the brink of stardom while the latter made her a Hollywood star. It should be noted that her rise to fame occurred when she promoted the American flag on the cover of *Seventeen*. From this we might say that her fair features became just as symbolic as the flag because of her white/American look. Yet, because Diaz became a star during a period when Latinos demanded recognition in the US, the blonde blue-eyed actress became something more than a (possible) Latina representative in Hollywood. She added a 'twist' to the perceptiopn of Latina stardom and became the film industry's Golden Girl with cultural values and ethnic pride.

While it has not been my goal to "Latinise" Diaz, I have attempted to demonstrate her *latinidad* despite the media's insistence on projecting dark featured Hispanics as authentic Latino

---

[201] Jane Gaines, *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*,' Gaines & Charlotte Herzog (eds.) (Routledge: London & New York, 1909), p 20.

figures. However, the significance of her career for this research has been the 'saturation' of her ethnicity in her star texts highlighted by her 'willing[ness] to acknowledge her roots.'[202] Her exposure in Hollywood has given some in the Latino community a sense of pride, hence their continual claims that she is 'one of them'. In other words, for the Latino community, Diaz has not only become a Latina figure in the media, but also, 'la latina más rubia de Hollywood' – Hollywood's blondest Latina.[203]

[202] Kieran Scott, p 13.
[203] *People en Español*, 'Entre astros,' *People en Español*, May (US, 1999), p 10.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis I have tried to offer a new approach to analysing ethnic stardom by focusing on actresses who have disturbed perceptions of *latinidad* in contemporary film. While other recent studies on Latina stardom have continued to evoke stereotypical ethnic female discourses, I discuss the ways in which Rosie Perez, Jennifer Lopez and Cameron Diaz have contributed to the transformation of Latina stardom in Hollywood over the past two decades. Most recently, Chris Holmlund, in her book chapter on Perez and Lopez, analyses their stardom by pointing up those physical features (i.e. the mouth and backside) that, in some manner, stem from stereotypical discourses. As the author states, 'I also pick these actresses because their *bodies* [...] both torque[...] and tempt[...] casting traditions and hence reveal limitations and liberties that Latinas encounter.'[1] While I also explore these actresses in my work, I have included Diaz as an exceptional case of Latina representation in mainstream cinema: this is because she challenges casting traditions and the limitations ethnic stars have come across in the past. Moreover, I have not limited my work to the analysis of their appearance in Latino-themed independent films, nor do I focus exclusively on their publicity in English texts. In contrast to Holmlund's work, I concentrate on those films which have made these actresses stars and examine how they have been transformed (including physically) as ethnic female stars, throughout their careers. For this reason, I have focused on three actresses with differing features to understand how they are promoted as Latina representatives in film and other texts, as well as how they have played a crucial role in the transformation of the Latina image in Hollywood.

In examining the celebrity of the three actresses, a considerable amount of material devoted to ethnic studies and stardom has been referred to throughout this thesis. Richard Dyer's pioneering work on stars has allowed me to explore the significance of the star images of Perez, Lopez and Diaz in the film industry and in society. The work of Thomas Harris and Charles Eckert has also been useful in demonstrating the importance of publicity and how the film industry is in charge of the creation of the star image. Harris, as well as Barry King, provides much insight as to how to 'reconstruct' the images of the women analysed in this research by focusing on the type of texts used to promote each one. Moreover, the work of Charles Ponce de Leon on celebrity journalism has been fundamental to this research as it offers

[1] Chris Holmlund, *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculinity at the Movies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p 112.

insight into stars and how their 'true' selves are revealed in the press. While Andrew Britton's book on Katherine Hepburn has also served to foreground my analysis of the star persona and image, thus providing an excellent framework, it is the work of Diane Negra and Adrienne L. McLean which has been extremely useful to my work on transformation and authenticity in ethnic female stardom. McLean's analysis of the physical transformation of Rita Hayworth has also served in my discussion of the three actresses' images in media texts. Significantly, McLean, along with Linda Mizejewski, offer discourses on dance performance which have proved useful to my examination of Cameron Diaz as a dancing figure across a number of her films.

In this research I have tried to understand and clarify 'what features and values appear to be assigned to each star on the basis of transformation and authenticity.'[2] I have compared my work to McLean and Negra's by illustrating the manner in which the bodies of Perez, Lopez and Diaz were 'manufactured,' 'restricted and codified'[3] by Hollywood to guarantee 'a version of ethnicity.'[4] In examining the stardom of Rosie Perez, I focused on Kathleen Rowe and Maria DiBattista whose work on the unruly woman and fast talking dame respectively provided rich material for exploring the actress as a positive and active agent of ethnic femininity. It is through the work of Rowe and DiBattista that I looked at the narrative of transformation in Perez' stardom as embodying a post-modern version of the Latina stereotype, one who uses her voice to have a say in her own destiny. As I have shown in my research, Perez is not merely posited as an updated caricature of former 'Latina' stars Lupe Vélez or Carmen Miranda whose comic appearances involved the mangling of the English language. Rather, the Puerto Rican star is able to offer performances on a much more complex level as in the case of the character of Gloria in *White Men Can't Jump*, where her intelligence is just as compelling the actress's comedic dialogue. Moreover, in contrast to Vélez and Miranda, Perez has proved her ability to portray intense characters whose silence is just as overwhelming as her potent voice, as in *Fearless*. To understand the significance of the actress's outbursts in films and how her 'tantrums' are much more complexly involved with the narrative than just simple outbursts of an ethnicised unruly woman, I turned to the work of other feminist film scholars such as Amy Lawrence and Kaja Silverman, whose investigation on the woman's voice in classical cinema has also been essential to my chapter on Perez.

Because Perez' voice and body serve as a site of ethnic femininity, I have taken into account the way directors have built upon her persona as authentically urban and genuinely

---

[2] Adrienne L. McLean, "'I'm a Cansino': Transformation, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in the Construction of Rita Hayworth, American Love Goddess,' in *Journal of Film and Video*, Vol. 44, Numbers 3 & 4, Fall 1992 and Winter 1993 (University of Films and Video Association, 1993), p 22.
[3] Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p 18.
[4] Ibid., p 18.

Latina, as well as how her films offered 'authentic' depictions of Hispanicness via dialogue and/or mise-en-scène. Moreover, because of Perez' dark features, I have considered how the actress has often been placed in the narrative to briefly represent blackness, thus my interest in the work of Vincent Roccio and Ed Guerrero on African American portrayal in contemporary cinema. The racialising of Perez' body and ethnic background have also led to my discussions on the actress as representing an 'authentic' hip hop artist. Raquel Z. Rivera and William Eric Perkins' work on hip hop has been useful in my analysis of Perez, as well Eric Lott and W. T. Lhamon, Jr.'s study on blackface performance which also examines hip hop culture. Notably, I look to these scholars not only in my work on Perez but also in my examination of the stardom of Jennifer Lopez and Cameron Diaz.

Frances Negrón Muntaner and Mary C. Beltrán's examination of the construction of Jennifer Lopez as cross-over celebrity and the brouhaha over the actress's shapely figure in the media, has also been of much use to my work on the star of *Selena*. My analysis of Lopez' cross-over stardom included the actress's shift to non-Latina roles and mainstream success which neither Muntaner and Beltrán show as their work fails to go beyond 1998, when Lopez became a Hollywood celebrity. It is after such time, as I have shown, that the establishment of Lopez' ethnic identity in films and in the press continued to construct her as a site of ethnic femininity despite her crossover to non-Latina roles. With Lopez' transformation to mainstream success, I have also been able to explore the actress's move to pop music stardom as well as her rise from film star to 'JLo' commodity. More importantly, I have been able to demonstrate the physical transformation of the Latina star to a more white look, thus hopefully offering a more detailed account of her transformation to stardom than Muntaner and Beltrán. Negra's work on former skating star Sonja Henie has also allowed me to explore what whiteness has meant in the persona and image of the Latina icon. Moreover, the author's discussion of Cher has been extremely helpful to my examination of Lopez' shift from singer to actress and 'magnate.'

The transformation of Cameron Diaz to both ethnic and American in her star image and persona has also been read in more detail to examine the distinctive position of the actress as a white Latina in Hollywood. Because this thesis also looks at the construction of whiteness in Latina stardom, I have concentrated on the work of Dyer, Negra and David R. Roediger, to name three of the most central reference points throughout this chapter and dissertation. In my chapter on Diaz I have asserted that the association between her white body and Latina heritage has actually established a pattern in her publicity which has marked the star as representing exoticism. Thus, in my analysis of the transformation of Diaz' persona, I have emphasised how the actress has been posited as a 'genuinely' WASP figure at the same time as she is put forward as an exotic and erotic image of ethnic femininity in her films. Because of this, in

contrast to Lopez and Perez, Diaz' films have relied more on her ethnic identity than features, to convey her body as an 'authentic' site of 'exotic sexuality.'[5]

Contributing to the authenticity of these actresses as Latinas in Hollywood has been the construction of their celebrity in Spanish-speaking texts, a source not utilised in any of the other studies on Latina stardom. My reading of their publicity in Spanish articles has allowed me to illustrate the Hispanic community's efforts to repeatedly link Perez, Lopez, *and* Diaz as authentic Latina representatives in the media. Golomb explains that, authenticity cannot be achieved 'apart from the community,'[6] for the individual is bound to 'one's society, folk or people.'[7] Thus, the legitimacy of the actresses' status as ethnic can be found in the Latino community's claim that each star forms a part of their heritage and social framework. This is demonstrated in the way the Spanish press continuously highlight their origins (since the early stages of their career), and by the emphasis on each consenting to her ethnic identity. In fact, throughout my research of the materials gathered, each actress has openly acknowledged and discussed their heritage and upbringing in both Spanish and English texts. Yet, that such declarations appear in Spanish contributes to the promotion of the actresses as Latina bodies despite their features or portrayal of non-Latina roles. This is not to say that the entire Latino community has responded in a positive manner to the selection of the three figures as representatives, as noted in my work on Cameron Diaz, but for the most part, Hispanics have been quite supportive of the accomplishments of these women as Latina figures.

In part, I have also applied the notion of authenticity to the actresses' performances in dance sequences to contest stereotypical discourses of Latinos never 'function[ing] outside the musical number.'[8] Angharad N. Valdivia briefly discusses Perez' dancing in several films and states that the stereotyping of Latino/as as dancers is 'reinforced' by the actress. As the author claims, 'Her dancing is seductive and "other," not socially sanctioned for white people.'[9] While it is true that Perez may be positioned as 'other' in these sequences, I have proposed that her dancing is extremely crucial to the storyline, specifically in *Do The Right Thing*, for she establishes the dynamic tension of the film itself. In the case of Lopez, her *salsa* dancing with Jack Nicholson also defines the actress as personifying genuine Latina characters. In this manner, the scenes themselves function to reinforce the actress's heritage, thus creating examples of authenticity in dance. Significantly, it has been through the repeated performance

---

[5] Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London and New York: Routledge., p 111.
[6] Jacob Golomb, *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegard to Camus*, Chapter 5, Heidegger's Ontology of Authenticity (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p 116.
[7] Ibid., p 117.
[8] Ella Shohat, 'Ethnicities-in-Relation: Toward a Multicultural Reading on American Cinema', in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 234.
[9] Angharad N. Valdivia, *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood: and Other Essays on Media Culture* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2000), p 98.

of dance across Diaz' films that her uniquely' white body is 'negotiated', as well as heightened, as an 'authentic' example of ethnic/Latina display. For Diaz, an example of authenticity in a dance performance may be found in her debut film where signs of Latinness emerge throughout the sequence, but it is her dancing in several musical numbers in *Charlie's Angels* which posits the issue of her body as representing 'otherness'. She appears as a harem dancer and is centred as an 'advocate' of hip-hop music within an African-American setting. Hence, the presence of the three actresses in dance sequences has allowed me to describe the importance of their musical performances as part of the film's narrative.

Within the framework of ethnic female stardom, I have tried to show how each offers a different 'experience' of transformation to celebrity. Through the use of photographs I have illustrated how the three actresses have been positioned as ethnic feminine figures in their press coverage, as well as demonstrating any visual physical transformation throughout their careers. My analysis of Lopez' image has provided evidence of a dramatic transformation to a 'more' white look. The publicity for her film *Angel Eyes* and the promotion of her perfume 'Glow' have provided the most exaggerated white images of the actress's body; images of Lopez years earlier showed her with dark wavy hair and a voluptuous frame. As a result, the transformation of the actress involved the lightening of her hair to blonde and the reshaping of her body to a slender frame. That this description reflects the 'ideal' features Diaz possesses is noteworthy, for the blonde actress exhibits no overt ethnic signifiers. But even with her 'uniquely' white physiognomy, her body has been constructed as an ethnic site by means of: 'associat[ing her] with unauthorised sexuality'[10] (as in *Playboy* magazine), connoting her ethnic background as early on as in the caption/cover of those texts featuring Diaz (*Vaya con Diaz*), and, by promoting the star in texts geared to Latinos in general. In Perez' publicity, her Brooklyn upbringing, Puerto Rican roots, attitude, petite frame and accent appear constantly in articles thus constructing her body and identity as Latina. As for her image, it is important to bear in mind that Perez, like Diaz, shows little physical transformation when compared to Jennifer Lopez.

Part of the metamorphosis of an actor's career is the defining performance through which they become a star. Despite the classification of their performances as exclusively representing Latinaness or Whiteness, the actresses dealt with in this thesis have demonstrated three distinct cases of stardom within a five-year period. To begin with, the transformation of Rosie Perez to star occurred with her performance of a grieving mother of Hispanic descent in the 1993 film *Fearless*. What was unusual about her performance was her transition to drama and, more importantly, the altering of her trademark voice to sound more submissive. As demonstrated in my work on the actress, her reviews have often been influenced by her vocal

[10] Negra, p 18.

performances, targeting the actress as a hostile 'nag' or 'bitch'[11] in the majority of her films (e.g., *Do The Right Thing, Night on Earth, White Men Can't Jump, It Could Happen to You, Somebody to Love, Perdita Durango*). While *Fearless* clearly signalled Perez' transformation into a bona-fide star, the film itself offered a unique performance by the actress in that she stepped away from those roles which had systematically portrayed her as an uncontrollable figure.

Four years after her performance in *Fearless* Perez' stardom began to fade just as Jennifer Lopez captivated audiences with her performance in *Selena* (1997). Like Perez, Lopez appeared in an independent film and was recognised with an Oscar nomination for her role, which marked her rise to stardom. That Lopez' rise to fame was primarily initiated by Latino audiences is significant, for this clearly alerted the film industry as to the economic influence Latinos were exerting in the nineties. What was also being indicated by Latinos to the film industry was the need for a new Latina image on screen, one that shifted away from the loud-mouthed image of Perez despite her dominant persona. Even so, for all of her success with *Selena*, Lopez had not been recognised by Hollywood as a star until her performance in *Out of Sight* (1998). In other words, her transformation to mainstream stardom was assured when she took on the role of a non-Latina character.

It is surprising that in the same year that Lopez became a mainstream success (1998), Cameron Diaz was also recognised as a star for her performance in *There's Something About Mary* (1998).[12] As the only ethnic female star studied in this thesis who plays characters that were consistently non-ethnic, it is significant that the blonde actress was catapulted to stardom when she portrayed another white character. Yet, despite being positioned as representing every (white) male's dream girl, signs of the actress's ethnicity continued to emerge on-screen as well as off-screen; on screen we get a glimpse of Diaz' biological father. Thus while she is often recognised by Latinos and mainstream viewers as a 'genuinely' white actress, there is an ongoing negotiation between Diaz' white/American 'look' and her Latina identity. For this reason, the actress became a key figure in the film industry for she could be read as ethnic and/or white.[13] As a result Diaz, along with Lopez and Perez, guaranteed the film industry's efforts to provide a changing nature of contemporary and authentic Latina representation.

What has also been demonstrated in the film industry is the economic success of Latina stardom. Perez' publicity indicated that she earned $1.5 million for her performance in *Fearless*, making her the first Latina actress to earn $1 million for a film. A decade later, Diaz became

---

[11] Myra MacDonald, *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media*, (London and New York: E. Arnold New York, NY. Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press, 1995), p 56.
[12] I wish to mention that with her performance of *There's Something About Mary*, Diaz provided one of cinema's most memorable moments: her character's use of (human) 'hair gel.' As for Perez and Lopez, both also offer unforgettable moments such as Perez dancing during the opening credits of *Do The Right Thing*, and Lopez trapped in the boot of car with George Clooney in *Out of Sight*.
[13] McLean, p 14.

the second Hollywood actress to amtch Julia Robert's $20 million fee, a sum Lopez reportedly earned in 2005 for *Monster-In-Law*. Significantly, after earning $20 million for her appearance in the sequel to *Charlie's Angels* in 2003, Diaz appeared in the 2004 *Guinness Book of World Records* for the highest annual earnings of $42.2 million, beating Julia Roberts (and Jennifer Lopez) as the highest paid actress in Hollywood. As for Perez, recently the actress has not been featured in a major Hollywood film hence her inability to compete against Lopez' or Diaz' levels of stardom.

It is significant that Diaz' earnings run parallel to the positioning of her characters as affluent. Although Diaz has portrayed a working class character, unlike Perez and Lopez, the blonde star has been projected to personify whiteness at its wealthiest, hence her portrayal of an heiress in two of her films. As for Lopez, it was her shift to mainstream success which seemed to herald a move to playing characters in the upper middle class bracket, although she occasionally returned to the working class, as in *Maid in Manhattan* (when she also returned to a Latina role). Interestingly, Lopez' characters seem to be situated in those regions which have the highest concentration of Latinos (New York, California, Florida, Texas) despite the fact that they are not always Latinas. Diaz' characters however, have been positioned all across the United States (e.g., Utah, California, Rhode Island) thus not marking the actress as being regionally linked, unlike Rosie Perez who is often situated in New York and usually portrays working class Latinas.

Because of the extreme shift between the representation of ethnic/white and working/upper class, I have also looked at the exchange between white, black and Latino cultures. I have shown that in Perez' films there seems to be a slightly disproportionate balance between Latino and black culture, with blacks dominating in *Do The Right Thing and White Men Can't Jump;* in the latter, we witness Perez' wits exceeding those of the rest of the characters but her culture, as well as that of white actor Woody Harrelson, is nonetheless underexposed. In contrast to Perez' films are those of Lopez where Latino/Mexican culture is pointed up as in *My Family and Selena.* However in both films, as well as in *Blood and Wine* where the actress portrays another Latina character, whiteness is 'superior', as evidenced in the treatment of Latino immigrants, customers and domestic servants. In two of Lopez' films (*Money Train* and *Anaconda*), Latinos and Blacks are seen working together thus projecting both on an equal level. As for Diaz' films there is a similar lack of coverage of Latino and black culture. Although we are introduced to black characters who possess a somewhat 'dominant' attitude over whites, as in *Feeling Minnesota*, the films of Diaz tend to give more insight into white culture.

Turning to the publicity build up of these Latina stars, I have also argued that the type of vocabulary describing the three actresses reinforces their image as 'feisty,' (Perez) 'glamorous,' (Lopez) and 'beautiful' (Diaz) across the media and in their films. Significantly,

such ascriptions reflect the type of star texts promoting each star. For instance, Perez' activism has been noted in articles found in political and health related magazines, whereas Diaz and Lopez dominate publications focusing on beauty or aimed at men (e.g., *For Him Magazine*, *Gentlemen's Quarterly*.) Notably, all three have appeared in *Latina* magazine, although Diaz has not graced the cover, unlike Perez and Lopez. I would argue here that if Diaz has already been judged by some Latino members as not being an 'authentic' Latina, her presence on the cover of a magazine such as *Latina* may not be completely accepted by the Hispanic population, thus perhaps causing outrage because of the insistence of her presence as representing *latinidad*. It is interesting to note that, in examining the biographies of each actress, there is a different tone in those articles describing their transformation into stars. In short, Perez struggled, Lopez worked hard and Diaz was given the opportunity (because of her extraordinary looks).

Having rejected scripts intending to offer a reprisal of her debut performance, Perez decided to take control of her career on-screen as well as off-screen, thus turning her back on Hollywood around 1996.[14] While this behaviour marked the actress as personifying the antithesis of compliance, it also designated her as 'fighter' in her campaign for AIDS awareness and women's and Puerto Ricans' rights. As an activist, the actress reflected the transformation of Latinos during the mid-nineties into a political force. As a result, it is her work as activist, rather than actress, which has made Latinos most proud of the Puerto Rican star. Thus, the assessment of her stardom has helped to transform the image of the Latina as a passive voice.

As the only Latina (to date) to have successfully crossed-over from Latina roles to mainstream characters and back again, Jennifer Lopez has become an extremely valuable figure in the film industry. Furthermore, she is the only Latina performer to profitably cross over from film to music in both Spanish and English markets. Hence, the best way to approach what her stardom has come to represent in the industry is to consider how Latinos have supported the actress economically since her performance in *Selena*. To confirm that she became a bankable figure because of *Selena*, articles documented how the film was marketed in Spanish and English, as well as how it became a box-office success because of Latino moviegoers. In fact, after her performance as the singer, the actress proved to have a strong hold over Latino audiences even after her transition to non-Latina roles. Given the way in which Latinos have proved to be an economic power, it is hardly surprising that Lopez has promoted herself as a cultural commodity and evolved as a one-woman 'empire'.

If Lopez' body serves to foreground the Latina image as marketable source, Diaz' figure has come to represent the ideal American image with ethnic origins. The sense that she has built a career showcasing her body, first modelling then starring in a number of Hollywood

[14] Perez continues to appear in independent films as well as on cable television programmes.

films (including her debut film), indicated that the actress embodies those features which have helped to transform her into a Hollywood star with Latina ancestry.

There is a distinction between what each actress has come to represent in Hollywood and how their celebrity has transformed the image of Latinas in film as well as in the United States. To begin with, Perez, Lopez and Diaz have not been limited exclusively to the portrayal of stereotypical roles, unlike Latina stars in early cinema.[15] The fact that the type of characters they have portrayed form an eclectic ensemble of roles throughout their careers is evidence of some type transformation of the Latina on-screen. As a result, the type of characters portrayed by Perez has ranged from bereaved mother, *Jeopardy!* junkie and television producer, whilst Diaz has gone from being a 'dopey bimbo' to (a runaway, psychotic, and birdbrain) bride, as well as one of *Charlie's Angels*. As for Lopez, she has personified a *Tejana* icon, documentary filmmaker, federal agent and upscale wedding planner.

It is significant to note that in more recent articles on the actresses, there has been a different approach to how they have been framed in the media and how their *latinidad* has been considered. For Perez, it is her change of image from 'Fly Girl' to a mature looking Latina (gone are the hoops and big hair), who is willing to fight for a just cause and develop her acting skills on stage. With Perez finally earning the respect of the Latino community after so many years, it is perhaps surprising to read sharp criticism of Jennifer Lopez who immediately garnered the admiration of Hispanics early on in her career. With her transformation to a more 'Barbie-like' look, the actress has provoked some Latinos/as to denounce her as 'false.' Moreover, because Hispanics are aware of the impact they have had on her career, they have displayed their resentment towards the star's unwillingness to 'give back' to 'her people.' Perhaps because Diaz has not specifically marketed herself to the Latino/a public, there has been a greater affection towards the blonde actress's achievements as a Latina figure. As a result, there has been a great deal of emphasis on her being 'one more' Latina in Hollywood.

Most recently, Hollywood has promoted young actresses Eva Mendez, Michelle Rodriguez and Rosario Dawson as the new faces of Latina stardom. That in such a short period a number of rising Latina stars are starting to become more apparent in the film industry reflects Hollywood's desire to promote new representatives for the Latino population. With Latinos reigning as the largest ethnic group in the United States, America has become, as Mireya Navarro claims, 'an increasingly Hispanic nation, home to 31 million people of Latin ancestry.'[16] For this reason, what I have tried to show throughout this thesis is the impact Latina stars are having in Hollywood and how their celebrity offers a rich source of investigation. By examining the stardom of Rosie Perez, Cameron Diaz and Jennifer Lopez, I

[15] All three actresses have also portrayed stereotypical ethnic roles (e.g., prostitute, spitfire and maid).
[16] Mireya Navarro, 'Latinos Gain Cultural Visibility in Cultural Life: Numbers and Influence Are on the Rise,' *The New York Times*, 19 September (New York, 1999), p A24.

hope to have offered a unique way of exploring ethnicity and Latina stardom via three distinct figures. What I also hope to have shown is how such diverse figures have embodied *latinidad* as well as how these actresses have proudly represented their Latina roots.

Appendix A-1

Filmography/Genre	Character's Name	Character's Nationality
ROSIE PEREZ		
Exactly, 2004 Drama	Angela	Latina
Riding in Cars With Boys, 2001 Comedy/Drama	Shirley Perro	Latina
The Road to El Dorado, 2000 Animation	Chel	Mexican
King of the Jungle, 2000 Thriller		
The 24 Hour Woman, 1999 Comedy	Grace Santos	Puerto Rican
Louis and Frank, 1998		
Perdita Durango, 1997 aka *Dance with the Devil*, 1999 USA Video Title Crime/Action/Romance	Perdita Durango	Latina - Not Specified as Puerto Rican or Mexican
Subway Stories: Tales from the Underground, 1997 (TV) Drama	Mystery Girl	
A Brother's Kiss, 1997 Drama	Debbie	
Somebody to Love, 1996 Drama/Romance	Mercedes	Puerto Rican
House of Buggin', 1995 (TV Series) Comedy		
It Could Happen to You, 1994 aka *Cop Tips Waitress $2 Million*, 1994 Comedy/Romance/Drama	Muriel Lang	Latina
Untamed Heart, 1993 Drama/Romance	Cindy	Puerto Rican
Fearless, 1993 Comedy Romance	Carla Rodrigo	Puerto Rican
White Men Can't Jump, 1992 Comedy	Gloria Clemente	
Night on Earth, 1991 Drama/Comedy	Angela	Latina
Criminal Justice, 1990 (TV) Drama	Denise Moore	
Do The Right Thing, 1989 Drama/Comedy	Tina	Puerto Rican

Filmography as Producer and Choreographer:
Subway Stories: Tales from the Underground, 1997 (TV) - Executive Producer

The 24 Hour Woman, 1999 - Co-Producer

In Living Color, 1990 (TV Series) - Choreographer

Do The Right Thing, 1989 - Choreographer

Appendix A-1

Filmography/Genre	Character's Name	Character's Nationality
JENNIFER LOPEZ		
Shall We Dance, 2004 Comedy/	Paulina	American
Jersey Girl, 2004 Comedy/Drama	Gertrude	American
Gigli, 2003 Comedy/Romance	Ricki	American
Maid in Manhattan, 2002 Comedy/Romance	Marisa Ventura	Puerto Rican
Enough, 2001 Drama/Thriller	'Slim'	
Angel Eyes, 2001 Drama/Thriller/Romance	Sharon Pogue	American[1]
The Wedding Planner, 2001 Comedy/Romance	Mary Fiore	Italian-American
The Cell, 2000 Thriller	Catherine Deane	American
Antz, 1998 Animated	Azteca	Not Specified
Out of Sight, 1998 Drama/ Comedy/Romance/Crime	Karen Sisco	Italian-American
U-Turn, 1997 Drama/Thriller	Grace McKenna	Native-American Indian
Anaconda, 1997 Thriller/Horror	Terri Flores	'American'
Selena, 1997 Drama/Musical	Selena Quintanilla Perez	Mexican-American
Blood and Wine, 1997 Thriller/Action	Gabriella	Cuban
Jack, 1996 Drama/Comedy	Miss Marquez	Latina- Not Specified
Money Train, 1995 Drama/Comedy/Action	Grace Santiago	Puerto Rican
Mi Familia/My Family, 1995 Drama	Maria Sanchez	Mexican
Nurses on the Line: The Crash of Flight 7, 1995 (TV) Drama	Rosie	Latina – Not Specified

[1] Sonya Braga portrays Lopez' on-screen mother thus making the actress's character not 'entirely' American. Must get more details.

Hotel Malibu, 1994 (TV) Drama	Melinda Lopez	Mexican-American
South Central, 1993 (TV) Drama	Lucy	Latina - Not Specified
Second Chances, 1993 (TV) Drama	Melinda Lopez	Mexican-American
My Little Girl, 1986 Drama	Myra	

In Living Color, 1990 (TV Series) – 'Fly Girl' Dancer

Albums
On the Six, 1999
J.Lo, 2001
J to Tha L-O, 2002
This is Me...Then, 2002
The Reel Me, 2003
Rebirth, 2005

Appendix A-1

Filmography/Genre	Character's Name	Character's Nationality
CAMERON DIAZ		
Shrek 2, 2004 Comedy/Animation	Princess Fiona	WASP
Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle, 20003 Action/Comedy	Natalie Cook	WASP
Gangs of New York, 2002 Action/Crime/Drama	Jenny Everdeane	Irish-American
Sweetest Thing, 2002 Comedy/Romance	Cristina Walters	WASP
Vanilla Sky, 2001 Drama/Romance/Sci-Fi/Thriller	Julianna Giannia	Italian-American
Shrek, 2000 Comedy/Animation	Princess Fiona	WASP
Charlie's Angels, 2000 Action/Comedy	Natalie Cook	WASP
Being John Malkovich, 1999 Comedy/Fantasy	Lotte Schwartz	Jewish
Any Given Sunday, 1999 Drama	Christina Pagniacci	Italian
There's Something About Mary, 1998 Comedy/Romance	Mary Jensen Matthews	WASP
Very Bad Things, 1998 Comedy/Thriller	Laura Garrety	WASP
A life Less Ordinary, 1997 Comedy/Romance	Celine	WASP
My Best Friend's Wedding, 1997 Comedy/Romance	Kimberly 'Kimmy' Walace	WASP
Keys to Tulsa, 1997 Crime/Drama	Trudy	
Head Above Water, 1996 Comedy/Thriller	Nathalie	WASP
Feeling Minnesota, 1996 Com./Romance/Drama	Freddie	WASP
She's the One, 1996 Comedy Romance	Heather Davis	WASP
The Last Supper, 1996 Comedy Romance	Jude	WASP
The Mask, 1994 Com./Fantasy/Romance	Tina Carlyle	WASP

Appendix B-2: Original Spanish text translated to English

B-2.1
Un toque de *Barbie* que la aleja de la racial hija de puertorriquenos que se educó en el Bronx [...].[2]

Appendix C-2: Original Spanish text translated to English

C-2.1
Salma Hayek. Antonio Banderas. Jennifer López. Andy García. Cameron Díaz. Penélope Cruz. Sus nombres suenan familiars hoy día y con mucha razón. Se trata de algunas de las estrellas latinas de Hollywood más populares de la actualidad. Latinos y nolatinos pueden reconocerles por sus varias películas éxitos de taquilla, por haber recibido halagos de la crítica o por ambos. *Desperado. From Dusk Til Dawn. The Mask of Zorro. The Cell. Out of Sight. Selena. The Godfather III. There's Something About Mary. The Mask. My Best Friend's Wedding* [...].[3]

C-2.2
Cuando me dí cuenta que Cameron Díaz estaba en el grupo de los hispanos reconocidos como los "trendsetters," me pregunté, ¿por qué será que su nombre está en la lista? Ella no habla español, ni practica la cultura cubana de su padre. Le decimos hispana por su apellido. Bueno, tiene el apellido Díaz y nada más. Si eso cuenta para ser hispano, pues hay mucho más hispanos que los treinta millones de hispanoparlantes entre los bordos de los EEUU.[4]

C-2.3
En tercer lugar quedó la actriz de ascendencia cubana Cameron Díaz con un 13.7% (98 votos).[5]

---

[2] Joseba Elola, 'Jennifer López: Fiera Latina,' *El País Semanal*, 6 de junio (Spain, 1999), p 72.
[3] César Arredondo, Editor de *La Vibra*, '"Latinos en Hollywood" en la pantalla grande y también en la chica,' *La Vibra* in *La Opinión*, 12 October (Los Angeles, CA, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 11 January 2002.
http://www.laopinion.com/archivo.html?START=1&RESULTSTART=1&DISPLAYTYPE=single&FREETEXT=%91%93Latinos+en+Hollywood%94+en+la+pantalla+grande+y+tambi%E9n+en+la+chica%2C%92&FDATEd12=&FDATEd13=&BOOLp00=&BOOLp08=&SORT_MODE=Relevancia
[4] *Hispanic*, Letters to the Editor, Jan-Feb (New York, 1999).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001. http://www.hispanicmagazine.com/1999/jan_feb/Letters/Index.html.
[5] *Primera Hora*, 'Jennifer Lopez como pareja de Ricky Martin,' martes 22 de mayo (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.primerahora.comnoticia.asp?guid=B9E5CBB44E5F11D5A2D000508B12482.html.

C-2.4
Después de Ricky Martín y Gloria Estefan [...]. la estadounidense Díaz [...], cuyo padre es hijo de cubano [...].[6]

C-2.5
Carlos de la Torre –también de origen cubano- con quien vivió los siguiente cinco años. [7]

C-2.6
CAMERON DIAZ... NO HABLA ESPAÑOL: pero es la rubia de oro de Hollywood
Orgullosa de sus orígenes Cameron se siente "feliz de tener tanto apoyo dentro de la comunidad hispana en Estados Unidos y en el mundo de habla hispana en general...¡a pesar de que hablo español muy, muy mal y me daría mucha vergüenza hablarlo en una película!...Pero aún así 'siento' el cálido apoyo de la comunidad latina, el que me hace sentir muy, muy bien" . ¡Bravo chica![8]

C-2.7
¿En qué se parece Cameron, Penélope (desde ahora *Pe*)? Salma Hayek, Laetitia Casta, Jennifer Lopez [...]. Ellas son el máximo exponente de la sensualidad latina. Cálidas, sensuales, potentes, afrodisiacas, tan estimulantes como energéticas. Están para comérserlas. Su hermosa y efervescente naturaleza las hace menos proclives a caer en esos retoques exagerados *made in USA*. Habitan en todos nuestros sueños y podemos afirmar que, con ellas, la epidemia hispana en el mundo anglosajón está más que justificada y tiene visos de convertirse en una enfermedad crónica.[9]

C-2.8
Las actrices Jennifer López y Cameron Díaz fueron las únicas estrellas hispanas ubicadas en la más reciente lista de las 100 personas másss influyentes en el mundo del entretenimiento en Estados Unidos. Díaz de padre cubano nacido en California, y López, puertorriqueña, fueron colocadas en los puestos 80 y 86, de maner respectiva [...]. [10]

---

[6] *El Universal*, 'Espectáculos,' martes 8 de febrero (México, 2000), p 2.
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.el-universal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia-busqueda.html.
[7] *El Universal*, '"Invaden" las reinas latinas a Hollywood: Penélope Cruz, Jennifer López y Cameron Díaz sólo una muestra,' martes 26 de diciembre (México, 2000), p 14. [Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.el-universal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia-busqueda.html.
[8] Alejandra d'Aremberg, 'CAMERON DIAZ... NO HABLA ESPAÑOL pero es la rubia de oro de Hollywood), Lavox.com, 21 December (US, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 6 June 2002.
http://www.lavox.com/protagonista/12-21-2001.phtml
[9] *GQ*, brief summary under caption, 'Sin trampa ni carton,' Spain, October 2000, p 42.
[10] No Aurthor, 'Jennifer López y Cameron Díaz son las únicas estrellas latinas que integran la lista de las 100 personas más poderosas del entretenimiento en Estados Unidos,' Servisios de *La Opinión*, miércoles, 1 de noviembre (Los Angeles, CA, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 11 January 2002.
http://laopinion.com/archivo.html?START=6&RESULTSTART=1&DISPLAYTYPE=single&FREETEXT=Cameron+Diaz&FDATEd12= FDATEd13=&BOOLp00=&BOOLp08=&SORT_MODE=Relevancia

Appendix D-1: Publicity Status

At present seventy-nine publicity sources have been documented. A total of fifty-eight magazines/newspapers from the United States (including newspapers from Puerto Rico), fifteen from the United Kingdom, two from Mexico, and four from Spain. What is interesting about these sources, with the exception of the *Alberta Report* (Diaz & Perez appear), is the association of the actresses with the particular focus of the publicity. For example, *The Daily News* is a New York City newspaper, and articles on Perez and Lopez have been somewhat consistent; more important both actresses are from the metropolitan area. The beauty magazine *Cosmopolitan* has featured Lopez and Diaz on its cover as well as in feature stories, thus confirming the two actresses as Latina/American beauty icons. Men's fashion magazine *GQ* (*Gentlemen's Quarterly*) has included Lopez and Diaz in either cover stories or articles, perhaps projecting these actresses as erotic images for the male spectator. Finally, the Spanish newspaper *El País* has included a number of articles on Lopez and Diaz, affirming their status as 'Latinas'.

As to the aim of publication and their readership, as well as circulation, attached is a list of eighteen sources. Although some information on the publicity to be used has been attainable from the Internet, several calls were made to the sources' New York City or Los Angeles offices. It should be noted at this time that calls were also made to the offices of the actresses' agents to request publicity, but the offices contacted offered no information.

Appendix D-2: Publicity Information - List of Magazines and Newspapers

List of Magazines and Newspapers in the United States

Alberta Report
Arena
Biography
Chicago Tribune
Celebrities
Celebritywizard.com
Chicago Sunday Times
Cosmopolitan
Details
Detour
Elle
Empire
Entertainment Weekly
Essence
Esquire
For him Magazine (FHM)
Film Review
Films in Review
Film Review
Gentleman's Quarterly (GQ)
George
Glamour
Hispanic
Hispanic Business
In Style
Interview
Jennifer Lopez Website
Movieline
La Opinión
Latina
Latin Style
Looks
La vox
Maclean's
McCalls
Men's Health
Mirabella
Movieline
Mr. Showbiz
National Review
New Republic
Newsday
New Statesman
Newsweek
New York
NY Casting
Parade
People
People en Español
Playboy
Premiere
Primera Hora (Puerto Rico)
Rolling Stone
Screen Babes Monthly
Seventeen
Sociological Quarterly
The Los Angeles Daily News
The Los Angeles Times
The New York Daily News
The New York Post
The New York Times
The Puerto Rican Heald (P.R)
The Star Ledger
The Village Voice
Time
Time Out New York
Total Film
TV Guide
Vanity Fair
Variety
Vogue

List of Magazines and Newspapers in the United Kingdom

Biography
Cosmopolitan
Elle
Empire
Evening Standard
Looks
Now
Screen International
Sight and Sound
The Guardian
The Independent
The Independent on Sunday
The Observer
The Sunday Times
The Times

List of Magazines and Newspapers in Mexico

El Universal
La Crónica de Hoy

List of Magazines and Newspapers in Spain

El País
Fotogramas
Turia

Appendix D-3: Publicity Information

Magazine:	*Alberta Report*
	(780) 796-2306
Founded:	1997
Circulation:	
Aimed at:	Canadian Conservatives
Focus:	Independent Conservative Groups
Information:	Accessed from Internet 2 October 2001

Magazine:	*Entertainment Weekly* (NY & LA Offices)
	(212) 522-5600
Founded:	1990
Circulation:	
Aimed at:	No Specific Group
Focus:	Entertainment News
Information:	Person to contact (Jason) out until 23 October

Magazine:	*Essence* (Monthly)
Founded:	1970
Circulation:	1 million/month. Total 7.6 Readership
Aimed at:	African-American Women
Focus:	Health & Beauty
Information:	Accessed from Internet 2 October 2001

Magazine:	*For Him Magazine (FHM)* (Monthly)
Founded:	
Circulation:	Distributed in more than 8 countries
Aimed at:	Men
Focus:	Fashion & Entertainment
Information:	Accessed from Internet 2 October 2001

Magazine:	*George* (Monthly) (Ceased Publication)
Founded:	1995
Circulation:	
Aimed at:	New Yorkers
Focus:	Political Magazine

Magazine:	*Hispanic* (Monthly) 999 Ponce de Leon, Suite 600
	Coral Gables, FL, 33134
	(305) 442-2462
Founded:	1987
Circulation:	250,000
Aimed at:	Hispanics
Focus:	Issues of Hispanic interest
Information:	Accessed from Internet 18 October 2001
	http://hispaniconline.com/aboutus.html.

Magazine:	*Hispanic Business* (Monthly) Founded: 1987
Circulation:	250,000
Aimed at:	Hispanic professionals, members of Hispanic organizations, entrepreneurs and students
Focus:	Business, career, politics and culture
Information:	Accessed from Internet 2 October 2001 http://hispanicmagazine.com/aboutus.html.
Magazine:	*Latina* - (Monthly) Latina Publications Inc., 1500 Broadway, NY, NY 10036 (212) 642-0600
Founded:	1996
Circulation:	254,000
Aimed at:	Latina women, average age of reader 29
Information:	Sarah Day at Latina Magazine, 5/10/01
Magazine:	*People*, (Weekly)
Founded:	1974
Circulation:	3,552,287
Aimed at:	No specific Group
Focus:	Entertainment Magazine
Information:	Accessed from Internet 18 October 2001 (Website receives 7 million users/month)
Magazine:	*People en Español* (Weekly) 1633 Broadway, NY, NY 10019 (212) 767-5400
Founded:	
Circulation:	3,552,287
Aimed at:	Latinos
Focus:	Entertainment Magazine
Information:	Accessed from Internet (Website receives 7 million users/month)
Magazine:	*Premiere* (Monthly), 1290 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10104-1616 (212) 484-1616 (Susana- 767-5414)
Founded:	1987
Circulation:	600,000
Aimed at:	No Specific Group
Focus:	Entertainment Magazine
Information:	NY Office
Magazine:	*Rolling Stone* (Newsweekly), 1290 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10104-1616 (212) 484-1616
Founded:	1967
Circulation:	1,250,000 bi-weekly
Aimed at:	According to the receptionist 'Everyone.' The magazine is Circulated all over the world.
Focus:	American Music as well as film, politics and so on
Information:	NY Office

Magazine: *Variety* (Weekly) (L.A. -HQ, NYC & London Affilliates)
Founded: 1905
Circulation:
Aimed at: Entertainment industry
Focus: Entertainment
Information: Accessed from Internet

Magazine: *Village Voice* (Newsweekly)
36 Cooper Square, NY, NY, 10013
(212) 475-3300
Founded: 1955
Circulation: 250,000
Aimed at: New Yorkers
Focus: Writing and reporting on local and national politics, with opinionated arts, culture, music, dance, film and theatre reviews
Information: NY Office

Magazine: *US* (weekly), 1290 Ave. of the Americas,
NY, NY 10104-8214
(212) 767-8214
Founded:
Circulation:
Aimed at:
Focus: Entertainment
Information: NY Office

Newspaper: *The New York Post*
Founded: 1801
Circulation: 70,000 Daily
Aimed at: New Yorkers
Information: Accessed from Internet 18 October 2001
(Web Page more than 20 million users/mo.)

Newspaper: *The New York Times* (Affiliate with The Herald Tribune-International) 229 West 43rd Street, NY, CY 10036
(212) 556-1234
Founded: September 1851
Circulation: 1.2 Million Daily and 1.7 Million the Weekend Edition
Aimed at: New Yorkers, Corporate Companies
Information: NYC Office

Website: Mr. Showbiz (Parent Corporation - ABC)
Founded:
Circulation:
Aimed at:
Focus: Entertainment
Information:

Appendix D-4: Actresses' Agent's Address

Jennifer Lopez
International Creative Management
8942 Wilshire Blvd.
Beverly Hills, Ca 90211
Official Website: www.jenniferlopez.com - 18 International Sites.
Office contacted December 2001 and claimed to not represent Lopez.

Cameron Diaz
Artists Management Group
9465 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 519
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
(310) 271-9818
(No Official Website but several websites are dedicated to the actress)
Office contacted December 2001 and claimed to not represent Diaz.

Rosie Perez
No Address found for this actress

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acosta-Belén, Edna and Santiago, Carlos E., 'Merging Borders: The Remapping of America.' In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp 29-42.

Alba, Richard D., *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

Albacete, Lorenzo, 'America's Hispanic Future,' *The New York Times*, 19 June (New York, 2001).

Affron, Charles, 'Voice and Space,' in *Cinema and Sentiment* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp 104-131.

Avila, A., 'The 25 Most Powerful Hispanics in Hollywood,' Hispanic, April (US, 1996), p 26, cited in Chris Holmlund, 'Latinas in La-La Land,' in *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculity at the Movies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p 112.

Babb, Valerie Melissa, *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture* (New York University Press: New York, 1998).

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p 39 cited in W. T. Lhamon, Jr., *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip-Hop*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p 139.

Banner, Lois, *American Beauty* (New York: Knopf, 1983).

Bardem, Carlos, *Durango Perdido: Diario de Rodage de Perdita Durango* (Barcelona: Ediciones Grupo Zeta, 1997), p 198.

Barthes, Roland, "The Grain of the Voice," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp 179-89. Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p 44.

Beale, Lewis, 'H'wood Has a Bad Accent: Book, stars say Hispanics still mostly villains,' *New York Daily News*, 24 January (New York, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 21 January 2001.
http://www.nydailynews.com/2001-01-24/New_York_Now/Movies/a-97027.asp

Bean, Frank D. and Tienda, Marta, *The Hispanic Population of The United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1987).

Belton, John, *American Cinema/American Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 1994).

Beltrán, Mary C., 'The Hollywood Latina Body as a Site of Social Struggle: Media Constructions of Stardom and Jennifer Lopez' "Cross-over Butt"," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 19 (Brunner Routledge, 2002), pp 71-86.

Bernardi, Daniel, ed., (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

'The Voice of Whiteness: D.W. Griffith's Biograph Films,' in *The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema*, Daniel Bernardi, ed., (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), pp 103-128.

Bernstein, Matthew and Studlar, Gaylyn (eds.), *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1997).

Bhabha, Homi, K., 'The Other Question - The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse,' *Screen*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (1983), pp 18-36.

Blades, Rubén, 'The Politics Behind the Latino Legacy,' *The New York Times*, 19 April (New York, 1992), Section H31.

Bogle, Donald, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies & Bucks: An Interpretative History of Blacks in American Films*, Third Edition (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1996).

Bonilla, Frank, ed., *Borderless Borders: US Latinos, Latin Americans and the Paradox of Independence*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

Borger, Julian, 'The World: America Decides: Bush boldly salsas to Latino tune,' *The Observer*, 23 January (UK, 2000), p.24
[Online] Accessed 23 April 2002.
http://guardian.chadwyck.co.uk/noframes/quick/fulltext?ACTION=byoffset&warn=N&OFFSET=127924808&div=0&FILE=../session/1019494798_1716

Boskin, Joseph, *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester* (New York: 1986).

Britton, Andrew, *Katherine Hepburn, Star as Feminist* (London: Studio Vista, 1995).

Burr, Ramiro, 'How Will The Death of Selena Change the Way Hollywood Approaches the Hispanic Entertainment Audience,' *Hispanic Business*, July (New York, 1995), pp 18-20.

Cafferty, Pastora San Juan and **Engstrom, David W., eds.**, *Hispanics in the U.S.: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Pubishers: 2000).

Campbell, Patrick (ed.), *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996).

Carter, Alexandra, 'Bodies of Knowledge: Dance and Feminist Analysis,' in *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*, Ed Patrick Campbell (ed.) (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp 43-55.

Castañeda, Ruben, 'Jimmy Smits: Hollywood's Newest Hottest Property,' *Hispanic*, June (New York, 1989), pp 25-28.

Chapa, Jorge, 'The Burden of Independence: Demographic, Economic and Social Prospects For Latinos in the Reconfigured U.S. Economy,' *Borderless Borders: US Latinos, Latin Americans and the Paradox of Independence, Frank* Bonilla, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

Chavez, Linda, *Out Of The Barrio: Toward a New Politics of Hispanic Assimilation* (New York: BasicBooks, 1991).

Chion, Michel, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

The Voice in Cinema, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

Clark, Christine and O'Donnell, James (eds.), *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1999).

Cornelius, Wayne A., 'Neo-nativists Feed on Myopic Fears," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 July, Opinion Section (1993), p B7.

Cowen, Paul S., 'A Social-Cognitive Approach to Ethnicity in Films,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp 353-378.

Darder, Antonia, 'The Politics of Biculturalism: Culture and War Difference in the Formation of Warriors for Gringostroika and The New Mestizas,' *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp 129-142.

Darder, Antonia and Torres, Rudolfo D. (eds.), *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society* (Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

Dávila, Arlene, *Latinos Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).

Davis, Mike, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (London and New York: Verso, 2000).

de Cordova, Richard, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

de la Campa, Román, 'Latinos and the Crossover Aesthetic,' foreword in Mike Davis's *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), pp xi-xviii.

de Leon, Charles L. Ponce, *Self Exposure: Human Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

del Barco, Mandalit, 'Rap's Latino Sabor,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), pp 62-84.

Delgado, Richard and Stephanic, Jean (eds.), *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997).

DiBattista, Maria, *Fast-Talking Dames* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001).

Dinnerstein, Leonard and Reimers, David M., *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration, Fourth Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

Dominguez, Robert, 'H'wood "Nix" to Hispanix in flix,' *New York Daily News*, 15 January (New York, 1995), p 15.

'Lovin' La Vida Loca. Suddenly, America is becoming the world's longest Conga Line,' *New York Daily News*, 13 June (New York, 1999).
[Online] Accessed 22 November 2001.
http://www.nydailynews.com/1999-06-13/New_York_Now/Cityscape/a-31598.asp

Dreiser, Theodore, 'Hollywood Now,' in *McCalls*, September (US, 1921).

Dyer, Richard, *Stars* (London: BFI, 1979).

'A Star is Born and the Construction of Authenticity,' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), pp 132-172.

White (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

Eckert, Charles, 'Shirley Temple and the House of Rockefeller,' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), pp 30-39. Eckert originally published a lengthier version of this text in *Jump Cut*, July-August (1974), pp 60-73.

Erenberg, Lewis, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Chicago: 1981).

Farris Thompson, Robert, 'Hip hop 101,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), pp 211-219.

Flores, Juan, 'Puerto Rocks: New York Ricans Stake Their Claim,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), pp 85-105.

Foley, Neil (ed.), 'Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and the Faustian Pact with Whiteness,' in *Reflexiones 1997: New Directions in Mexican American Studies* (Austin, Texas, 1997).

Frankenberg, Ruth, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (London: Routledge, 1993).

Friedman, Lester D. (ed.), *Unspeakable Images, Ethnicity and the American Cinema,* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

'Celluloid Palimpsests: An Overview of Ethnicity and the American Film,' in *Unspeakable Images, Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp 11-35.

Furman, Leah *Jennifer Lopez: Latinos in the Limelight* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001).

Fusco, Coco, 'The Latino "Boom" in American Film,' in *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños*, Bulletin 2, No. 8 (New York, 1990), pp 48-56.

Gaines, Jane, 'Costume and Narrative: How Dress Tells the Woman's Story,' in *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*, Gaines and Charlotte Herzog *(eds.)* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp 180-211.

'Introduction: Fabricating the Female,' in *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*, Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds.) (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp 1-27.

Gaines, Jane and Herzog, Charlotte (eds.), *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

Gamson, Joshua, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994).

Gann, L.H. and Duignan, Peter J., *The Hispanics in the U.S.: A History* (Boulder, CO and London: Westview Press, 1986).

Gansburg, Alan L., 'Raul Julia: One of the Busiest Actors in America,' *Hispanic Business*, July (1992), p 48.

Garcia, Guy D., 'Burning with Passion: Despite a low-key exterior, Edward James Olmos ignites the screen,' *Time*, July, (New York, 1988), p 37. Reported by Elaine Durtka in Los Angeles.

Giroux, Henry A., 'Rewriting the Discourse of Racial Identity: Toward a Pedagogy and Politics of Whiteness,' in *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity*, Christine Clark and James O'Donnell, eds. (Westport, CT: Bergen and Garvey, 1999), pp 246-247.

Glasser, Ruth, *My Music is My Flag* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p 73.

Gledhill, Christine, *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).

Goldie, 'Ass Rules Everything Around Us: Some Late Night Thoughts on Jennifer Lopez,' *XXL* 2, No. 3, Issue 5 (1998), p 80. Cited in Raquel Z. Rivera's book *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone*, p 131.

Golomb, Jacob, *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegard to Camus* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

Goodwin, Christopher, 'Latin Lessons,' *The Sunday Times*, 18 July, Culture (1999, UK), p 4.

Gott, Richard, 'The racial price of life in the melting pot,' *The Guardian*, 11 July, Features (UK, 1992) p 25.
[Online] Accessed 23 April 2002.
http://guardian.chadwyck.co.uk/noframes/quick/fulltext?ACTION=byoffset&warn=N&OFFSET=458003449&div=0&FILE=../session/1019494798_1716

Greig, J.Y.T., *The Letters of David Hume* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932).

Green, W.C., "Jim Crow", "Zip Coon": The Northern Origins of Negro Minstrelsy,'*Massachusetts Review 11* (1970), p 395. Roediger, p 118

Griffith, Richard, *The Movie Stars* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970).

Gristwood, Sarah, 'Screen: Mouth of the Border,' *The Guardian*, 20 November, Features (UK, 1998), p 4.
[Online] Accessed 22 April 2002.
http://guardian.chadwyck.co.uk/noframes/quick/fulltext?ACTION=byoffset&warn=N&OFFSET=187137724&div=0&FILE=../session/1019496815_27837

Grosz, Elizabeth, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p 23. Cited in Mizejewski's *The Ziegfeld Girl*, p 38

Guerrero, Ed, *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p 146.

Hadley-Garcia, George, *Hispanic Hollywood: The Latins in Motion Pictures* (New York: Citadel Press Book, 1990).

Halter, Marilyn, *Shopping For Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity* (New York: Schocken Books: 2000).

Hancock, Philip; Huges, Bill; Jagger, Elizabeth et. al., 'Consumer Bodies,' in *The Body, Culture and Society: An Introduction*, (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000).

Harris, Thomas, 'The Building of Popular Images: Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe,' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), pp 40- 44.

Hazzard-Donald, Katrina, 'Dance in Hip Hop Culture,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, pp 220-235.

Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). The German edition is *Sein und Zeit* (Tibingen: Max Niemeyer, 1963).

Hess, Thomas B. 'Pin Up and Icon,' in *Woman as Sex Object Studies*, Hess and Linda Nochlin (eds.), Art New Annual XXXVIII (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990), pp 222-237.

Hess, Thomas B. and Nochlin, Linda, eds., *Woman as Sex Object Studies*, Art New Annual XXXVIII (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990).

Heyck, Denis Lynn Daly, *Barrios and Borderlands: Cultures of Latinos and Latinas in the United States* (London and New York: Routledge 1994).

Holley, Jr., Eugene, 'The New *Nueva York*,' *Hispanic*, September (New York, 1997), pp 61-66.

Holmes, Steven A., 'Blacks Crunch the Numbers Figuring Out Hispanic Influence,' *The New York Times*, 16 August, Week 3–Week in Review-The Nation (New York, 1998).

Holmlund, Chris, *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculinity at the Movies* (London and New York, Routledge, 2002).

Hutcheon, Linda and Natoli, Joseph (eds.), *A Postmodern Reader* (New York: New York State University Press, 1991).

Hutcheon, Linda, 'Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism,' *A Postmodern Reader* Hutcheon, Linda and Joseph Natoli (eds.), (New York: New York State University Press, 1991), pp 243-272.

Institute for Puerto Rican Policy (IPR), "Puerto Rico: 2000 Population and Racial Breakdown," No. 25, April 2001.

Irigaray, Luce, *The Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1985).

Jagger, Elizabeth, 'Consumer Bodies,' in *The Body, Culture and Society: An Introduction*, Philip Hancock, Bill Huges, Elizabeth Jagger et. al. (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), p 46.

James, Fredric, 'Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,' in *A Postmodern Reader*, Hutcheon, Linda and Joseph Natoli (eds.), (New York: New York State University Press, 1991), pp 312-333.

Jarvie, Ian C., 'Stars and Ethnicity,' in *Unspeakable Images, Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp 82-111.

Jones-Correa, Michael, *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Puerto Ricans in New York* (Ithica and London: Cornell University Press, 1998).

Kanellos, Nicolas, *Thirty Million Strong: Reclaiming the Hispanic Image in American Culture* (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishers, 1998).

Keller, Gary D., *Chicano Cinema: Research, Reviews and Resources* (Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press, 1984).

Hispanics and United States Film: An Overview and Handbook (Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press, 1994).

Kelly, Robin D. G., 'Kickin' Reality, Kickin' Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Postindustrial Los Angeles,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), p 137. Cited in *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone*, p 98.

Kellner, D., 'Aesthetics, Ethics, and Politics in the Films of Spike Lee,' in M. Reid (ed.), *Spike Lee's "Do The Right Thing,"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp 92-105.

Kerr, P (ed.), *The Hollywood Film Industry* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

King, Barry, 'Stardom as an Occupation,' in *The Hollywood Film Industry*, P. Kerr (ed.) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), pp 154-184.

King, John; Lopez, Ana M. and Alvarado, Manuel (eds.), *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas* (British Film Institute: London, 1993).

Klor de Alva, Jorge and Shorris, Earl, 'Our Next Question: The Uneasiness between Blacks and Latinos,' in *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror*, Richard Delgado and Jean Stephanic (eds.) Chapter 77 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), pp 482-492. Original text appeared in *Harpers'* Magazine, 1996.

Kugel, Seth, 'The Latino Culture Wars,' *The New York Times*, 24 February (New York, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://query.nytimes.com/search/articlepage.html?res=9E05E5DD103EF937A15751C0A9649C8B63

Lacan, Jacques, *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans, Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), pp 1-7. Cited in *The Acoustic* Mirror, p 100.

Lacayo, Richard, 'A Surging New Spirit: In film, music, art, design – the Hispanic influence is exploding into the American cultural mainstream.' *Time*, July (New York, 1988), pp 30-31. Reported by Scott Brown in Los Angeles, Christina Garcia in Miami and Edward M. Gomez in New York.

La Crónica de Hoy, '"Somos tres o cuatro." No hay boom latino, dice Marc Anthony,' *La Crónica de Hoy*, 28 April (Mexico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 13 November 2001.
http://www.cronica.com.mx /2001/abr/28/culturas06.html

La Ferla, Ruth, 'Latino Style is Cool. Oh, All Right: It's Hot.,' *The New York Times*, 15 April (New York, 2001), pp 1-2.

Latin Heat, January-February (2000), pp 14-15, p 14.

Latina, 'Christina Aguilera: Dirrty diva,' *Latina*, July (New York, 2003), p 88.

Lawrence, Amy, *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

Lhamon Jr., W. T., *Raising Cane: Blackface performance from Jim Crow to Hip-Hop*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Lomeli, Francisco and Jimenez, Alfredo, et.al (eds.), *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the United States: Literature and Art* (Houston: Arte Publico Press and Instituto de Cooperacion IberoAmericana, 1993).

Lott, Eric, *Love and Theft, Blackface, Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

López, Ana M., 'Are All Latins From Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.), (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp 404-424.

Lubiano, Wahneema, 'But Compared to What?: Reading Realism, Representation, and Essentialism in *School Daze, Do The Right Thing*, and the Spike Lee discourse,' *Representing Blackness: Issues in Films and Videos* Valerie Smith, ed. (London: The Athlone Press, 1997), p 109.

MacDonald, Myra, *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media*, (London and New York: E. Arnold New York, NY. Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press, 1995).

Maciel, David R., 'Latino Cinema,' in *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the United States: Literature and Art*, Francisco Lomeli, and Jimenez, Alfredo, et.al (eds.) (Houston: Arte Publico Press and Instituto de Cooperación IberoAmericana, 1993), pp 312-332.

Marchetti, Gina, 'Ethnicity, the Cinema and Cultural Studies,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman, ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p 278.

Marcuse, Herbert, work *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

McDonald, Paul, *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities* (London: Wallflower, 2000).

McGirk, Jan, 'The Latina Queens take it down Mexico Way,' *The Independent on Sunday*,' 17 December, Culture and Film (UK, 2000), p3.

McLean, Adrienne L., "'I'm a Cansino': Transformation, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in the Construction of Rita Hayworth, American Love Goddess,' in *Journal of Film and Video*, Vol. 44, Numbers 3 and 4, Fall 1992 and Winter 1993 (University of Films and Video Association, 1993), pp 8-26.

'Feeling and the filmed Body: Judy Garland and the kinesics of suffering,' *Film Quarterly*, Spring (2002).
[Online] Accessed 23 November 2004.
http:www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1070/is_3_55/ai_85465100

Menard, Valerie, "'Luscious Latinas': The Pros and the Cons of an Evolving Stereotype,' *Hispanic*, May (New York, 1997), pp 21-26.

Mitchell-Kernan, Claudia, "Signifying, Loud-talking, and Marking," p 328. Cited in Juan Flores' chapter 'Puerto Rocks: New York Ricans Stake Their Claim,' in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, p 137.

Mizejewski, Linda, *Ziegfeld Girl: Image and Icon in Culture and Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

Morales Carrión, Arturio, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983).

Navarro, Mireya, 'Media: After a Summer of High-Profile Coverage of Hispanic Culture, Some Wonder if It Will Last.,' *The New York Times*, 4 October (New York, 1999) p C-17.

'Latinos Gains Visibility in Cultural Life of U.S.,' *The New York Times*, 19 September (New York, 1999) p A-24.

'Puerto Rican Presence Wanes in New York,' *The New York Times*, 28 February (New York, 2000), p 24.

Negra, Diane, *Off White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (New York and London, Routledge, 2001).

Negrón-Muntaner, Frances, *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and The Latinization of American Culture* (New York University Press, New York and London: 2004).

'Jennifer's Butt,' in *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall, (US, 1997), pp 182-194.

***New York Daily News* Staff and *Knight Ridder* Newspaper Reports**, 'That Latin Touch: Hispanics are set to make their mark in Tinseltown,' *New York Daily News*, 26 July (New York, 1998), pp 14-15.

Noriega, Chon A. (ed.), *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

'Internal "Others": Hollywood Narratives 'about' Mexican-Americans,' in *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas*, John King, Ana M. López, Manuel Alvarado (eds.) (London: BFI Publishing, 1993), pp 52-65.

Novas, Himilce, *Everything You Need to Know About Latino History* (New York: Plume, 1994).

Orgel, Stephen,'The Authentic Shakespeare,' in *Representations*, 21 (1988), pp 1-25.

Orgeron, Marsha,'Making It in Hollywood: Clara Bow, Fandom, and Consumer Culture,' *Cinema Journal: The Journal of Society for Cinema and Media Studies*, Volume 42, No. 4 (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2003).

Pérez, Richie, 'From Assimilation to Annihilation: Puerto Rican Images in US Films,' in *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin*, No.2 (Hunter College Press: New York, 1990), pp 8-27.

Pérez y González, María, *Puerto Ricans in the United States* (Westport: Greenwood, 2000).

Perkins, William Eric ed., *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996).

'The Rap Attack: An Introduction,' *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, William Eric Perkins, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1996), pp 1-45.

Plamenatz, John, *Karl Marx's Philosophy of Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

Ramirez Berg, Charles, 'Stereotyping Films in General and of the Hispanic in Particular,' in *Latin Looks: The Image of Latinas & Latinos in the United States Media*, Clara Rodriguez (ed.) (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), pp 104-119.

Ríos-Bustamante, Antonio, 'Latino Participation in Hollywood, 1911-45, in *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance*, Chon A. Noriega (ed.) (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp 21-32.

Rivera, Lucas, 'Mambo: King of Comedy,' *Hispanic Business*, March (1992), p 14.

Rivera, Raquel Z., *New York Ricans From the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2003).

Rivera-Batiz, Francisco L., *The Socioeconomic Status of Hispanic New Yorkers: Current Trends and Future Prospects* (Washington D.C.: Pew Hispanic Centre, January 2002), p 24, Table 2.

Rocchio, Vincent F., 'Do the Right Thing: Style as Confrontation,' in *Reel Racism: Confronting Hollywood's Construction of Afro-American Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).

Rodriguez, Clara E. (ed.), *Latin Looks: The Image of Latinas & Latinos in the United States Media* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

'Visual Retrospective: Latino Film Stars,' in *Latin Looks*, Rodriguez (ed.), (1997), pp 80-85.

Rodriguez, Gregory, '150 Years Later, Latinos Finally Hit the Mainstream,' *The New York Times*, Week in Review Desk, 15 April (New York, 2001).

Rodriguez-Morazzani, Roberto P., 'Beyond the Rainbow: Mapping the Discourse on Puerto Ricans and "Race",' in *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres (eds.) (Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp 143-162.

Roediger, David, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and The Making of the American Working Class* (Revised Edition), (London and New York: Verso, 1999. First Edition 1991).

Rogin, Michael, *Blackface White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1996).

Rogoziński, Jan, *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and The Carib to the Present* (New York: Meridian, 1992).

Romero, Mary, Homdagneu, Pierette and Sotelo, Ed (eds.), *Challenging Fronteras: Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the U.S.* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997).

Rowe, Kathleen K., 'Roseanne: unruly woman as domestic goddess,' in *Screen*, Volume 31, No 4, Winter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp 408-419.

Rubidge, Sarah, 'Does Authenticity Matter? The Case for and against Authenticity in the Performing Arts,' in *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*, Patrick Campbell (ed.) (New York and Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp 219-233.

Sachs, Susan, 'Hispanic New York Shifted in 1990s,' *The New York Times*, 22 May, (New York, 2001), p B8.

Sánchez, Rosaura, 'Mapping the Spanish Language along a Multiethnic and Multilingual Border.' In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp 101-125.

Sandoval Sánchez, Alberto, 'West Side Story: A Puerto Rican Reading of "America",' in *Latin Looks*, Clara E. Rodriquez (ed.) (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), pp 164-179.

Sarris, Andrew, 'Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962,' in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 3rd ed., Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press 1985), p 538. In *The Acoustic Mirror*, p 195.

Schiebinger, Londa, 'Theories of Gender and Race,' in *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*, (Beacon Press, 1993), pp 143-183.
[Online] Accessed 10 April 2005.
http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/rt21/concepts/SCHIEBINGER.html

Shohat, Ella and Stam, Robert, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (Routledge: London and New York, 1994).

Shohat, Ella, 'Ethnicities-in-Relation: Toward a Multicultural Reading of American Cinema,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp 215-250.

Shorris, Earl, *Latinos: A Biography of the People* (New York: Avon Books, a division of The Hearst Corporation, 1992).

Sierra, Christine Marie, 'Hispanics and the Political Process,' in *Hispanics in the U.S.: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century*, Pastora San Juan Cafferty and David W. Engstrom, eds. (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers: 2000).

Silverman, Kaja, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988).

Smith, Valerie, ed., *Representing Blackness: Issues in Films and Videos* (London: The Athlone Press, 1997).

Snead, James A., 'Spectatorship and Capture in *King Kong*: The Guilty Look,' in *Representing Blackness: Issues in Film and Video*, Valerie Smith, ed. (London: The Athlone Press, 1997), pp25-46.

Sobchack, Vivian, 'Postmodern Modes of Ethnicity,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp 329-352.

Stacey, Jackey, 'Feminine Fascinations: Forms of Identification in Star-Audience Relations,' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), pp 141-163.

Stark, Steven D.,'Mainstream Culture Embraces Hispanic Images,' *The New York Times*, 11 November (New York, 1987), p C4.

Stavans, Ilan, *The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on Culture and Identity in America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

Stowe, William F. and Grimsted, David, 'White-Blacks Humour,' *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 3 (Summer, 1975).

Studlar, Gaylyn, '"Out-Salomeing Salome": Dance, the New Woman, and Fan Magazine Orientalism,' in *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*, Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar (eds.) (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1997), pp 99-129.

Sullivan, Teresa A., 'A Demographic Portrait,' in *Hispanics in the U.S.: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century*, Pastora San Juan Cafferty and David W. Engstrom, eds. (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers: 2000).

Suro, Robert and Singer, Audrey, *Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations* (Washington D.C.: Centre on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and the Pew Hispanic Centre, July 2002).

Terry-Azíos, Diana A., 'Can The Explosion Last?,' *Hispanic*, March (US, 2000), p 22.

Thernstrom, Stephan (ed.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1980).

Tomlinson, Gary S., 'The Historian, the Performer and Authentic Meaning,' in *Authenticity and Early Music*, Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp 115-136.

Torres, María de los Angeles, '*Encuentros y Encontronazos*: Homeland in the Politics and Identity of the Cuban Diaspora.' In *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp 43-62.

Vaca, Nicolás C. ,*The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict between Latinos and Blacks and what it means for America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2004).

Valdivia, Angharad N., *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood: and Other Essays on Media Culture* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2000).

'A Latina in the Land of Hollywood: Transgressive Possibilities,' *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood, and Other Essays in Media Culture*, Angharad N. Valdivia (Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 2000), pp 89-105.

'Stereotype or Transgression? Rosie Perez in Hollywood Film,' *Sociological Quarterly*, Summer, Vol. 39, Issue 3 (1989), pp 393-409
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http//globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_1587603421&site+ehost&return=n.

Valdivia, Angharad N. and Curry, Ramona, 'Xuxa!: Can Latin Americans Be Blonde or Can the United States Tolerate a Latin American?,' in *A Latina in the Land of Hollywood, and Other Essays in Media Culture*, Angharad N. Valdivia (The University of Arizona Press: AZ, 2000), pp 125-147.

Vargas, Zaragosa, 'Rank and File: Historical Perspectives on Latino/a Workers in the US.' *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*, Antonia Darder and Rudolfo D. Torres, eds., (Mass., MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p 243-256.

Warner, Marina, *From the Beast to the Blonde* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994).

Watrous, Peter, 'For Latin Music, New Worlds To Conquer: English-Speaking Fans Discover a Spanish Voice,' *The New York Times*, 24 May (New York, 1999), p 5.

Weinraub, Bernard, 'Hispanic Film Audience Grows Fastest,' *The New York Times*, 11 March (New York, 1999), p E8.

Wellman, David, *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity*,' Christine Clark and James O'Donnell (eds.) (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1999).

Wiegman, Robyn, 'Black Bodies/American Commodities: Gender, Race, and the Bourgeois Ideal in Contemporary Film,' in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, Lester D. Friedman (ed.) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp 308-328.

Wolfe, Charles, 'The Return of Jimmy Stewart: The Publicity Photograph as Text,' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, Christine Gledhill (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991), pp 92-106.

Woll, Allen L., *The Latin Image in American Film* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publication, 1977).

'How Hollywood Has Portrayed Hispanics,' *The New York Times*, 1 March (New York, 1981), p 17.

www.imdb.com
[Accessed] Online 20 May 2005.

www.boxofficemojo.com.
[Accessed] Online 20 May 2005.

Zavella, Patricia, 'Reflections on Diversity among Chicanas,' in *Challenging Fronteras: Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the U.S.*, Mary Romero, Pierette Homdagneu, and Sotelo Ed (eds.)(New York and London: Routledge, 1997), pp 187-194.

Zbar, Jeffrey D., 'Agency Execs say Marketers Want in: Globalized Marketing Brings new Business to Hispanic shops,' *Advertising Age*, 24 August (US, 1998), p S16.

PUBLICITY AND PRESS SOURCES FOR ROSIE PEREZ

Altman, Rachel, 'Hip-Hop Taxing for Motown Generation,' *L.A. Times*, 9 December, Ventura Country Life Section (Los Angeles, 1993), p J3.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http: latimes.com.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=lt93+55897&LATID=847947

Applebome, Peter, 'Trying to Shake a Stereotype But Keep On Being Rosie Perez,' *The New York Times*, 14 February, Section 2 (New York, 1999), pp 11, 20.

Biography Channel, Television programme on Perez, 3 July (Spain, 2005), 8pm.

Buchalter, Gail, 'The World Doesn't Owe Me a Thing,' *Parade*, 19 September (New York, 1993), pp 12–13.

Chambers, Veronica, 'Learning to Fly,' *Premiere*, November (New York, 1993), p 86.

Carvajal, Doreen, 'John Ortiz and Rosie Perez: Accidental Actors,' *The New York Times* cited in *The Puerto Rican Herald*, Theatre, 8 April (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2001.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n15/OrtizPerez-en.shtml

Current Biography, 'Profile on Rosie Perez,' *Current Biography*, September (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1995), pp 44–47.

Dominguez, Robert, 'Amid Despair, B'klyn actress offers Hope,' *New York Daily News*, 24 August (New York, 1993).

Deming, Mark, '*Do The Right Thing*,' *MSN Entertainment.com*, All Movie Guide Film Review.
[Online] Accessed 11 May 2003.
http://entertainment.msn.com/Movies/Movies.aspx?m=141758

Ebert, Roger, '*It Could Happen to You*,' *Chicago Sunday Times*, 29 July (Chicago, 1994).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2000.
http:www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1994/07/932682.html

'*White Men Can't Jump*,' *Chicago Sunday Times*, 27 March (Chicago, 1992).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2000.
http:www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1992/03/748163.html

'*Fearless*,' *Chicago Sunday Times*, 15 October (Chicago, 1993).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2000.
http:www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1993/10/883966.html

Fennell, Tim, 'A Rosie By Any other Name,' *Empire*, May (UK, 1994) p 75.

Flamm, Matthew, 'Girl From the Hood,' *The New York Post*, 16 April (New York, 1992).

Gregory, Deborah, 'Rosie Perez: This actress is turning Hollywood Out,' *Essence*, October, Vol. 24, Issue 6 (1993) p 48.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http:globalvgw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?g=Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_-1587603421&site=ehost&return=n.

Hill-Holtzman, Nancy, 'Hip-Hop Hopefuls: Trendy TV Show holds Casting call for Dance Troupe,' *L.A. Times*, 5 August, Metro Section (Los Angeles, 1992), p B3.
[Online] Accessed 9 September 2000.
http://latimes.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=It92+50205&LATID=847947

Hispanic Business, 'Cover Story: Top Entertainers, *Hispanic Business*, July (New York, 1994), pp 40-42.

Hochman, Steve, 'Whatever,' *LA Times*, 14 February, Home Edition, Calendar Section (Los Angeles, 1999), p 25.
[Online] Accessed 23 September 2000.
http://latimes.qpass.com/cgi-bin.cgi?QIID=It999+13485&LATID=847947

Howard, Susan, 'Rosie Perez Takes "Fly Girl" to a New Altitude,' *Newsday*, 28 November (New York, 1990) pp 67, 76.

Issenberg, Sasha, 'A Bomba Squad Victory,' *George*, May, Vol. 5, Issue 4 (New York, 2000), p 18.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http:globalvgw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?g=Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_-1587603421&site=ehost&return=n.

Kellner, Elena, 'Everything's Coming Up Rosie,' *Hispanic Business*, July (New York, 1994), pp 28-30.

Lee, Felicia R., 'The Honest Dialogue That is Neither,' *The New York Times*, 7 December (New York, 1997).
[Online] Accessed March 4, 2000.
http://search.nytimes.com/search/daily/bin/fastweb?getdoc+site+site+105984+4+wAAA=Rosie%7EPerez.

Leerhsen, Charles, 'Rosie the Riveting,' *Newsweek*, 4 May (New York, 1992), pp 64-65.

Lester, Bruno R., 'Luck of the Draw,' *Film Review*, Film Review of *It Could Happen To You*, December (London: Visual Imagination Limited, 1994), pp 39-43.

Magenheim, Michelle, 'Rosie Perez: Hip Hopping From Brooklyn to Hollywood,' *NY Casting*, 9 August (New York, 1994), p 4.

Maslin, Janet, '*The 24-Hour Woman*: Working 9 to 5 in Daydreams Only,' *The New York Times*, 29 January (New York, 1999).

McGavin, Patrick Z., 'Distinctive Voice,' *Chicago Tribune*, 6 November (Chicago, 1994), p 8.

Meyers, Kate, 'The Subject is Rosie,' *Entertainment Weekly*, 5 November (US, 1993), pp 36-39.

Millner, Denene, 'Rosie Blossoms: Actress Perez Switches out of Squeaky Gear and Steps on Gas in *'24 Hour Woman,' New York Daily* News, 24 January (New York, 1999), p 12.

Mr. Showbiz News, 'Keanu Gets Action; Bruce Gets Plugs, View Gets Dirty,' *IMDB*, 13 July (1999).
[Online] Accessed 17 February 2000.
http://mrshowbiz.go.com/archive/news/Todays_Stories/000713/quickhits071399.html

Ojito, Mirta, 'Everything's Coming Up Rosie,' *Latina* (New York, 1997), pp 40-43.

Pawelczak, Andy, '*White Men Can't Jump*,' *Films in Review*, July/August, Vol. 43, Issue 7 (US, 1992), p 263.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_15 87603421&site+ehost&return=n.

Puerto Rican Herald, 'Puerto Rican Profile: Rosie Perez,' *Puerto Rican Herald*, 27 April, Vol 5, No 17 (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2001.
http://puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n17/ProfileRPerez-en.sthml

Rainer, Peter, '*It Could Happen to You*' is Just the Ticket; A cop gives a waitress half of his $4-million lottery payoff in Andrew Bergman's cheery fairy tale,' *LA Times*, 29 July, Home Edition (Los Angeles, 1994), F-13.
[Online] Accessed 27 September 2000.
http:latimes.com.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=lt94+42656&LATID=71101

'Movie Review; 'Jarmusch's "*Night on Earth*" Slight but Affecting Taxi Ride, *L.A. Times*, 8 May, Home Edition, Calendar Section (Los Angeles: 1992), p F-8.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http: latimes.com.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=lt92+68145&LATID=847947

Rolling Stone, '*It Could Happen To You*,' *Rolling Stone*, 11 August, Issue 688 (New York, 1994), p 62.

Rowe, Douglas J., 'Hispanic bombshell has the answers for her career in film,' *The Star Ledger*, 17 May (Newark, NJ, 1992), p 6-7.

Schnickel, Richard, '*Fearless*: A Question of Mortality,' *Time*, 18 October, Vol. 142, Issue 16 (New York, 1993), p 98.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_15 87603421&site+ehost&return=n.

Simon, John, 'Believe It Who Will,' *National Review*, Film Review of *Fearless*, 29 November, Vol. 45, Issue 23 (1993), p 69.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_15 87603421&site+ehost&return=n.

Smith, Russell Scott and Hamm, Liza, et al., 'Celebrities: Pop Quiz with Rosie Perez', *People*, 21 January, Vol. 53, Issue 3 (New York, 2000), p 18.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://globlgvw13.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.141_8000_1587603421&site+ehost&return=n

Talty, Stephan, 'A Rosie Grows in Brooklyn,' *Time Out New York*, 14 August (New York, 1997), pp 6, 8.

Tomei, Maria, 'The Riveting Rosie Perez,' *Interview*, March (New York, 1993), pp 124, 135.

Turan, Kenneth, '"Jump" Shoots From the Hip,' *L.A. Times*, 27 March, Home Edition, Calendar Section (Los Angeles, 1992), pp F1, F16.
[Online] Accessed 23 September 2000.
http://latimes.qpass.com/cgibin/qpass.cgi?QIID=It92+84513&LATID=847947

'"*Fearless*": A Bellyful of Plane Crash Survivor,' *L.A. Times*, 15 October (Los Angeles, 1993), p F-4.
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http://latimes.qpass.com/cgi-bin/qpass.cgi?QIID=It93+6899&LATID=847947

Waddell, Robert, 'Rosie Perez Speaks Out on Vieques Controversy,' *Puerto Rican Herald*, 6 October (Puerto Rico, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2001.
www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n42/RosiePerez-en.shtml

Wilmington, Michael, 'Fear of Flying,' *Chicago Tribune*, 15 October (Chicago: 1993).

PHOTO(COPIES) OF ROSIE PEREZ

Latina, 'Until There's a Cure,' *Latina*, February (New York, 2004), p 77.

Rosie Perez at a fundraiser, October (New York, 1995). Photo Credits: Mitchell Gerber/CORBISS.
[Online] Accessed 5 October 2000
http://search.corbis...dfault.asp?i=11323937&vID=1rID=10

PUBLICITY AND PRESS SOURCES FOR JENNIFER LOPEZ

Ayuso, Rocío, 'El efecto Jennifer', *El País Semanal*, 29 April, N° 1.283 (Spain, 2001), pp 46-51.

Bardin, Brantley, 'Woman of The Year: Jennifer Lopez,' *Details*, December (UK, 1998). [Online] Accessed 3 December 2002. http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/details1298.htm

Bernal, María, 'Jennifer Lopez: Cuerpo de Película, Mente de Empresaria,' *Fotogramas*, January, N° 1.911 (Spain, 2003), pp 64-68.

Castro, Peter, 'Jennifer Lopez: Hollywood Meets The Bronx,' *Latina*, Summer (New York, 1996), pp 40-44.

Channel 4, 'J.Lo: Behind The Behind,' *Channel 4*, Wednesday, 30 April, 10pm (UK, 2002).

Clehane, Diane, 'Whatever Lopez wants, Lopez gets,' *TV Guide*, 10-16 February (US, 2001), pp 14-18.

Corliss, Richard, 'No Butts About it. Jennifer Lopez has it all: a pretty new movie, a salsa-hot CD and a potential appearance at Puff Daddy's trial,' *Time*, 29 January (New York, 2001), p 64.

Edwards, Stewart, 'Snake Charmer,' *Film Review*, Film Review of *Anaconda*, July (UK, 1997), pp 48-50.

Elola, Joseba, 'Jennifer Lopez: Fiera Latina,' *El País Semanal*, 6 June, No. 1.184 (Spain, 1999), pp 70-78.

Empire, 'Hot,' *Empire*, September (UK, 1996), p 94.

Fraser, Katie, 'Living La Vida Lopez,' *Looks*, March (UK, 2001), pp 14-19.

Furman, Leah, *Jennifer Lopez: Latinos in the Limelight* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001).

Gannon, Louise, 'Learning Curves,' *Looks*, April (UK, 2000), pp 87-90.

'Billion Dollar Babe,' *Elle*, July (UK, 2000), pp 60-67.

Gonzales, Michael A., 'Jennifer's Many Phases,' *Latina*, March (New York, 1999), pp 68-71.

Gonzalez, Lilly, 'Lopez sold out Latina heritage to make money,' *The Daily Northwestern*, 11 April (North Carolina, 2002). Column found in Northwestern University's newspaper. [Online] Accessed 3 June 2002. http://www.dailynorthwestern.com/daily/issues/2002/04/11/forum/f-gonzalez.shtml

Handleman, David, 'A Diva Is Born,' *Mirabella*, July/August (US, 1998). [Online] Accessed 3 December 2002. http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/mirabella0898.htm

Hispanic, 'Leading the Way: These Latinos are Setting New Trends in America,' *Hispanic*, November (New York, 1999), p 44.

'Jennifer Watch,' *Hispanic*, Panorama, October (New York, 2000), p 20.

Holden, Stephen 'A Short Life Remembered with Songs and Sunshine,' *The New York Times*, Film Review of *Selena*, 21 March (New York, 1997), p C16.

'Scared of Snakes, and Rightly So,' *The New York Times*, Film Review of *Anaconda*, 11 April (New York, 1997), p C5.

Holloway, Lynette, 'Keeping J. Lo in Spotlight Has Risks as Well as Rewards,' *The New York Times*, 9 December (New York, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/09/business/media/09LOPE.html?pagewanted=2

Iley, Chrissy, 'I've Found my Perfect Match,' *Glamour*, September (UK, 2001), pp 68-73.

IMDB, '"False" J.Lo Blasted by Bronx Locals,' *IMDB*, 5 November, Celebrity News 2002.
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://us.imdb.com/WN?20021105#3

Kalyin, Lucy, 'Jennifer Lopez is awfully talented...,'*GQ*, December (US, 2002), pp 245-251.

Kennedy, Dana, 'Jennifer Lopez: Homegirl, Working Woman, Empire Builder,' *The New York Times*, 3 November, (New York, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/03/movies/03KENN.html?pagewanted=2

Lambert, Pam and Cortina, Betty, "Viva Selena," *People*, 24 March (1997), pp 160-161, p 160.

Lechner, Ernesto, 'Crossover Mania,' *Hispanic Business*, 26 May (New York, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 27 November 2001.
http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/news/newsbyid.asp?id=462

Looks, 'Looks Celebrity Romance Special: Who's the Perfect (Style) Match?,' *Looks*, March (UK, 2001), p 44.

Lopez, Lynda, 'The J.Lo you don't know,' *Latina*, December-January (New York, 2002-2003), pp 82-85. Text by Suzan Colón.

Macaulay, Sean, 'Star of the Week: Jennifer Lopez,' 28 November (UK, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://timesinline.co.uk/section/0,,2099,00.html

Manning, Sarra, '*Elle* Diva Special,' *Elle*, October (UK, 2001), pp 93-94.

Martin, Lydia, 'Lunch with "J.LO": Jennifer Lopez, Riding High,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 24 January (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2002.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n05/JLopez-en.shtml

Maslin, Janet, 'He's a Thief, She's a Marshal, They're an Item,' *The New York Times*, Film Review of *Out of Sight*, 26 June (US, 1998), p E14.

Montague, Regina, 'Where J-Lo Lookalikes Abound, Some Women Want no Part of It,' *The New York Times*, 17 June (New York, 2001).

Morris, Bob, 'Could this Be Love?' *Talk*, March (UK, 2000), pp 86–89, 147, 148.

Murray, Rebecca and Topel, Fred, 'Jennifer Lopez Talks About *Maid in Manhattan*,' *romanticmovies.com*, 10 December (US, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://romanticmovies.about.com/library/weekly/aamaidinmanhattaninta.htm

Noguera, Anthony, 'Jennifer Lopez: Hollywood Heavyweight. Million Selling Artist. The World's Hottest Property Talks Only to *FHM*,' *FHM*, November (UK, 1999), pp 216-228.

'For Your Eyes Only,' *FHM*, October (UK, 2001), pp 152-169.

Palmer, Martyn, Jennifer Lopez,' *Total Film*, December (US, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/totalfilm1298.htm

Peuer, Degen, 'From Here To Divanity,' *Entertainment Weekly*, 9 October (US, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://members.aol.com/dafreshprinz/jenniferlopez/ew100998.htm

Penn, Faye, 'Ifs, ands & butts!,' *New York Post*, 11 June (New York, 1998).

Rebello, Stephen, 'The Wow,' *Movieline*, February (US, 1998), pp 48–53, 90, 93.

Rodriguez, Réne, 'J.Lo: Success Makes the Best Revenge,' *Hispanic Magazine Online*, June (New York, 2002).
[Online] Accessed 19 July 2002.
http://www.hispaniconline.com/magazine/2002/june/ConverStory/index3.html.

Rush & Malloy, 'Deejays tell Jlo: Watch your Mouth,' *Daily News*, 4 July (New York, 2001).
[Online] Accessed December 15, 2001.
http://www.nydailynews.com/2001-07-04/News_and_Views/Daily_Dish/a-117178.asp

Sales, Nancy Jo, 'Vida Lopez,' *New York*, 6 September (New York, 1999), pp 25-27.

Schneller, Johanna, 'Jennifer Lopez: La Actriz Latina Mejor Pagada Calienta El Otoño,' *Fotogramas*, September, N° 1.883, Translated by Bruno Menéndez (España, 2000), pp 70-78.

The Puerto Rican Herald, 'Puerto Rico Profile: Jennifer Lopez,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 8 September, Vol. 4, No. 35 (Puerto Rico, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2001.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol4n36/ProfileLopez-en.shtml

'Lopez to Perform in Puerto Rico,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 19 September (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 26 October 2001.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n38/JLopezInPR-en.shtml

Tippit, Sarah, 'Jennifer Lopez, Hillfiger Unveil "J.Lo" Fashions,' *The Puerto Rican Herald*, 26 April (Puerto Rico, 2001)
[Online] Accessed 23 April 2002.
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2001/vol5n19/JLoClothes-en.shtml

Travers, Peter, '*Selena*,' *Rolling Stone*, 17 April, Issue 78 (New York, 1997), p 86.
[Online] Accessed 25 November 2001.
http://www.rollingstone.com/mv_reviews/review.asp?mid=73192&cf=1

Rolling Stone, 9 July, Issue 790/791 (New York, 1998), p 145.

Turpin, Adrian, 'Daddy's Girl?,' *The Independent on Sunday*, 17 September (UK, 2000), p 4.

Turan, Kenneth, '*Selena*,' *L.A. Times*, 21 March (Los Angeles, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 11 March 2000.
Accessed from latimes.com although the website page is as follows:
../moviegi?action=View&VdkVgwKey=%2E%2E%2F%2E%2E%2Fvol17c%2Fhttpd%Fd

'*Anaconda*,' *L.A. Times*, 11 April (Los Angeles, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 11 March 2000. Accessed from latimes.com although the website page:
../moviegi?action=View&VdkVgwKey=%2E%2E%2F%2E%2E%2Fvol17c%2Fhttpd%Fd

'*Out of Sight*: Wised up and Witty,' *L.A. Times*, 26 June (Los Angeles, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 2 February 2003.
http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-movie980625-5.story

Video Hits 1 (VH1) 'J.Lo TV Moments,' *VH1*, TV, Aired 15 February, narrated by Michael Hannon (UK, 2003).

PHOTO(COPIES) OF JENNIFER LOPEZ

Angel Eyes publicity poster (Luis Mandoki, Warner Brothers, 2001, US).
Angel Eyes official Website.
[Online] Accessed 7 March 2003.
http://angeleyesmovie.warnerbros.com/index_flash.html

El País Semanal, Jennifer Lopez and Sean Combs in, 29 April, N° 1.283 (Spain, 2001), p 49.

Jennifer Lopez advertisement for Louis Vuitton, 2 November (Spain, 2003), p 13.

Empire, 'Hot,' *Empire*, September (UK, 1996), p 94.

Esquire, 'JLo: The Pin Ups,' August (New York, 2003).

Fotogramas, 'Jennifer Lopez: Calienta El Otoño,' *Fotogramas*, September, N° 1.883, (España, 2000), cover. Photo Credits: Tony Duran.

Advertisement for 'GLOW' perfume, *Fotogramas*, No. 1.911, January (Spain, 2003), p 23.

Furman, Leah, *Jennifer Lopez: Latinos in the Limelight* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001).

Movie still from *My Family*, p 29. Photo Credits: New Line Productions/Digital Press.

Movie still from *Blood and Wine*, p 33. Photo Credits: 20the Century Fox/Digital Press.

Keenan Ivory Wayans and the Fly-girls, p 24. Photo Credits: Fox Broadcasting Co./PRN

Jennifer Lopez and George Clooney during the premiere of *Out of Sight* (1998), p 46. Photo Credits: Universal Pictures/PRN

People en Español, Jennifer Lopez with Gloria Estefan and Sean 'Puff Daddy' Combs. (The 1998 dated photograph appeared in *People en Español*, August (New York, 2000), p 66.

Selena, movie still of Jennifer Lopez.
[Online] Accessed 20 April 2002.
http://www.absolutes.net/celebrities/l/lopez_jennifer/039.html

Silverscreensirens.com, Images of Rita Hayworth and Greta Garbo accessed from this website.
[Online] Accessed 3 December 2002.
http://silverscreensirens.com/galleries/rita12.htm
http://silverscreensirens.com/galleries/garbo34.htm

Talk, 'Line of Fire. Jennifer Lopez Stands her Ground' *Talk*, March (UK, 2000), cover. Photo Credits: Oliviero Toscano

The Independent,' Jennifer Lopez projecting a certain 'star' appeal, *The Independent*, 17 September (UK, 2000), p 4. However, the exact year of Lopez' image is in *Empire* magazine, November (UK, 1996). Photo credits: C. Levine/Sygma

PUBLICITY AND PRESS SOURCES FOR CAMERON DIAZ

Arredondo, César, '"Latinos en Hollywood": En la pantalla grande y también en la chica,' *La Vibra*, Nota en *La Opinión*, 12 October (Los Angeles, CA, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 11 January 2002.
http://www.laopinion.com/archivo.html?START=1&RESULTSTART=1&DISPLAYTYPE=single&FREETEXT=%91%93Latinos+en+Hollywood%94+en+la+pantalla+grande+y+tambi%E9n+en+la+chica%2C%92&FDATEd12=&FDATEd13=&BOOLp00=&BOOLp08=&SORT_MODE=Relevancia

Avila, Alex, '25 Most Powerful Hispanics in Hollywood,' *Hispanic*, April, Cover Story, Vol. 9, No. 4 (New York, 1996), pp 20-28.
[Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site=ehost&return=n

Bardin, Brantley, 'Who Says Comedy Can't Be Pretty? *Premiere Online*, '*Premiere* Annual Celebration of Females in Film, the New Icons: Cameron Diaz, Frances McDormand, Paula Wagner,' October (UK, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 18 October 2001.
http://www.premieremag.com/Premiere/1001/diaz1.html

BBC News, 'Latin sensations rock US,' *BBC News.com*, 27 March, Arts Section, (UK, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 3 June 2002.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/entertainment/arts/newsid_1231000/1231942.stm

Beck, Marilyn, 'Gossip: Ask Marilyn,' *E! Online*, 5 January (2002).
[Online] Accessed 5 June 2002.
http://www.eonline.com/Gossip/Marilyn/Archive2002/020105-07.html

Buchalter, Gail, 'Cameron Diaz,' *Parade*, 21 October (New York, 1997), pp 12-13.

Cagle, Jess, '*There's Something About Mary*: Farrelly Brothers laughing all the way to the bank,' *Cable News Network (CNN)*, 27 July (New York, 1988).
[Online] Accessed 29 September 2000.
http:www.cnn.com/SHOWBIZ?Movies/9807/27/farelly.bros

Carrel, Wendy Jane, '4th Annual Latino Entertainment Conference,' held at the Universal Hilton Hotel, 4 November (Universal City, CA, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 3 June 2002.
http://www.hollywoodnet.com/conferences/latin98.html

Chidley, Joe, 'Put on a Happy Face: Jim Carrey Pushes Physical Comedy to the Limit,' *Maclean's*, 8 August, Vol. 107, No. 32 (US, 1994), p 54.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

Cole, Melanie, 'Review: Film,' *There's Something About Mary*, *Hispanic*, July/August, Vol. 11, Issue 7/8 (New York, 1998), p 96.
[Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_13 24724281&site=ehost&return=n

'Generation X: '30 Under Thirty,' *Hispanic*, August, Vol. 8, No 7 (New York, 1995), p 24.
[Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_13 24724281&site=ehost&return=n

Corliss, Richard, 'Diaz-zling: But can Cameron save this Gross-Out Comedy?,' *Time*, Film Review of *There's Something About Mary*, 20 July, Vol. 152, Issue 3, Arts & Cinema Section (New York, 1998).
[Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_13 24724281&site=ehost&return=n

Cosmopolitan, 'Playing it Cool: Cosmo Chills Out with Cameron Diaz,' *Cosmopolitan* Cover story, March (UK, 2002), pp 42-46.

'Cameron Diaz,' April (UK, 2001), p 44.

Cruz, Riza, 'Their Brilliant Careers,' *Vanity Fair*, April (New York, 1997), p 26.

d'Aremberg, Alejandra, 'CAMERON DIAZ... NO HABLA ESPAÑOL pero es la rubia de oro de Hollywood), *Lavox.com*, 21 December (US, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 6 June 2002.
http://www.lavox.com/protagonista/12-21-2001.phtml

Davis, Ivor, 'Giddy, Gorgeous, and Just One of the Guys: Cameron Diaz,' *Biography*, April, Vol. 4, No. 4 (US, 2000), p 74.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_132 4724281&site+ehost&return=n.

de Avila, Yesenia, 'The Second Annual Erik [Estrada] Awards,' *Latina*, March (New York, 2001), p 134.

Demmon, Calvin, 'Behind the Mask Lurks a Remarkable Morality Play,' *Alberta Report*, 6 March, Vol. 22, Issue 12 (US, 1995), p 45.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_132 4724281&site+ehost&return=n.

D'Souza, Christa, 'Cameron Comes On,' *Esquire*, February, Vol. 123, Issue 2 (New York, 1995), p 130.
[Online] Accessed 8 March 2000.
http:ehostvgw13.epnet.com/ehost1.asp/key=204.179.122.140_8000_122769190 1&site=eho st&return=n.

Dunn, Jancee, 'Hot Phenom: Cameron Diaz,' *Rolling Stone*, Cover Story, 22 August, Issue 741 (New York, 1996), p 50.
[Online] Accessed 8 March 2000.
http:ehostvgw13.epnet.com/ehost1.asp/key=204.179.122.140_8000_1227691901&site=ehost&return=n.

Ebert, Roger '*The Mask*,' *Chicago Sunday Times*, 29 July (Chicago, 1994).
[Online] Accessed 28 June 2000.
http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1994/07/932743.html.

'*Feeling Minnesota*,' *Chicago Sun Times*, September (Chicago, 1996).
[Online] Accessed 25 September 2002.
http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1996/09/091305.html

El Universal, 'Estrenó Cameron Díaz restaurante en Miami; asistieron varias estrellas,' *El Universal*, 8 February, espectáculos (México, 2000), p 2.
[Online] Accessed 14 November 2001.
http://www.el-universal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia_busqueda.html?id_nota=3833&tabla=espectaculos_h-qwertyuiop[]

'"Invaden" las reinas latinas a Hollywood Penélope Cruz, Jennifer López y Cameron Díaz, sólo una muestra,' *El Universal*, 26 December, espectáculos (México, 2000), p 14.
[Online] Accessed 7 November 2001.
http://www.el-universal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia_busqueda.html?id_nota=14521&tabla=espectaculos_h

Entertainment Weekly, 'The It List with Cameron Diaz as the It Girl,' *Entertainment Weekly*, 19 June (US, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 14 June 2000.
http://www.ew.com/ew/features/980636/itlist/diaz.html.

Fischer, Paul, 'Diaz, Cameron: A Life Less Ordinary A GAL MOST EXTRAORDINARY,' *urbancinefile.com* (Australia).
[Online] Accessed 6 July 2000.
http://www.urbancinefile.com.au/scripts/cinefile/Interviews.idc?Article_ID=594

Forrest, Emma, 'The Banana Bunch,' *The Guardian*, 6 August (UK, 1997), p 6.

***Gentlemen's Quarterly* (*GQ*)**, 'Sin trampa ni carton,' *GQ*, October (Spain, 2000), p 42.

Gerston, Jill, 'Cameron Diaz, *Bibliography*, September, Vol. 3, No. 9 (1999), p 24.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

Gliatto, Tom and Speidel, Maria, 'Unmasked: Cameron Diaz is the Beauty who Tames Jim Carrey's Party Beast,' *People*, 22 August, Vol. 42, Issue 8 (New York, 1994), p 51.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

Granados, Christine, 'Setting the Pace: The Top ten Hispanic Trendsetters for 1998,' *Hispanic*, November, Vol. 11, Issue 11 (New York, 1998), p 18.
[Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site=ehost&return=n

Grobel, Lawrence, 'Candid Cameron,' *Movieline*, March (US, 1997), pp 50-55, 100-101

Hamilton, Kendall, 'There's Something in the Hair: Cameron Diaz's Career is starting to Gel,' *Newsweek*, 27 July, Vol. 132, Issue 4 (New York, 1998), p 58.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

Hispanic, Letters to the Editor, *Hispanic*, Jan-Feb (New York, 1999).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.hispanicmagazine.com/1999/jan_feb/Letters/index.html.

Letters to the Editor, 'Picking Leaders,' *Hispanic*, April (New York, 1999).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.hispanicmagazine.com/1999/apr/Letters/index.html.

'Leading the Way: These Latinos are Setting New Trends in America,' *Hispanic*, November (New York, 1999), p 44.

'Cameron to Play Master Thief,' *Hispanic*, June, Panorama (New York, 2000), p 16.

Holden, Stephen 'Any Given Sunday': End Zone as War Zone... Hut!,' *The New York Times*, 22 December (New York, 1999).
[Online] Accessed 6 June 2000.
http://search1.nytimes.com/search/daily/bin/fastweb?getdoc+site+site+28205+9+wAAA+Cameron%7EDia

Inclán, Ramón, 'Reconocimiento latino. Entre los ganadores de los Premios ALMA 2000 están Antonio Banderas, Jennifer López, Cristina Saralegui, Héctor Elizondo, Cameron Díaz y Christina Aguilera,' 18 April (Los Angeles, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 11 January 2002.
http://laopinion.com/archivo.html?START=49&RESULTSTART=49&DISPLAYTYPE=single&FREETEXT=Jennifer+Lopez&FDATEd12=FDATEd13=& SORT_MODE=SORT_MODE.

Kaufman, Gerald , 'All in The Worst Possible Taste,' *New Statesman*, 25 September, Vol. 127, Issue 4404 (US, 1998), p 65.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

Kehr, Dave, 'Cameron Diaz, Good Sport,' *The New York Times*, 30 April (New York, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 7 June 2000.
http:www.search3.nytimes.com.search/daily/bin/fastweb?getdoc+site+site35486+0+wAAA cameron%7Ediaz.

Keveney, Bill, 'Prime Time For Latinos on TV, *USA TODAY*, 23 August (New York, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 7 June 2000.
http://www.usatoday.com/life/enter/tv/2001-08-24-prime-time-latinos.htm

La Opinión, 'Jennifer López y Cameron Díaz son las únicas estrellas latinas que integran la lista de las 100 personas más poderosas del entretenimiento en Estados Unidos,' *La Opinión*, 1 November, (California, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 11 January 2002.
http://www.laopinion.com/archivo.html?START=29&RESULTSTART=25&DISPLAYTYPE=single&FREETEXT=Jennifer+Lopez&FDATEd12=&FDATEd13=&SORT_MODE=SORT_MODE

Latina, 'Blasts from the Past: Flash back to school with yearbook pics of these estrellas,' *Latina*, August (New York, 1999), p 120.

Maslin, Janet, 'Wild Card Game in a Game of Dirty Tricks,' *The New York Times*, 29 July, Film Review of *The Mask* (New York, 1994), p. C16.

'Here Comes the Bride, Fleeing Thugs,' *The New York Times*, Film Review of *Feeling Minnesota*, 13 September (New York, 1996), p C25.

'Something Borrowed and Blue,' *The New York Times*, Film Review of *My Best Friend's Wedding*, 20 June (New York, 1997), p C3.

'*A Life Less Ordinary*': Heaven-Sent Love with a Mean Streak,' *The New York Times*, 24 October (New York, 1997).
[Online] Accessed March 5, 2000.
http:///www.nytimes.com/library/film/102497life-film-review.html

Mills, Nancy, 'A down-and-dirty Diamond; Cameron Diaz might be the least vain actress in Hollywood,' *New York Daily News*, 28 January, Showtime (New York, 2001), pp 2-3.

Mr. Showbiz, 'Cameron Diaz,' *Mr. Showbiz* Celebrities Biography of Cameron Diaz on the *International Movie Database* (IMDB).
[Online] Accessed 4 March 2000.
http://mr.showbiz.go.com/people/camerondiaz/content/bio.html.

Palmer, Martyn, 'Candid Cameron: Hollywood's Golden Girl Cameron Diaz on the set of her latest film with Leo,' *Cosmopolitan*, April (UK, 2001), pp 44-46.

People, 'Cameron Diaz' *People* Cover Story, *People*, 11 May, Vol. 49, Issue 18, (New York, 1998), p 167.
[Online] Accessed June 12, 2000.
http://globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site=ehost&return=n

'10 Best Dressed,' *People*, 14 September, Vo. 50, Issue 9 (US, 1998), p 92.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n

People en Español, 'Entre astros,' *People en Español*, May (US, 1999), p 10.

Primera Hora, 'DiCaprio usa excremento de caballo para atacar fotógrafo,' *Primera Hora*, 2 February (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 14 November 2001.
http://www.primerahora.comnoticia.asp?guid=179658COF89411D4A2BE00508B124842.

'Jennifer Lopez como pareja de Ricky Martin,' *Primera Hora*, 22 May (Puerto Rico, 2001).
[Online] Accessed 14 November 2001.
http://www.primerahora.comnoticia.asp?guid=B9E5CBB44E5F11D5A2D000508B12482.h

Quiñones, John, 'Latinos in the Limelight News Report,' The Latin Beat *ABC News* Special, TV, 7 September, (Miami, 1999), 10 pm.
[Online] Accessed 4 June 2002.
http://www.geocities.com/jetpack7/migloria/getrans/latinbeat99.rtf

Roy, Norman, 'Interview with Cameron Diaz,' *Empire*, December (UK, 1996), pp 96- 99.

Schneider, Karen S. and Leonard, Elizabeth, et.al., 'There's Something About Cameron,' *People*, 17 August, Vol. 50, No. 5 (New York, 1998), p 74.
[Online] Accessed 12 June 2000.
http:globalvgw8.global.epnet.com/ehost1.asp?Global=1&key=204.179.122.140_8000_1324724281&site+ehost&return=n.

Scott, A.O., 'Sleek, Tough, Frosted? Must Be Empowerment,' *The New York Times*, 3 November, Film Review of *Charlie's Angels*, (New York, 2000), p E16.

Scott, Kieran, *Cameron Diaz: Latinos in the Limelight* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001).

Strauss, Bob, 'Q & A with Cameron Diaz: On cigars, boyfriend Matt Dillon and 300-pound actresses with warts,' *E! Online* (1998).
[Online] Accessed 4 June 2002.
http://www.eonline.com/Celebs/Qa/Diaz/interview2.html
http://www.eonline.com/Celebs/Qa/Diaz/interview3.html
(The original interview 'Cameron Diaz Talks about Role Choices,' appeared in the *Los Angeles Daily News*, 9 September (Los Angeles, 1996).
[Online] Accessed 3 June 2002. http://diaz.all-pics.com/Articles/2.htm
Excerpts of the audio version of this interview had been accessed online 4 June 2002.
http://www.celebs.cz/cameron/Audioclips/mary.shtml

Terry-Azíos, Diana A., 'Film: Veteran Latino Stars Take Back the Screen. New Releases by Jimmy Smits, Salma Hayek and Cameron Diaz, *Hispanic*, April, Cultura (New York, 2000).
[Online] Accessed 1 October 2001.
http://www.hispanicmagazine.com/2000/apr/Cultura/books.html.

Travers, Peter, 'Movies: The Comic Art of the Gross Out', *Rolling Stone*, Film Review of *There's Something About Mary*, August 6, Issue 792 (New York, 1998), p 75.
[Online] Accessed March 8, 2000.
http://ehostvgw13.epnet.com/ehost1.asp/key=204.179.122.141_8000_1227691901$site=ehost&return=n

'Feeling Minnesota,' *Rolling Stone*, 3 October (New York, 1996), Issue 74, p 78.

Turan, Kenneth, '*My Best Friend's Wedding*: Roberts Turns her Frown Upside Down,' *L.A. Daily News*, 20 June (Los Angeles, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 4 October 2002.
http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/reviews/cl-movie970620-4.story

Vogue 'Cameron Diaz: Hollywood's New Golden Girl,' *Vogue* Magazine Profile Cover Story, October (US, 1998).
[Online] Accessed 8 June 2000.
http:www.Cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover01.jpg.

Wolf, Jeanne, 'Diaz of Our Lives: On screen Cameron romps with Keanu Reeves, off screen with Matt Dillon,' *New York Daily News*, 15 September, Spotlight Section (New York, 1996), p 7.

Wyatt, Gene, 'Cameron Diaz plays down looks in "Minnesota",' *The Tennessean*, 15 September (Tennessee, 1996).
[Online] Accessed 4 June 2002.
http://www.tennessean.com/sii/longterm/celebrities/profiles/camerondiaz/diaz91596.shtm

Zehme, Bill, 'Cameron Diaz loves you,' *Esquire*, April, Vol. 137, Issue 4 (New York, 2002), p 72.
[Online] Accessed 19 July 2002.
http://www.ehostvgw11.epnet.com/ehost.asp?key=204.179.122.140_8000_163527601&site=ehost&return=n

PHOTO(COPIES) OF CAMERON DIAZ

Charlie's Angels, movie stills of Cameron Diaz as representing whiteness and ethnicity.
[Online] Accessed 24 September 2002.
http://cameron-diaz.com/gallery/movie_stills/Charlies_An.../ viewfull.asp?offset=33
http://cameron-diaz.com/gallery/movie_stills/Charlies.../viewfull.asp?
IMAGE_ID=29

Cosmopolitan, 'Cameron Diaz: Hollywood's Golden Girl on Set with Leo,' *Cosmopolitan*, March (UK, 2002), cover. Photo Credits Patrick Demarchelier.

Detour, 'Cameron Diaz: *Vaya con Diaz*,' *Detour*, August (US, 1996).
[Online] Accessed 5 September 2001.
http:www.Cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover24.jpg.

Estylo, 'Cool, Confident, Cameron Diaz,' September, Vol. 1, No. 2 (US 1994).
[Online] Accessed 6 June 2000.
http:www.cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover66.jpg
Walter Martinez from Latin Style confirmed Diaz' appearance on the cover.

Playboy, 'The World's Most Beautiful Woman: Cameron Diaz Unmasked,' *Playboy* (Australia, 1994).
[Online] Accessed 8 June 2000.
http://www.cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover38.jpg

Premiere, 'Cameron Diaz on love, drugs and A Life Less Ordinary,'
Cover of *Premiere* Magazine, September (UK, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 10 September 2001.
http:www.Cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover35.jpg.

Seventeen, Cover, July (1990, USA)

Screen Babes Monthly, 'Cameron Diaz: Sheer Sex Appeal!,' *Screen Babes Monthly*, March (UK, 1997).
[Online] Accessed 8 June 2000.
http://www.cameron-diaz.hu/covers/covers/kulf_full/cover31.jpg