

RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY: CONSTRUCTIONS OF LATINIDAD IN *JANE THE VIRGIN*

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ABSTRACT

*Jane The Virgin* debuted on the CW in fall 2014 at a time when anti-immigrant, particularly anti-Mexican and anti-Latin@, sentiment in the U.S. was reaching an all-time high. This TV show was the latest to offer representations of Latin@s at the forefront and advanced a distinct political stance on immigration by calling for #immigrationreform. Through a critical and intertextual analysis of the first season, this study sought to complicate existing critiques of the show by addressing the ways in which race/ethnicity and gender were utilized to construct *pan-Latinidad* identities. Findings indicate the show deserves praise for serving as an educational agent in exposing audiences to telenovela tropes, presenting hybrid identities, and complicating *pan-Latinidad* identities. Consistent with previous literature on Latin@ representation in film/television, this study finds the show's narratives racialize and sexualize Latin@s and falls short of its potential to shatter virgin/whore dichotomous discourses. Only when compared to white masculinities, are Latinos portrayed as sexual deviants lacking self-discipline but are given more sexual agency than their female counterparts. Findings suggest *Jane The Virgin* superficially celebrates the independence and family unity of the Villanueva women but reinforces and advances traditional gender norms where women are expected to be caretakers and deferential to men. The show should be criticized for its negative portrayals of women who exercise sexual agency, which is labeled and linked to deviant spirituality. Ultimately, the show's representations are significant in educating audiences about the assimilation of Latin@s, now the nation's largest ethnic group, into the U.S.