

Transcript of the Video “Media's Roadmap For Latinas”¹ with Kat Lazo

Hey guys! It's Hispanic Heritage Month! Woo!

My mom is actually from Columbia and my father is from Peru. And I was born here which makes me Latina!

A while back, I wrote a blog called A Media Roadmap for Latinas.

So growing up, I think like any kid, I was consumed by media...and I loved TV, and to this day, that's what I do, I watch a lot of TV. I watched things like Mister Rogers, who taught me how to be a really good neighbor, and I watched Buffy the Vampire Slayer, who taught me how to kick ass – and take names!

But I also realized that no people really looked like me who were in the media. I never saw anyone who actually looks similar to what I look like. Until I saw a little show called Lizzie McGuire. It was on Disney, I don't know if you guys remember. Basically, it was Hillary Duff, she was the protagonist, and her best friend was Miranda Sanchez. When I saw her I was like “alas! Someone who looks like me!” And honestly, I tuned in to see Lizzie McGuire go through her shenanigans, but I really tuned in to see Miranda, because I couldn't believe that someone on TV actually looked like me, she was young like me...

Quick fact – by the way, Miranda actually played a Mexican, when in fact, she was Filipino. No one ever knows what my ethnicity is, so I really related to her in that sense. The next thing I started watching was Degrassi. You know, the first Degrassi, the one with Drake in the wheelchair – that one.

Once again, we have the protagonist, Emma, goody-two shoes, blonde, blue eyed...and her best friend, Manny Santos. Everything was cool, Manny was once again the sidekick best friend, nothing too outlandish. Until we get to Season 3, Episode three “You Got the Look.” Oh, did things change there.

I'll never forget that iconic moment where she's walking down the hallway and BAM! There's her thong, big shot on her butt. Manny went from being this ordinary girl I could totally relate to, to all of a sudden her changing, as she said in the episode, she did it to get boys attention.

¹ <http://everydayfeminism.com/2013/09/medias-roadmap-for-latinas/>, published on September 22, 2013

But that's not the end of it, because Manny continues to go through this crazy provocative sexy change. In Season 5, when she tells her father "I think I'm getting breast implants," he calls her a slut, and tells her that she's a very loose girl. Which then results in her going out, drinking too much, and her character just happens to be the one that flashes her breasts to the camera; and then all of Degrassi sees her breasts and once again she's the slut of the school. Why wasn't it Emma? Emma's gone through her own troubles, but why is that these promiscuous attributes are always associated to the Latina girl?

After Degrassi, I started watching ABC Family's "The Secret Life of the American Teenager." I know, it's a really bad show, but it's so bad, you have to watch it. There, you have Adrienne Lee. Literally, her character encompasses just being promiscuous.

Who's that with their bellybutton showing? Oh, that's no one, that's just Adrienne Lee...you know, wondering why she has to show her belly button...probably because she's brown.

Now of course, if you watch the show, everyone's having sex, everyone's getting pregnant, there's baby mama troubles, everyone intertwines, all of this crazy stuff. But, Adrienne Lee, out of all the characters really struggles with this idea of her sexuality, whether she's sexually confident or if she's actually promiscuous and whether she's a slut. Not like the main character Amy, who I believe struggles with more deeply rooted issues and not these surface issues like Adrienne Lee.

When I stub my toe, sometimes I'm like "eej puta!" But Adrienne Lee takes it to a whole 'other level., because out of nowhere she's like "I can't believe you're doing this! Ay pero....no te entiendo...!!!" And she'll go on. It's so unrealistic it's crazy. I don't know whose writing this stuff but they're obviously not from the Latin community. Sometimes we do this, but you're taking this a little too far.

To finalize this, now that I'm older, I'm watching shows like "Modern Family." For an adult version of a Latina, who do we have? Sofia Vergara. [Various clips of Sofia Vergara saying "jes" - yes with a Hispanic accent.]

No doubt about it, Sofia is beyond humorous and I love her to pieces, but I think its really funny how we go through this road map and she's supposed to be the adult version of what Latinas are. And of course they make fun of her, and her accent. [More clips of Sofia Vergara and her accent.]

Yet again the focus is on her sexuality. There's a lot of comments are made from men on the show about her race, or how she's stupid, they don't understand her, how she's loud and obnoxious.

My question about all of these portrayals of Latinas in the media, since when did we become the epitome of sexiness? Is it because we look 'ethnic'? Is it because we look foreign to the people who are making the media?

Listen, I'm not saying I'm not sexy and I'm not saying that my fellow Latinas are not sexy, but why are we the epitome of sexiness? Plus, we're much more than just our appearance and we're much more than our sexiness. I'm sorry if I'm sounding a little bit negative, but I am sharing what I've seen growing up in the media.

But I do remember some positive shows featuring people of color such as, "That's So Raven," "The Garcia Brothers" on Nickelodeon, "Sister Sister," "Family Matters," "Smart Guy". These were amazing shows. We're still missing strong female Latina leads. I'm not seeing a lot of that.

If you guys think I'm wrong please let me know, because I'd love to watch it and I'd love to support it.

We have "The Mindy Project." She's an Indian female who's the main character and she's also writing. Something I really want to emphasize, if we want to change the media, we need more diversity not just in front of the camera but behind the camera.

Maybe you're a young Latina female who's watching this and you're as unhappy with the portrayals you're seeing as I was, hey – get to writing! Get to filming. Just make media. If you're unhappy with what you see, change it. No ones going to change it but you.

And my message to my Spanish speaking viewers would be that soy orgullosa de donde viene mis padres. Mi madre es de Colombia y mi padre es de Perú. Discúlpeme si no hablo bien en español. Pero les quería decir que amo a esta ciudad donde mis padres me han criado, por las oportunidades me han dado a mi hablar y hablar de mis opiniones. Y gracias a ustedes por soportarme y soportar mi canal en YouTube y saludos a mi familia en Colombia y Perú. Y los amo a todos y gracias otra vez. Ciao!

[English translation: And my message to my Spanish speaking viewers would be that I'm proud of where my parents come from. My mother is from Colombia and my father is from Peru. Forgive me if I don't speak Spanish well. But I wanted to tell you that I love this city where my parents raised me, for the opportunities it's given me to speak and share my opinions. And thank you for supporting me and my YouTube channel. And hi to my family in Colombia and Peru. I love everyone one of you and thank you again. Bye!]