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"Remember Me": A Narrative Analysis on Latino Representation in Disney's Coco and Encanto

Angie Nicole Vega
Brigham Young University

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Clark Callahan, Chair
Kevin John
Jason Freeman

School of Communications

Brigham Young University

ABSTRACT

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Angie Nicole Vega
School of Communications, BYU
Master of Arts

This study explores the authenticity of Latino representation in Disney animated films by reviewing the visuals, symbols, and themes incorporated into the animations. Using a narrative analysis method, the study examines themes present in the films, including characters, setting, music, and language, to uncover deeper meanings and cultural references. Through this analysis, the study aims to identify commonalities in how Latino culture is represented in mainstream media and to uncover any underlying messages or biases that may be present. The findings of the study suggest that both films showcase Latino culture in a positive and celebratory manner, highlighting the importance of family, community, and tradition. However, while both films feature similar themes, there are notable differences in how these themes are presented. Coco emphasizes the significance of intergenerational relationships and the importance of preserving cultural heritage, while Encanto focuses on the power of individuality and self-discovery. Overall, the semiotic analysis reveals that both Coco and Encanto provide examples of authentic Latino representation in mainstream media, showcasing the diversity and richness of Latino culture in a respectful and engaging way. The study highlights the importance of representation in media and the potential impact it can have on shaping societal attitudes and perceptions.

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I also want to thank and dedicate this to all the immigrants, the children of immigrants, and anyone who has ever struggled with an identity crisis. Los amo! Finally, the little Mexican American girl in me would never believe how far we have come. We did it.

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Introduction

Disney films have been a significant part of popular culture for decades, with generations growing up watching and enjoying the various characters and stories. The Latino community has been vastly underrepresented in Disney films, with few characters and storylines reflecting the experiences and perspectives of this community. As one of the largest ethnic groups in the U.S., Latinos represent a significant audience for Disney, yet their experiences and stories have been largely overlooked in the company's films (Conroy, 2022). This lack of representation can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to the erasure of Hispanic culture and identity.

However, improvements have been made recently as Disney has produced two major films starring all Latino characters. In 2017, Disney premiered the film *Coco* which takes premise in Mexico and focuses on Miguel, a young Mexican boy, and his family. In the following years, Disney came out with the film *Encanto* which depicts a family in Colombia and goes into depth about their family's history and current dynamics. Encanto portrays the Latino culture visually, but also addresses the intergenerational trauma that can be seen in Latino families. (Conroy, 2022). The event that onsets the intergenerational trauma for the Madrigal family begins in a small town in Colombia when Abuela Madrigal and her husband are forced to leave. Abuelo Madrigal does not make it out alive and it sets a deep-rooted trauma in his wife that she eventually passes down to her later generations (Conroy, 2022). Disney films *Coco* and *Encanto* have both captured audiences in the United States with their compelling stories, memorable characters, and stunning animations. Both movies have also utilized music as a powerful tool to connect with viewers and tell their respective stories.

In today's society, the media plays a significant role in shaping our perceptions of various racial and ethnic groups. Unfortunately, this can often lead to the reinforcement of negative

stereotypes that perpetuate racism and discrimination. For many Latinos and other minority groups, there is an innate fear of being judged based on these stereotypes, especially on college campuses that are predominantly white (Erba, 2018). This fear can lead to stereotype threat behavior, where individuals may conform to these expectations set by others.There is an innate fear among Latinos and other minority groups about how they will be perceived based on stereotypes seen in the media (Erba, 2018). Latinos often experience racism on college campuses that are predominantly white (Erba, 2018). In a study conducted at a predominantly white university, Latino college students shared their observations of the typical stereotypes portrayed in English media, including criminals, gang members, illegal immigrants, maids, and blue-collar workers (Erba, 2018). These stereotypes have real-world consequences and can impact the way individuals are perceived and treated in various settings.

Disney is a big player in the entertainment industry that has taken the approach in the past decades in deciding how they will depict race based on how much it will benefit them overall (Chavez & Kylie, 2016). As such, it is important to examine how they portray minority groups, specifically Latinos, in their media. Latino children, specifically, are recognized as a powerful audience. However, they often lack the proper representation in the content that Disney produces (Chavez & Kylie, 2016). To address this issue, a study was conducted to explore how Disney represents Latino minorities in their films. The study employs a narrative style analysis to identify the various patterns and themes that emerge from an examination of Disney's depiction of Latinos. This type of analysis involves looking at themes in both films, as well as the underlying meanings and messages conveyed through them. By examining the various depictions of Latino characters in Disney films, the study aims to shed light on how these representations contribute to the larger discourse surrounding race and ethnicity in society. Ultimately, the hope

is that this research will provide insights into how we can improve media representation of minority groups, including Latinos, and work towards a more inclusive society.

Literature Review

Minorities in the Media

Mainstream media can affect how minorities compare themselves to the majority. There is an influence on perception. (Doshi et al., 2017). When minorities see negative perceptions of themselves in the media, it discourages them from finding belonging and instead leads to isolation and distancing from the majority. Mainstream media often fails to show diverse perspectives of all minority groups and when they do, they often get them wrong. A way to combat this is the existence of ethnic media which produces media focused solely on the group. An example of this is shown by the existence of Bollywood films, which often help minorities of Indian identity connect with their country as well as decipher their own identity while living in America (Doshi et al., 2017). Minorities are often exposed to both mainstream and ethnic media. These differing sources of media can be conflicting and cause a confused sense of identity depending on how they see themselves portrayed. An example of this is seen in a study done specifically on Indian Americans and their sense of self, collective view, and sense of pride for their ethnicity (Doshi et al., 2017). What is often seen in several forms of mainstream media is that Indians are often portrayed as side characters or as ambiguous characters with few ambitions or a sense of constructed identity. There is also a correlation between media representation and public perceptions, meaning that how a minority group is portrayed in mainstream media, affects how the majority of a group perceives them. This creates false messages about minority groups and leads to negative perceptions of them. This portrayal also impacts how minorities perceive

themselves, as they often feel impacted by any type of representation in the media about their group. "Even subtle implicit stereotypical cues in the media can potentially lead to long-lasting effects on ethnic minority audiences' self-concepts and self-esteem" (Doshi, et al., 2017). A stereotype threat is damaging and can lead minority groups to underperform. "Past research on the effects of media stereotypes suggest that media are important socializing agents through which racial and ethnic minorities learn about their in-group vis-a-vis the majority White outgroup" (Doshi et al., 2017). Ethnic media helps Indian Americans feel a stronger connection to their identity and creates a sense of nostalgia for them (Doshi et al., 2017). Ethnic pride is important for this group and consumption of ethnic media helps this group feel connected to who they are and can increase pride.

"Additionally, a recent study by Harwood and Vincze (2015) showed that Hungarian minorities in Romania preferred ethnic media for diversion, presumably because ethnic media provided a positive alternative to the group's negative portrayals in mainstream media. While there is literature on the motivations of minority audiences to seek out ethnic media content, further examination of the social-psychological processes and effects of ethnic media content is needed in the current media environment characterized by increased access to ethnic media content."

The media has the power to influence people's attitudes about specific groups that are a minority in society. An example of this concept is seen in a literature review of media representation of minorities in Canada (Mahtani, 2001). It is a damaging narrative when minorities are misrepresented in the media. A negative perception of a race can heavily influence how others perceive them. This can tell a false story of a specific race being deviant or dangerous (Mahtani, 2001). A sense of belonging is quickly taken away as minorities who see themselves

misrepresented in the media often feel excluded and misunderstood. This also creates shame in their identity and racial background. There are two different types of ways to view the way ethnic minorities are shown in the media which are misrepresentation and underrepresentation (Mahtani, 2001). Underrepresentation means there is a lack of representation of the minority seen in the media. This is harmful in the way that it excludes prominent groups in the country. Misinterpretation is when minorities are present in the media, but they are not represented accurately (Mahtani, 2001). All of these ideas create a damaging narrative perpetuated through stereotypes, negative interpretations, and being placed in an inferior position.

A study done on minority representation in Canadian entertainment programs included eight Canadian dramatic series that were monitored by Media Watch (Mahtani, 2001). It was discovered that "only 4 percent of the female characters and 12 percent of the male characters were from diverse or racial backgrounds" (Mahtani, 2001, p. 102). Minorities in Canada feel a sense of otherness with the "us vs them" narrative between them and the majority (Mahtani, 2001, p. 102). Media misinterpretation of Canadian minorities often shows them as a side character accentuating the white main character or as an "evil" against the main character. Several news reports have been studied and have shown discrimination and negative framing of minorities by "describing immigrants as a 'threat to the system and to Canadians'." (Mahtani, 2001, p. 105). In Ottawa, research was done to study several news reports that have shown commonality in racist remarks of the Asian population in the area (Mahtani, 2001). This group is labeled as an "Asian crime wave" in the area which is a damaging narrative of a minority group in Ottawa (Mahtani, 2001). Race, gender, and religion have caused separation, exclusivity, and "the reinforcement of negative stereotypes culturally pathologizes ethnic minorities, furthering racial divides." (Mahtani, 2001, p. 108). This ongoing narrative of fear mongering and

misrepresentation in the media feeds negative stereotypes of minorities which impacts audiences' perceptions.

Latinos in the Media

The Latino community is one of the largest and most prominent groups present in the United States. It is estimated that about 19% of the U.S. population identifies as Hispanic or Latino (Nielsen, 2022). This unique population, on its own, would have about the seventh largest economy as it brings in about $1.9 trillion in revenue, and currently has a strong influence in the media and entertainment industry (Nielsen, 2022). As of 2022, there have been historic accomplishments from the Latino community in the entertainment industry with the world-renowned singer *Bad Bunny* being the first Latino ever to win Artist of the Year at the Video Music Awards (Nielsen, 2022). Disney's *Encanto*, a movie based on a Colombian family and their culture won a Golden Globe and an Academy Award (Nielsen, 2022). These significant events strongly impact the Hispanic community because they feel represented in the media and have increased interest when they see other Latinos in the content they consume.

The Latino community has continuously worked for their voices to be heard and for their communities to be seen as this group has often been marginalized. Hispanic television was a small and often forgotten platform for minorities and has now made its way as a competitor in the media world (Retis, 2019). Latino media originated as a way to advocate for a minority group of people that was often kept out of important news especially political environments that directly affected them (Retis, 2019). Agricultural workers depended on the radio for information especially as they established temporary work lives in the U.S. Important topics discussed in these various forms of media included: "Hispanic activism against discrimination, racism, and exploitation (Retis, 2019, p 8)."

In the 1960's there was an influx of Spanish speakers in the United States, oftentimes, Latinos were ignored as citizens but were viewed as consumers who could bring in money due to the untapped advertising market towards Latinos (Retis, 2019). Media investors and advertisers were not interested in Latin media until they noticed this increase in consumers in the Latino community and their buyer power (Retis, 2019). Latino media serves unique populations within the Latino community which includes both Spanish and English speakers. Specifically, the group that grew up in the United States, speaks Spanish at home, but English at school. They are integrated into two cultures, because of this,Spanish media and advertising have evolved to cater to these bilingual speakers.

The growing number of Latinos in the U.S. led to a powerful establishment of Spanish-language broadcast networks that accumulated over 43% of Latino viewers (Nielsen, 2022). The television network, Univision, which caters to the Latino population, as it is a Spanish-language network began in 1962 in San Antonio, TX (Aziz, 2019). The lack of news broadcasting and communication to this large minority group in the U.S. inspired the start of a broadcasting network for these individuals who only spoke Spanish (Aziz, 2019). Univision's various focuses in the Latino community include diversity in media, freedom of speech, promoting Hispanic community presence in politics, immigration, environment, and voting (Aziz, 2019). It gives a voice to those who did not have one and it allows a community of Latinos to come together towards events and political news that directly affects them.

A competitor of Univision, the broadcasting network Telemundo, has accumulated over 10 million subscribers on their YouTube page, which typically offers video clips intending to draw viewers to their broadcasting (Villafane, 2020). These Spanish language broadcasting

networks have evolved throughout the years to cater more towards the growing Chicano community and "according to Telemundo, its viewers tend to be young, bilingual, and ambicultural, and those demographics are mirrored among its YouTube subscribers, who are mostly between the ages of 18 – 34 (Villafane, 2020)." Vota Conmigo: A campaign to help Latino voices be heard in politics, is a form of educating Latinos on how their vote counts and why filling out the census matters. Univision also works with partners like these to help the community with scholarship initiatives for students (Villafane, 2020).

There has been a demand for more Latin American representation in American media as the growth of Latin Americans in the United States has only continued to increase (Nieuwmoer, 2019). Children exposed to media early in their life begin to develop biases and thoughts about different nationalities so these external influences have the responsibility of how they portray different groups. This could lead to positive or negative stereotypes of several groups (Nieuwmoer, 2019). There have been political dilemmas in the past decade in which the media has negatively portrayed the Latino community using negative stereotypes. Films focused on these cultures that have premiered in the past five years are a way to combat these negative biases the media has created (Nieuwmoer, 2019).

The framing of Latino stories in the media allows for the opportunity of a marginalized group to be perceived as an intrusive people (Tobar, 2023,p. 143). This group is made to be "helpless" and often ends up being the eye of political struggles in the media (Tobar, 2023, p. 143). Latinos are often framed in television shows as criminals, cartel runners, or people of lower class jobs such as servants or maids. This is done on purpose to send a message to the majority that this group is "dangerous." It is to show an "us vs them" concept of white America (Tobar,

2023, p .149). "The most common representation of Latino people in televisions and film is as agents of chaos" (Tobar, 2023, p. 148).

In current media, you often see the storyline of Latinos being powerful as owners of cartels and white people fighting to stop this. It is an "us vs them" storyline that is told time after time in mass media formats (Tobar, 2023). This is often in a powerlessness nature as to make the Latino the evil guy in the storyline. (Tobar, 2023, p. 148). A lot of mainstream media will often portray minorities as dangerous individuals and Latinos are often cast as being a part of illegal drug schemes, but "the cartel genre sends the message that there is something dangerous and villainous lurking the seemingly friendly and benign exterior of their Latino coworkers and neighbors." (Tobar, 2023, p. 150).

Minorities in Film

Unfortunately, audience perception affects the casting process of films due to negative assumptions and opinions that a majority of people have about minorities in movies (Weaver, 2011). An example of this can be seen in the dilemma producers had when they were casting for the movie, *Hitch.* Will Smith was set to be the lead actor in the romantic comedy and there was opposition to casting a white female as the romantic lead due to people's disapproval and uncomfortable perception of interracial relationships (Weaver, 2011). Producers were afraid that the movie would fail to succeed if they portrayed an interracial relationship (Weaver, 2011). Will Smith stated that he felt that including Black characters in films would stray away from the majority of white audiences because they would perceive it as a "Black film" (Weaver, 2011).

Social identity theory is a theoretical basis that explains how people connect more to characters that they feel they can relate to or are a part of the same group as (Weaver, 2011). When it comes to the basis of this theory in films, "social identity theory has been used to predict

that the need to create these intergroup comparisons can influence people's viewing decision"
(Weaver, 2011, p 270). The first study done would test if the majority would favor a race-neutral
film, where everyone cast is White, with no other ethnic influence. The first hypothesis backed
up by social identity theory is that Whites with a less diversity-seeking attitude, often prefer an
all White cast in a film (Weaver, 2011). The second hypothesis based on participants' color-blind
racial attitudes is that Whites with high color-blind attitudes were less likely to watch an
ethnic-focused cast (Weaver, 2011). The third hypothesis deals with familiarity and states that
Whites are more likely to watch a movie with a familiar Black actor than one with an unfamiliar
Black actor (Weaver, 2011). The study found that color-blind racial attitude testing on
participants who scored high most likely preferred to watch films with a White cast, but were
okay with a Black lead in the film if they were familiar to the participant (Weaver, 2011).

Disney and Latino Representation

Disney has portrayed Latinos in films as inauthentic Westernized individuals with a lack
of acknowledging their culture, geography, and ethnicity in the storyline (Silverman, 2002). The
lack of inclusiveness in the Disney archives has brought about controversy with how Disney
neglected to show authentic parts of Hispanic cultures as well as marginalizing this ethnic group
as the "other" (Silverman, 2002). There is very little media depicting Latinos in films or cartoons
in the history of Disney content, but the few present problems with how Hispanic individuals are
often depicted through a Westernized lens (Silverman, 2002).

The 2000 Disney movie, *The Emperor's New Groove* is an example of the lack of
authenticity in presenting the ancient Peruvian culture. This "feature-length animated movie that
archaeologists will readily recognize as set in Inca Peru, but whose action Disney never
geographically situated or culturally identifies." (Silverman, 2002, p 299). It sets the film in a

hyperreal setting as it fails to acknowledge the location despite the obvious topography and geography of ancient Peru (Silverman, 2002). The art director, animators, and anyone involved with the art and animation of the film took a trip to Machu Picchu to accurately portray Peruvian topography and culture in the film yet neglected this authenticity in the movie (Silverman, 2002). The research done previous to the film was not identified or made clear in the film as "the Incas are not merely represented by their archaeological sites." (Silverman, 2002, p 306). The commentary made in the film gives further insight into how much detail was revealed about the location and inspiration behind the movie (Silverman, 2002).

There are specific details such as the way the llama is portrayed through the American lens, despite the llama being an exotic animal essential to Peruvian culture (Silverman, 2002). In the film commentary, the keywords describing where the movie is based are only said once or twice. These include: Machu Picchu, Peru, South America, Latin America, etc (Silverman, 2002). The film shows the Inca culture, but fails to place it as "we see that Groove's appropriation of ancient Peruvian art and technology is specific at the same time that it is conflated." (Silverman, 2002, p 309). Disney's placelessness weakens its identity as "it is ethically easier for Disney to profit from Peru's archaeological patrimony by not naming the model for the film's mythical empire" (Silverman, 2002, p 313).

In 1944, Disney aired the cartoon "The Three Caballeros" which was based on a Mexican rooster named "Panchito Pistoles" (Alonso, 2009). This cartoon depicts a Mexican character and displays soft racism as it stereotypes the Mexican culture using a child's cartoon (Alonso, 2009). It misleads audiences and creates a storyline for a group of people that is inauthentic and lacks to acknowledge the essential aspects of the culture. A cartoon is a powerful tool that can harm since

"children are often taught racism through cute caricatures and other forms of visual and verbal play" (Alonso, 2009, p 238).

Disney and Minority Representation

Disney began to present multiculturalism in the 1990s with their creation of the movies *Aladdin, Pocahontas,* and *Mulan* (Neal, 2010). The movie *Aladdin* was the first time Disney portrayed an entire ethnic population since minorities were often portrayed as a small part of the movie (Neal, 2010). However, the ethnic group highlighted as a whole is still small in comparison to the majority (Neal, 2010). Lack of integration as these ethnic characters are portrayed as "others" in a "them vs us" context or lens is shown in these other movies that Disney came out with to diversify their content (Neal, 2010). An example of this, is in the movie *Pocahontas*, a historically based Disney movie that follows a "them vs us" perspective as she is portrayed through a European lens (Neal, 2010). Disney neglected to present various minorities through their lens and established their stories through the Westernized lens often comparing them to the majority (Neal, 2010).

The movie *Aladdin* presents stereotypes of the entirety of the Middle East and is not accurate to the variety of cultures throughout the various Middle Eastern cities (Neal, 2010). Jasmine and Aladdin are not presented with accurate accents to the Middle East and other characters are stereotyped with thicker accents and inaccurate features (Neal, 2010). Minorities are forgotten in the melting pot as they are portrayed through an "American lens". Disney places Western ideals parallel to Arabian ideals through the portrayal of Aladdin as the hero and Jafar as the villain (Neal, 2010). The culture is portrayed as barbaric, released around the time of the Gulf War, which was a controversial move at the time on Disney's part (Neal, 2010).

In the movie *Pocahontas*, native americans are portrayed through the Americanized lens and lack to share their perspective (Neal, 2010). They are seen as savages and barbaric people which, "perhaps the need for the Disney lens to be placed on historical events came about as a way to forget the truth of the past by placing it into song to shape the minds of future generations" (Neal, 2010, p 29). The "red man" stereotype was portrayed in the *Pocahontas* movie which is what the Native American community has tried to change for hundreds of years in the media (Neal, 2010). The Western culture is depicted in nonwestern families from family dynamics to parental style (Neal, 2010). Native American girls expressed that *Pocahontas* was created as a character of what Western society wanted them to be.

The movies *Pocahontas* and *Aladdin share similar parallels in that* there is a paradoxical alignment between the two characters. The character who sticks to his true cultural values is perceived as being wrong and the character that is more "Westernized" is seen as right (Neal, 2010, p 39). It glamorizes the white man, and there is a lack of accurate storytelling on Disney's part and the real story is drowned out (Neal, 2010).

Audience Reception of Latino-focused Disney Content

A study was done to "investigate the role of media as a context for ethnic socialization in Mexican-heritage families" (Walsh et al., 2022, p 1). Parent-child relationships were studied in the context of teaching children their heritage and culture and observing how media such as the movie *Coco* helps in that process (Walsh et al., 2022). Latino families and children have been constantly exposed to negative stereotypes of their heritage in the media (Walsh et al., 2022). It is difficult for these children's psychological well-being when they are perceived as "bad" in the media (Walsh et al., 2022). It is harder for parents to instill a sense of pride and belonging in their children regarding their culture when they are exposed to negative stereotypes in the media.

In the Latino community, it is common for parents to expose their children to both Spanish and English media and because of this, they form a relationship with both (Walsh, et al., 2022) . Media socialization is a key factor in helping children have a sense of identity, especially since it is hard for children of immigrants to form said identity as they face the double-consciousness dilemma as well as an identity crisis (Walsh et al., 2022). They find it difficult to feel like they belong. Media discussion is a part of how an individual finds a sense of their identity. The media ties people together so it is a large part of how it affects various people's identities especially since "Mexican Americans access cultural proximity to people and places in the absence of physical proximity" (Georgiou, 2012). Mexican-American families that watch media together bond more as they share and learn more about parts of their culture together (Walsh et al., 2022).

Children learn different roles in their family dynamic through and because of the media. This includes informing their parents about English media they may not have heard of or translating media outside of the Spanish language. There have been several negative portrayals of Latino cultures with various characters perceived as uneducated, and there is very little positive representation of Latino people in the media (Walsh et al., 2022). In the media world, "only 6.2% of speaking characters in popular media have been Hispanic/Latino, with little or no attention to country of origin" (Walsh et al., 2022, p 1).

Twenty-three Mexican heritage families were interviewed, one parent per family in a semi-structured interview (Walsh et al., 2022). They were asked how well they thought the Mexican people were represented in the movie. Some of the participants explained that there was a lack of cultural diversity within Mexican culture itself (Walsh et al., 2022). There are various aspects of the culture that differentiate throughout the country. Intergenerational and cultural loss

was a recurring theme in the interviews (Walsh et al., 2022). Participants were happy to see Latinos being included in mainstream media.

Theoretical Foundation

Imagology and Representation

There has been a growing demand for more Latin-American representation in American media, driven by the continuous increase in the Latin-American population in the United States (Nieuwnoer, 2019). It is essential to recognize that children exposed to media at a young age start developing biases and perceptions about different nationalities. The responsibility for how these groups are portrayed in media lies with these external influences, and this portrayal can lead to the formation of both positive and negative stereotypes (Nieuwnoer, 2019).

Over the past decade, there have been political dilemmas where the Latinx community has been negatively depicted in the media through the use of harmful stereotypes. Recent films focusing on Latin-American cultures aim to counteract these negative biases that the media has perpetuated (Nieuwnoer, 2019). Images play a crucial role in how we understand the world, but our personal prejudices and biases significantly influence our interpretations (Leerssen, 2016). The field of imagology encompasses key aspects such as stereotypes, nation and identity, intercultural relations, and comparative analysis (Leerssen, 2016). Leerssen defines imagology as, "a well-established field rooted in Comparative Literature, which analyzes the discursive articulations of national characterizations" (Leerssen, 2016, p. 14).

A fundamental theoretical assumption in imagology is based on the concept of "narrative tropes and rhetorical formulae" (Leerssen, 2016, p. 16). Imagology also includes the concept of ethnotypes, which involve the differentiation of characters based on their appearance and cultural

backgrounds (Leerssen, 2016). Narrative is a fundamental element in imagology, as it is used to construct meaning. Preconceived narratives about nations, cultures, and ethnic groups significantly impact our understanding of other cultures (Leerssen, 2016). Imaging is another concept within imagology, representing the images and counterimages associated with a nation, encompassing opposing ideas and notions about these nations (Leerssen, 2016).

Ethnotypes can vary based on the perspective taken, with one example being the perception of Americans as either friendly and optimistic or loud, unfriendly, and pessimistic. Certain moral markers, such as work ethic and family involvement, are often used to establish a positive view of characters (Leerssen, 2016). Imagology seeks to comprehend the "representational set of cultural and poetic inventions" and is primarily focused on the rhetorical concept" (Leerssen, 2016, p. 19). The establishment of an ethnotype for a character is built upon an accumulation of knowledge about the culture and history of the character's background (Leerssen, 2016). Finally, three important concepts within imagology are intertext, context, and textual, which together form a procedure for analyzing the representation of cultures and nationalities in media and literature.

Narrative Theory

When analyzing a film, it is important to decipher the concept of narrative theory and how it applies to human perception. Narrative theory explains how stories help individuals make a sense of the world around them (Herman et al., 2012). There is a misconception that a narrative should be perceived as a singular event in time, but the reality is that a narrative is often multifaceted (Herman et al., 2012). Narrative theory is "seen as a purposive communication of a certain kind from one person (or group of persons) to one or more others" (Herman et al., p. 3). The narrative is perceived with the purpose of learning about a concept or theme in the real

world. There is a purpose to the story or a lesson to learn from it (Herman et al., 2012). The author tells the audience the story with thematic meanings or various communicative tracks to specific audiences (Herman et al., 2012). An example of this is explained as the author of *Frankenstein* places their audience as a first-hand witness of a real person's life (Herman et al., 2012).

 "In interpreting narrative, rhetorical narratologists adopt an a posteriori instead of an a priori stance. Rather than declaring what narratives invariably do or how they invariably do it, we seek to understand and assess the variety of things narratives have done and the variety of ways they have done it. In practical terms, this principle means that rhetorical narrative theory does not preselect for analysis particular issues such as gender or cognition or particular kinds of narratives such as those deploying antiemetic elements of a story or of discourse—though of course, we recognize that some narratives give special prominence to those issues or elements" (Herman et al., p 5).

Narrative allows people to create their own worlds and tie it to the relationships they create within the story (Herman et al., 2012). This happens when "narrative worldmaking is imbricated with—both supports and is supported by—basic mental abilities and dispositions" (Herman et al., p 17). It opens up to interpretation about why this story is set where it is and why it is being told in that way. The creation of these stories opens up parts of the brain that allow individuals to make a sense of the world around them (Herman et al., 2012). Their perspective is influenced by the media they are consuming and they make interpretations about the world based on what stories are being told (Herman et al., 2012).

Narrative Transportation Theory.

Narrative transportation theory applies when an individual is able to escape their physical environment and become absorbed in the storyline. The individual is then affected by a way of persuasion to act or apply learning from the story to their personal lives (Thomas & Grisby, 2024). Some of the outcomes from narrative transportation theory include cognitive processing, evaluations, perceptions and beliefs (Thomas & Grisby, 2024). An important aspect of narrative transportation is that it has a long lasting effect, so it is a powerful tool to use when it comes to persuasion especially as it has the ability to move audiences to change their beliefs (Watts, 2023). "Research demonstrates that even when the story has ended, the persuasive effects of narrative transportation often continue" (Thomas & Grisby, 2024, p.1).

Researchers are using new forms of storytelling to expand on narrative transportation such as social media (Thomas & Grisby, 2024). AI technology and other technology will continue to transform the future of narrative transportation and how it is used as a persuasive tool for audiences (Thomas & Grisby, 2024). Furthermore "narration can substantially affect individuals' or societies' buying behaviors in product or brand advertising, and has a vital function in understanding and analyzing target markets for companies" (Kılanç, 2013, p.46). Narrative creates connections between the past and future, using mental images to depict imaginary situations and possible outcomes (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017). It can also motivate behavior change by making events more tangible and leading to new attitudes and behaviors (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017). Narratives can also be effective through social media, where audience interaction and active participation contribute to story development. This is more effective now than ever as social media continues to evolve (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017). Stories have been studied for many years from a cultural perspective. They play a crucial role in preserving cultural

knowledge, allowing emotions, moral principles, and values to be passed down through generations. Cultures become distinct through the narratives they create and also help explain organizational culture (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017).

An important factor when it comes to narrative theory is that as the audience becomes immersed in the narrative then they are more likely to believe narration from the author than real life facts (Kim, 2022). This is because "Narrative advertising tells a story to the audience by depicting one or more episodes, which include characters engaging in action to achieve a goal, and the sequence of the story tells the consequences and outcomes of using or not using the advertised product" (Kim, 2022, p. 1544). An example of narrative advertising can be seen in patient influencers who use a powerful narrative to advertise pharmaceuticals. They usually discuss a health issue or illness and use a narrative to persuade audiences to buy the product they are advertising (Kim, 2022). This leads to audiences also potentially forming parasocial relationships with media personalities they feel attached to (Kim, 2022). Transportation goes hand in hand with escapism and it allows the audience member to be able to experience changes in attitudes and behaviors aligning with the storyline (Watts, 2023).

The Theory of Semiotics

As technology has advanced in society, the study of semiotics in multimedia has become more prominent as signs and icons have increased (Connolly & Phillips 2002). Animated films have been around since 1906 and have since provided a facet of entertainment with underlying messages, motifs, and metaphors. Semiotic analysis provides a framework to deconstruct symbols and icons in these visuals. A semiotic framework is interpreted through three layers: pragmatics, semantics, and syntactics (Connolly & Phillips 2002). These levels of analysis open the opportunity to further review the abstract and concrete concepts films have opened up to

interpretation. Furthermore, semiotics identifies other facets of multimedia through various levels of meaning using denotation, connotation, and ideology (Connolly & Phillips 2002). Visual and auditory classifications are a component of semiotics that allow identifying themes and patterns in films as told through speech, music, and sound effects (Connolly & Phillips 2002).

Semiotics, the study of signs and their role in design, plays a crucial part in evaluating multimedia productions (Conolly & Phillips, 2002). Signs are defined as elements that, based on social conventions, represent something else. Semiotic nature can be divided into two types: physical events and human behavior. This form of communication and information transfer shapes cultures over time, involving human actions as signaling devices (Conolly & Phillips, 2002).

It is important to note that cultural origin can be perceived from a person's gestures, enabling different audiences to interpret various cultures through signals and icons. Ferdinand De Saussure established a dominant model of the sign and theorized the concept of a sign deriving meaning from previous signs in the system (Chandler, 2022). Symbols are the vehicles of communication that allow individuals to make sense of the world around them. The sign and the signifier are independent of one or the other as they have their own elements and only become a link "in the mind by an associative link" (Chandler, 2022, p. 21). Saussure further discusses the concept of the arbitrariness of language and how "no two languages categorize reality in the same way" (Chandler, 2022, p. 27) This is an important concept in the media when there is a combination of two or more cultures, specifically when different languages are introduced to audiences (Chandler, 2022). This is prominent in both visual and print media across several countries where there is an intermix of various cultures (Chandler, 2022).

Leeds-Hurwitz (1993), explores nonverbal communication in semiotics, focusing on how human beings employ food, clothing, and objects as social codes. This concept is evident in films and storytelling, where such codes contribute to the portrayal of culture and social aspects within the storyline (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). Semiotics allows for a deeper analysis of everyday concepts in societies, as individuals continually recreate their knowledge during interactions, influenced by past experiences.

Society and individuality are closely intertwined, with social codes directly influencing individual choices, as seen in various families with their unique traditions (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). The researcher highlights the dynamic between tradition and creativity, emphasizing that no performance or tradition is identical across generations, yet traditions are passed down with adaptations over time. Different communities choose to emphasize creativity or tradition in varying ways (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). These choices reflect the broader dynamic between tradition and innovation within cultures and societies.

Attachment Theory

Emotional support is the foundation of human relationships, with a significant aspect of this support based on the validation of an individual's feelings (Jones, 2005). This is particularly evident in the context of attachment theory, which explains that the nature of a child's relationship with their caregiver significantly influences their sense of security. The caregiver's response to a child's distress is a critical component of this theory (Bartholomew, 1991).

According to Bartholomew, children who receive consistent care often develop a healthy attachment, while those who experience inconsistent care are more likely to develop a negative attachment (1991). The two foundational concepts of attachment theory, attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety, further elucidate this dynamic. Attachment anxiety is predicated on

whether individuals perceive themselves as worthy or unworthy of affection and attention. In contrast, attachment avoidance is determined by the extent to which individuals approach or avoid intimacy and interpersonal relationships (Jones, 2005).

These concepts give rise to four distinct attachment styles: secure, dismissive, anxious, and fearful-avoidant. Individuals with a secure attachment style view both themselves and others positively, and are comfortable expressing their emotions and seeking support from others (Bachman & Bippus, 2005). Those with a dismissive attachment style, however, view others negatively and themselves positively, often suppressing negative emotions and employing avoidant strategies as primary coping mechanisms (Bachman & Bippus, 2005). Anxious individuals, on the other hand, view themselves negatively and others positively, often seeking their partner's approval in an anxious manner (Bachman & Bippus, 2005). Finally, fearful-avoidant individuals harbor negative views of both themselves and others, and despite desiring close relationships, they avoid relational intimacy for fear of rejection or hurt (Jones, 2005).

Effective communication is integral to these attachment styles, particularly in the context of providing comfort and addressing ego support concerns. It is important to also recognize "the effect of gender, culture, and personality on evaluations of affective communication skills" (Jones, 2005, p. 234). It is important to focus on "person-centered comforting messages aim to bridge the psychological distance between individuals by validating and legitimizing the recipient's identity, experiences, and emotions" (Jones, 2005, p.236). This is especially pertinent for individuals with attachment avoidance, who tend to withdraw in response to stress, and those with attachment anxiety, who require reassurance and comfort. Conversely, individuals with a secure attachment style exhibit the most flexibility in their communication patterns, reflecting

their self-assuredness and positive relationships with both themselves and others (Bachman &
Bippus, 2005).

Supportive communication is a cornerstone of relationship maintenance, necessitating a
thorough understanding of each individual's communication style. This understanding is
influenced by a multitude of factors, including personality types. One's attachment style, in
particular, plays a significant role in how adults navigate distressing situations in their current
lives. Supportive communication encompasses emotion-focused messages and their delivery,
with varying levels of person-centeredness. Highly person-centered messages are
"emotion-focused and sensitive to the distressed person's emotional state" (Bachman & Bippus,
2005, p. 86), aiding the distressed individual in reframing their perspective on the situation.

A study conducted by Bachman and Bippus (2005), delved into the relationship between
different attachment style dimensions and evaluations of comforting behaviors from partners.
The study also explored gender differences in these comforting behaviors. With a diverse
participant pool of approximately 270 men and women, the researchers found that
"attachment-style orientations are linked to perceptions of comforting behaviors of friends and
romantic partners (Bachman & Bippus, 2005, p. 87)."

The results indicated that male participants "rated their friends and lovers higher on
general negativity than females" (Bachman & Bippus, 2005, p. 87), suggesting that men may
perceive their partners and friends as less interested in their distress. Consequently, men may be
more inclined to withhold deeper emotions. This research depicts the importance of effective
communicative messaging to develop healthy relationships in adulthood while recognizing
different attachment styles (Bachman & Bippus, 2005).

Latinos and Attachment Theory.

Attachment theory has a significant role in understanding the experiences of Latino individuals in many aspects of their lives. This impacts both their mental health and interpersonal relationships. A key cultural value for this population is something known as "familismo" which focuses on loyalty given to family which often goes above one's own needs (Wang et al., 2013). All of these key aspects including attachment style have a further impact on a Latino individual's relationship with one's self and others (Bautista & Venta, 2024).

Furthermore, these studies have found that those who endorse "familismo" may have an insecure attachment (Abate et al., 2022). However, "familismo" may play a protective role in the relationship between attachment and social support for Latino individuals (Wang et al., 2013). Even when attachment is low, those who highly value "familismo" may still perceive social support (Abate et al., 2022). The relationship between attachment security, emotion dysregulation, and somatization among Latino young adults has also been explored. Lower maternal and paternal attachment security predicted greater somatization, a relationship partially mediated by difficulties in emotion regulation (Abate et al., 2022).

A study done by Wang (2013), explored the topics of acculturation and attachment anxiety and how they significantly influence first generation Latinos attending college in the U.S. They explore the discrimination they experience as well as psychosomatic symptoms. The study found that attachment-style orientations are linked to perceptions of comforting behaviors of friends and romantic partners (Wang et al., 2013). Furthermore, the results showed that male participants rated their friends and lovers higher on general negativity than females, suggesting that men are more likely to perceive their relationships to be disinterested in what causes them distress (Wang et al., 2013). They are more likely to be closed off when it comes to their

emotions so they might be more detached than females. This probably causes hardship as well when it comes to emotional regulation which leads to insecure attachment (Bautista & Venta, 2024).

Acculturation, often most complex for first-generation Americans, is an important aspect of attachment style (Wang et al., 2021). It is separated into four different concepts: integration, marginalization, assimilation, and separation. Acculturative stress, caused by either or both interfamilial or extrafamilial factors, can mediate the effects of insecure attachment on psychological distress (Wang et al., 2021). Those with higher attachment anxiety were likely to have a lower acculturation level and greater psychological distress (Wang et al., 2021). This can be deemed from the backstory of most of these students coming from immigrant families. There is a form of grief and loss in culture and family moving away from their home countries that often leads to an insecure attachment (Wang et al., 2021).

Method

Research Questions

To understand how Latino people are portrayed in Disney's popular films *Coco (2017)* and *Encanto (2021)*, the researcher conducted a narrative analysis. The film *Coco* runs 105 minutes and the film *Encanto* runs 102 minutes both on Disney Plus. This will be done to examine evidence of themes and patterns of appearance, intergenerational trauma, and cultural barriers. The research study will utilize narrative criticism to analyze the Latino characters portrayed in Disney's *Coco* and *Encanto*. Narrative analysis is a method that allows for the opportunity to make sense of the world through a specific perspective that includes individuals and their environments.

The purpose of this research is to review two artifacts that have been popular in the media that are centered around Latino culture. The researcher analyzed the content to find patterns and themes to uncover the authenticity of the representation of Latino people and the emerging messages about inclusiveness and accurate storytelling. The analysis ranges from looking at themes involving intergenerational trauma, music, cultural identity, and family dynamics. The researcher was able to examine these themes to further address different topics regarding Latinos' portrayal in the media. This method will dive in deeper to examine patterns or themes regarding intergenerational traumas and situations often found in these blended households.

RQ1: How does Disney portray Latino minorities in their full-length feature films?
RQ2: What themes/patterns emerge regarding Latinos from an analysis of Disney films?

Film Content Selection

The artifacts analyzed are Disney's *Coco* and *Encanto.* These two films are centered on Latino families set in Mexico and Colombia. These films were chosen since they are both focused on a Latino family as the sole focus of the movie. Most films in the media rarely depict minorities as the main characters. The movie *Coco* follows a young boy named Miguel and his family in Mexico as they prepare to celebrate *Día De los Muertos* or Day of the Dead which is a recognized holiday that celebrates a family's ancestors and their connections that live in past mortal life on earth. The movie *Encanto* follows a young woman named Maribel and her family as they share their special gifts with their small community in Colombia. The film follows the family as they navigate trauma, hardships, and family secrets. Both of these films are set to be as

authentic as possible in order to represent the culture of each family as well as the unique

dynamics in most Latin American families.

Table 1

List of Coco Characters

Character Name	Image
1. *Miguel Rivera*	
2. *Mama Coco*	
3. *Mama Elena*	

4. *Mama Imelda*	
5. *Frida Kahlo*	
6. *Ernesto De La Cruz*	
7. *Dante*	
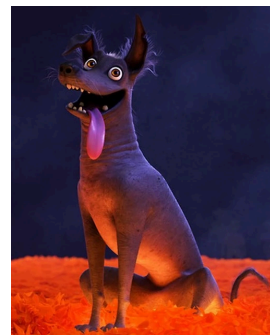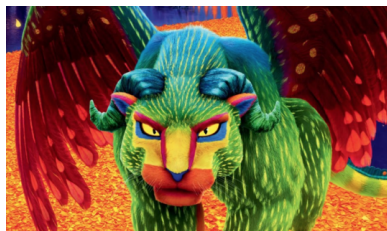
8. *Pepita*	
9. *Hector Rivera*	
10. *Tia Rosita*	
11. *Tio Julio*	
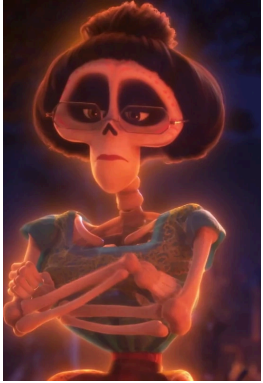
12. Oscar y Felipe	
13. Tia Victoria	

Table 2

List of Encanto Characters

Character Name	Image
14. Mirabel Madrigal	

15. Isabel Madrigal	
16. Luisa Madrigal	
17. Julieta Madrigal	
18. Bruno Madrigal	

19. Pepa Madrigal	
20. Abuela Madrigal	
21. Dolores Madrigal	
22. Camilo Madrigal	

23. Antonio Madrigal	

Conducting the Analysis

The researcher used narrative analysis to establish the major themes of each of the chosen characters in both films. Narrative analysis is a qualitative research method that allows the researcher to interpret the storyline and find deeper meanings, insights, and perspectives. James A. Graham, Hope Yuhas, and Jessica L. Roman (2018) utilized narrative analysis in their research on Disney films. Specifically, they conducted a content analysis, a subset of narrative analysis, to investigate the portrayal of death in these films over several years. Another example of narrative analysis, Larisa Arnold, McKenna Seidl, and Ariel Deloney (2015) conducted a study that involved a content analysis of the Disney films 'Frozen' and 'Snow White'. Their research compared the expression of gender norms and gender roles in these films, providing a deeper understanding of how such themes are portrayed in popular media.

In the narrative analysis the researcher conducted, there are a total of 23 characters that were analyzed. Each character chosen has a significant role in the film and is considered a main character. Narrative analysis was chosen specifically to evaluate the significance of the narrative

of the films. This process helps find the meaning or significance of a story. Each character's storyline had similarities and differences from the other, but the patterns that emerged from analyzing each one led to four significant themes. The researcher followed a three-step process for the narrative analysis after watching both films:

1) The first step included the analysis of the content of the narrative and the researcher focused on answering the question of what themes are found in both films (Foss, 1989).

2) The second step was the analysis of the form of the narrative which included the analysis of how the theme was expressed (Foss, 1989).

3) The third step of the process was the evaluation of the narrative and answered the question of how the narrative corresponds with the reality of the situation (Foss, 1989).

At the beginning of the analysis, the researcher first identified the list of main characters from each film and their impact on the overall story. Next, they found similar themes in both films by watching both movies one after the other and comparing the narratives from each film. Then they found ten themes that expounded from the film, however, the researcher found that some of the themes were relatively similar and would provide similar takeaways. They found that the themes of healing relationships, forgiveness, vulnerability, and family roles and identities all fall under the concept of family dynamics. They also realized that those same themes could also fall under the scope of intergenerational trauma as subtopics including betrayal. The theme of traditions also came up as a similar concept to cultural identity. The researcher debated eliminating traditions or music since these two themes also had a similar connection. The researcher felt that music was an important theme throughout the film, but traditions could fall

under cultural identity. The researcher then narrowed down the list to four themes, and then they evaluated how these themes were expressed throughout the film by analyzing chosen themes with each chosen character. Lastly, they evaluated the overall message of the narrative and how it corresponded with how these Disney Latino characters were portrayed as well as how the themes correspond to actual reality (Foss, 1989). The analysis focused specifically on finding the authentic portrayal of these Latino characters.

Table 3

List of themes in both films

Original Ten Themes	Final Four Themes
1. Intergenerational Trauma	1. Intergenerational Trauma
2. Healing relationships	2. Cultural Identity
3. Vulnerability	3. Music
4. Forgiveness	4. Family Dynamics
5. Cultural Identity	
6. Family Roles and Identities	
7. Music	
8. Family Dynamics	
9. Traditions	
10. Betrayal	

Findings

In the analysis of selected films, the researcher identified four themes. These themes include intergenerational trauma, cultural identity, family dynamics, and music. The theme of

intergenerational trauma is prominent in a Latino culture specifically due to experiences of immigration and the effect it has on multiple generations. This also stems from the theme of cultural identity as Latino audiences often face the scrutiny of inaccurate representation of Latinos in the media. Cultural identity is important as it entails beautiful aspects of culture that include music, food, celebrations, and traditions. Family dynamics are important to both films as they each tell the story of how their family experiences trauma and works toward healing. Music is a part of this process as it represents their cultural identity and expands on the narrative of the story with its impactful lyrics.

Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma is a theme presented in both films as different generations navigate their relationships with each other while carrying the burdens of their past. This specific trauma is seen through the lens of several characters in both films as they navigate familial situations. This can be seen in different scenes in the film, starting with the film *Coco* when Mama Elena, Miguel's grandmother and the current matriarch of the family establishes the ongoing rule of no music in the family. She is often harsh and strict with her family members especially if they try to go against any of the family's traditions. Despite the harsh demeanor, she cooks for her family and leads the family shoe-making business as the established leader of the family. In addition, she also takes care of her sick mother, Mama Coco.

Figure 1.

Miguel and Mama Elena

Mama Elena is a representation of tradition and loyalty in Mexican culture. She is portrayed as the traditional family member often found in the older generation in a Latino family. Her trauma of music avoidance was passed down to her from her own mother, and she continues to pass this down to the generations after her. This continues to affect her family especially her grandchild Miguel who loves music and does not understand why she dislikes music so much. As part of the Latino culture, Mama Elena has kept these traumas to herself as her mother did before her. This leads to resentment and misunderstanding from Miguel.

This trauma is also prominent in Mama Imelda, another character in the film *Coco*, and her own resentment towards her husband. Mama Elena's grandfather and Mama Coco's father. Mama Imelda was married to Hector Rivera and he ended up disappearing from their lives after he left to pursue music. This event led to her having bitterness towards anything regarding music until the day she passed away although it continues as she lives and crosses over to the afterlife. Her trauma of losing her husband and never receiving closure or knowing the truth of what

happened to him continued to affect generations after her. She prohibited her family from listening to music or pursuing any type of musicianship because she was never able to process what happened to her.

Figure 2.

Miguel and Mama Imelda

There is a scene in the film where she argues with Miguel about how she will continue to prohibit music and he has to promise to adhere to her rule. Mama Imelda's hatred of music is fueled by the abandonment by Hector. This, in turn, fueled Miguel's resentment towards his grandmother, who remained shrouded in secrecy, leaving him unable to understand the source of the prohibition.

Another character that presents this theme is Abuela Madrigal from the film *Encanto* as she passes down her intergenerational trauma to her children and grandchildren. At the beginning of the film, there is a flashback to Abuela Madrigal as a young mother to triplets fleeing violence in her community with her husband. Her husband does not make it out and she is left to fend for herself with her three babies. Decades later, Abuela Madrigal has made this trauma the center of

her family as her own lack of processing of this unfortunate event has led her family to feel they don't have room to make mistakes. Her pain has been passed on and it is not something that is talked about in their family.

Figure 3.

Mirabel and Abuela Madrigal hugging

Abuela Madrigal ends up causing more harm than good to her family as she realizes how much she has repressed the trauma in her life. She projected onto her family by expecting them to be perfect and maintaining the high expectations she placed on them. This discovery can be seen in the final scene of the film when Abuela Madrigal is having a conversation with her granddaughter Maribel and apologizes to her for her behavior. The acknowledgment of the trauma and the healing is established in this scene.

Figure 4.

Mirabel and her cousin Antonio.

Intergenerational trauma affects all generations in the family; this can be seen in younger characters in the movie *Encanto*. Maribel is one of the grandchildren in the Madrigal family who is affected by Abuela Madrigal's trauma. She is often seen as the grandchild in the film, often making sure that everyone in her family is doing well. She is the glue that keeps the family together. There is a scene in the film where Maribel is comforting her younger cousin Antonio as he shares that he is afraid he won't receive a gift. Maribel is seen as a comfort to those in her family as they all struggle to keep up with Abuela's high expectations. Maribel is the healer of her family as she is the one to recognize how negatively affected her family is by her abuela's traumatic experience as a young mother.

Miguel is another character who is affected by the trauma experienced by his great-grandmother Imelda. Miguel is prohibited from listening to music or playing music because of the trauma his great-grandmother experienced as a young mother. Miguel is the portrayal of a family member in a Latino household who tries to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma and harmful patterns. Miguel is the first member to question the

reasoning behind established traditions. He loves music and does not understand the rule of no music in his family because it is not a part of the culture to talk about hard things. His family does not talk about what happened and it leads to a lot of resentment from Miguel because he does not understand. Throughout the film, the journey of discovery of his family's painful past starts to become more clear to him as he spends time with his ancestors.

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is a prominent theme throughout both films and in essence, is one of the most important as both films focus on the authenticity of culture. The film *Coco* is set in a fictional Mexican town called Santa Cecilia that is fully inspired by real Mexican towns. The focus of the film is on the real Mexican tradition known as the Day of the Dead. Mexican families celebrate this holiday every year as a way to remember their ancestors. The Mexican cultural identity is an important facet of the film and this is seen through the portrayal of several characters.

An example of this can be seen in characters in the film that include Mama Imelda, Mama Coco, Mama Elena, Frida Kahlo, Ernesto De La Cruz, Pepita, Hector Rivera, Tia Rosita, and Tia Victoria. In the film, an important symbol of their cultural identity is the traditional Mexican clothing that they wear. Each of these characters wears traditional items that are authentic to Mexican culture.

Figure 5.

Miguel and his ancestors

The female characters wear embroidered tunics that incorporate vivid colors or long skirts with colonial-style shirts with bright colors. Frida Kahlo is a character in the film based on the real-life artist with the same name and she is portrayed in the film with traditional plaited updo and bright ribbon in her hair. The bold colors portrayed in the film are authentic to the culture of the country of Mexico, specifically when it comes to traditional clothing. Ernesto De La Cruz is a male character in the film that is portrayed in "Mariachi" clothing including a "sombrero" that is traditional to the culture as well. The clothing that is worn is essential to the storytelling of the film as it adds to the authenticity of the culture represented on screen.

Figure 6.

Miguel looks out in the Land of the Dead

In the film, Miguel accidentally ends up in the Land of the Dead where he meets his ancestors that have passed on before him. In one of the scenes, his face is painted to resemble that of a dead person or an "esqueleto." This face painting is a part of the real-life tradition of the Day of the Dead celebration in Mexico. Whoever desires can paint their face as well as make sugar skull candy to place as a gift or an "ofrenda." It is important how central this celebration is to the film as it is an important tradition to the Mexican people. Cultural identity embodies each character to represent what Latino audiences can see in their own lives as they reflect on their cultural traditions.

This theme is prominent in the film *Encanto* as well as cultural identity is central to the family's values and traditions. The film is set in a fictional town in the country of Colombia. However, the film is inspired by the country of Colombia and sets it to accurately represent the richness and beauty of the Latin country. The Latin culture represented in the film is accurately depicted through its characters and setting.

Female characters in the film including Maribel, Luisa, Julieta, Pepa, and Dolores are portrayed wearing a long brightly colored skirt as well as a vividly or light-colored round neck blouse which slightly bears the shoulders. Dolores is also seen often wearing a traditional bandana that is worn to keep the hair out of the face in hot weather. Male characters in the film including Bruno, Camilo, and Antonio wear traditional clothing of linen pants with a linen button-up shirt that is often paired with a bandana. Bruno and Camilo also wear a traditional pancho throughout the movie. Authentic cultural representation is important to Latino audiences and the traditional wear in Encanto adheres to a positive representation of a Colombian family on film.

Figure 7.

Mamá Elena gives Miguel Tamales

Both films also depict scenes that show the extended family sitting down to enjoy an authentic meal from their culture. In *Coco*, Miguel is sitting down at the table with his extended family eating tamales. Tamales are a traditional Mexican dish often shared with family and friends, especially during the holidays. In the scene, Mama Elena asks Miguel if he wants more tamales and he says no. She remarks that he is a "twig" and needs to eat more and does not give

him a choice as she places more tamales on his plate. This scene portrays the intergenerational interactions in the Latino culture with the matriarch of the family showing she cares by overstepping boundaries due to lack of emotional language in the family.

Figure 8.

Mirabel sits at dinner with her family

In the film *Encanto,* you often see the extended family sit together and enjoy a meal of traditional Colombian food. In this scene, the Madrigal family sits down to eat a breakfast of Colombian arepas. Arepas are a staple of Colombian culture and are crucial to the storytelling of these characters. Authentic cultural representation is important to audiences who have not seen their culture in the media portrayed in a positive way. The Madrigal family represents the loyalty felt by a lot of Latino families, especially those living in America, to their cultural identity and keeping traditions alive for every generation.

Family Dynamics

Family dynamics is a central theme for both films as they heavily narrate the intergenerational relationships between family members and how it affects each one of them individually. Latino culture is inclusive of an interpersonal way of life as family members often live in a multigenerational home. Extended family is interconnected no matter the circumstances. Each family member has a specific role in the multigenerational household. Both films depict this interpersonal way of life and how it affects relationships between each generation in the family unit.

In the film *Encanto*, most of the characters are defined by a subconscious role they have in their multigenerational household. An example of this throughout the film is the role of the main character Mirabel. Mirabel is one of the younger grandchildren of the Madrigal family however, she is the most aware of what each of her family members is going through. Mirabel is portrayed as the "healer" of the family or the family member who is often placed in a position to hold the family together.

Figure 9.

Mirabel and Bruno

In the film, Mirabel is often seen consulting with family members about their genuine experiences in their familial environment. Mirabel is the one in her family who does not receive a gift, but it is symbolic of her true gift of seeing every person in her family for who they truly are. Mirabel is the only person who is willing to cross those boundaries that kept her family bound to the pain passed down by her grandmother. Mirabel seeks to know the truth of why Bruno stays hidden and is the only one to notice that their house begins to crumble which is symbolic of the family breaking down. Mirabel goes to every family member to find out why the house is cracking as well as who is threatening the family's magic. On her journey, she uncovers each of her family members' unknown roles that are a direct reflection of the repressed familial trauma. Mirabel stands up to her grandmother when she fails to see that the casita cracking down is a consequence of her unrealistic expectations for her family.

Figure 10.

Luisa hugs Mirabel

Another example of this throughout the film is the role of Luisa, one of the older grandchildren in the Madrigal family. Luisa is the oldest sister of Isabel and Mirabel. Her gift is being able to carry extremely heavy weight like a pack of donkeys, buildings, and multiple people at once. Luisa symbolizes the role of the oldest sibling who often carries the weight of their family on their shoulders. Luisa represents a lot of people in Latino families, especially first-generation Latinos, who do their best to carry the weight often to protect their younger siblings. Throughout the film, Luisa keeps to herself and does as she is told which is fulfilling the role of being the strongest. Luisa begins to crack under the pressure of the weight when her powers begin to fade. She confides in Mirabel about the pressure she often faces to mask her difficulty of always having to be strong. This is a reality for many first-generation Latinos who take care of both their immigrant parents and protect their younger siblings from trauma they previously experienced.

A subtheme in *Encanto* is vulnerability and this can be seen in Isabel, the middle sister of Luisa and Mirabel. She confides in her sister when she shares the pressure she feels of keeping up with perfectionism. Her lack of vulnerability is a reflection of having to meet unrealistic expectations set by her grandmother. Isabel's gift is that she can make things beautiful with the touch of her finger, but she feels she often hides behind these beautiful things. When Isabel is vulnerable with Mirabel, they are finally able to start the process of healing their tumultuous relationship.

Isabel is portrayed as the family member who everyone often sees as the perfect individual who can do no wrong, but is often miserable under the unrealistic pressures of perfectionism. Isabel holds resentment towards her little sister Mirabel because she does not feel truly seen by her until she opens up. She represents a lot of people in Latino families, especially first-generation Latinos who are often expected to do more to make the sacrifice their parents and family members made to be in a new country for new opportunities and a better life. They are often met with unrealistic expectations by their parents to be perfect and exceed others around them who are often given a head start because they do not come from immigrant families or face adversity that other minorities do.

Figure 11.

Hector comforts Miguel

The sub-theme of forgiveness is prominent in the film *Coco* as Miguel's family begins to heal from negative family dynamics that affect multiple generations. Miguel represents the healer of his family, the glue that ends up bringing his family together. He is the character in the film who stands up to the matriarch of the family and questions the unfair boundaries set by her. Miguel's journey throughout the film represents the path to the journey of healing and forgiveness as well. In the film, there is a scene where Miguel learns the true identity of his great-great-grandfather and realizes that he will disappear forever unless a living family remembers him. He realizes Mama Coco is the only one who can help save him, and so begins his attempt to help his family heal from this deep-rooted trauma. Miguel learns of the truth of what actually happened to his great-great-grandfather and shares this with both his dead and living family members. The truth helps set their family free and they are able to heal relationships. Mama Imelda forgives her husband, Hector Rivera, and Mama Coco receives closure knowing her father never abandoned her.

Music

Music is a prominent theme throughout both films that portrays Latino culture, uses authentic sounds traditional to Mexican and Colombian music, and is symbolic of other themes and patterns presented. The authenticity of Mexican and Colombian music is important in the film as it allows audiences to connect with the cultures and learn more about Latino families. Music in both films sets the tone, evokes emotions, and gives more detail about the narratives the characters are experiencing.

In the film *Coco*, Miguel is a secret musician who is passionate about music but resents his family for forbidding it in their home. Throughout the movie, Miguel rebels and continues to nurture his talent and love for music. It is ironic how music becomes a part of the healing process for the intergenerational trauma in his family. An example of this is when Miguel and Mama Coco sing the song "Remember Me" together. The following is an excerpt from the song:

Excerpt 1:

Remember me

Though I have to say goodbye

Remember me

Don't let it make you cry

For even if I'm far away I hold you in my heart

I sing a secret song to you each night we are apart

This song is significant to the healing process of Miguel's family, but also to the deep meaning behind the Mexican tradition of Day of the Dead. In the film, audiences can see families

preparing for the Day of the Dead by making altars with pictures of their family members who have passed. The lyrics of this song allude to this celebration from the perspective of the family member who has crossed over. They are singing to their living ancestors and asking them to "remember me" and assuring them that they are still closer than ever. A good example symbolic of tradition and Mexican pride can be found in this excerpt "Proud Corazon":

Excerpt 2:

Ay mi familia, oiga mi gente (ay mi familia)

Canten al coro, let it be known

Our love for each other will live on forever

In every beat of my proud corazón

Ay mi familia, oiga mi gente (ay mi familia)

Canten al coro, let it be known (oiga mi gente)

This song continues to exemplify the message of family, tradition, and knowing that death is not the end as the remembrance of ancestors is prominent to keeping them alive. Miguel sings this song as an anthem of healing and holding on to the traditional values his family holds. This is significant as it portrays the accuracy of values most Latino households have which include interpersonal relationships, intergenerational households, and always putting family first. This is observed when Miguel sings "Our love will live on forever, in every beat of my proud corazon." However, Miguel is representative of the first-generation Latino who often has to set boundaries in their traditional household to break cycles of intergenerational trauma.

In the film *Encanto*, music includes the traditional use of Colombian instrumentals and is originally sung in Spanish. The music's messaging is also important to the storytelling aspect of

the story as well as the other themes it presents. The music in Encanto is also a part of the healing process for the family as Mirabel uncovers family secrets and tries to bring her family together by disbanding unrealistic expectations set by her grandmother. This storyline is told in the song "We Don't Talk About Bruno." The following excerpt is from the song:

Excerpt 3:

> Yeah, he sees your dreams (Bruno walks in with a mischievous grin-)
>
> And feasts on your screams (thunder!)
>
> You telling this story, or am I?
>
> I'm sorry, mi vida, go on (óye, Mariano's on his way)
>
> Bruno says, "It looks like rain" (a seven-foot frame, rats along his back)
>
> In doing so, he floods my brain
>
> Married in a hurricane
>
> He's here!
>
> Don't talk about Bruno, no! (Why did I talk about Bruno?)
>
> Not a word about Bruno!
>
> I never should've brought up Bruno!

The context of the song is that Mirabel is asking her other family members why Bruno seemingly disappeared. Every family shares a secret they have related to their experience with Bruno and continuously chants "We don't talk about Bruno" throughout the song. This is symbolic of the often taboo subject of not being able to discuss difficult things in Latino families which often includes suppressing emotions, keeping family secrets, and continual spread of trauma throughout different generations.

Mirabel desperately yearns to discover her family's truth in order to save their home from breaking and keep the family magic alive. She is representative of the family member who tries to change the dynamic in the family to allow members of their family to be vulnerable. Once Mirabel and Bruno are able to talk, she learns of the difficulty he has faced with knowing so much that he feels he would be better off hiding. Bruno is symbolic of another taboo subject in the Latino culture which is that of mental health. He hides away and is shunned by his other family members because he is different and deals with things that the others do not understand. Another example of this can be seen in the song *Surface Pressure*:

Excerpt 4:

But wait, if I could shake the crushing weight of expectations

Would that free some room up for joy or relaxation, or simple pleasure?

Instead, we measure this growing pressure

Keeps growing, keep going

'Cause all we know is

Pressure like a drip, drip, drip that'll never stop, whoa

Pressure that'll tip, tip, tip 'til you just go pop, whoa, oh, oh

Give it to your sister, it doesn't hurt, and

See if she can handle every family burden

Watch as she buckles and bends but never breaks, no mistakes

Luisa interprets this song and shares the deeper message of falling under the pressure of carrying the burdens of her family on her back. This is realistic for a lot of older children in Latino families who often feel they carry the weight of the family on their backs with no room to

make mistakes. Her family is oblivious to what Luisa goes through emotionally as they only see her for her tremendous physical strength. This can be seen in the line where she says "But wait, if I could shake the crushing weight of expectations, would that free some room up for joy." Mirabel is shocked when she learns that Luisa carries more than she can handle. They bond over similar recognition of all of the unhealed pain that lives inside their family. Mirabel shares this in an excerpt of the song she interprets *Waiting on a Miracle*:

Excerpt 5:

> I can't heal what's broken
>
> Can't control the morning rain or a hurricane
>
> Can't keep down the unspoken invisible pain
>
> Always waiting on a miracle, a miracle
>
> Always walking alone
>
> Always wanting for more
>
> Like I'm still at that door longing to shine
>
> Like all of you shine

In this excerpt, the audience can see how Mirabel realizes she cannot fully be the one to "heal what's broken." It has to be a whole family effort as she cannot be the one to do all the work to surpass family trauma. The use of traditional instrumentals accompanied with impactful lyrics that discuss topics important to Latino culture. Families continue to "wait on a miracle" when the most important step to overcome is to stand up to taboos that run in the culture and continue to break intergenerational trauma cycles. In the end, Mirabel is "still at the door longing

to shine" before she discovers her true gift was to be the person in her family to start the process of healing traumas.

Discussion

This study focused on how Disney portrays Latino minorities in their films and what themes and patterns emerge from an analysis of these full-length movies. Both films, *Coco* and *Encanto*, are set in Latin American countries that seem like typical Disney animated films catered towards young children. The added layers of music and bright colors frame the movies to be a light comedic watch about families from different cultures. However, once these films are analyzed through the lens of narrative analysis, there is a deeper meaning that surpasses the flashy colors and catchy music of the films.

Both of these films foster an understanding of a Westernized perspective when it comes to attachment and mental health, which contrasts with the traditional values typically associated with Latino culture. In both films, there is resolve when it comes to the deeper emotional problems found in both families. They are able to address it and make amends with some of those hard conversations which is not often the case in most Latino families. However, audiences, both younger and older generations, are able to reflect on these familial situations in the films and relate them to their own experiences.

When completing the analysis, the themes of cultural identity, family dynamics, music, and intergenerational trauma were present in both films. This is important as it contributes to the overall representation of Latino minorities in Disney films and in the media. It dives deeper than any type of Latino representation in previous Disney films. Bringing in narrative transportation, the film brings the audience into the film by allowing them to see themselves in some of these

characters. These films portray Latino characters authentically with physical characteristics, traditions, and family dynamics. In both films, characters have physical features that fit into the broad spectrum of indigenous features. Mexico and Colombia have a history of colonization in both countries that has led to a mix of indigenous and mestizo physical traits. This representation is important to Latino audiences as there is very little in the media, especially in Disney with only one previous film that included the Latino population.

Furthermore, narrative transportation in both of these films reflect on attachment theory as it deeply explores relationships between all of these characters. The audience is able to self-reflect on their own attachment style and how they relate to these characters. The first research question asks: How does Disney portray Latino minorities in their full-length films? To first answer this question, it is important to understand how the audience is immersed into these films through the depiction of authentic qualities and traditions of each of these cultures.

In the film *Coco*, the basis of the narrative is focused on the celebration of Day of the Dead which is a traditional holiday celebrated yearly in October in Mexico. This was an important choice made by Disney because this is a very important tradition for Mexican families especially those that currently live outside of their home country. Various scenes in the film portray important characteristics of this holiday such as the altar devoted to those who passed away. In the film, Miguel visits the altar that has been placed by his abuela. It is filled with candles, portraits of their ancestors, traditional Mexican dishes, candies, and marigolds. The film shares the meaning behind this tradition which is that of remembrance of those who crossed to the other side. Another example of this authenticity is in the way that the film continues to showcase other traditional aspects of Mexican culture such as mariachis, traditional food, decor, and family dynamics. The film shows mariachis in their traditional clothing singing music

accurate to the genre that is also included in the film's soundtrack. In one of the scenes, Miguel and his extended family are all sitting down and eating tamales. Tamales are an authentic meal of Mexican culture that is often shared during the holidays.

In the film *Encanto*, all of the characters are dressed in traditional Colombian clothing and also eat traditional food in various scenes of the movie. These foods include arepas, patacones, ajiaco, and empanadas. All of these authentic portrayals are important to Latino audiences as most Latino representation in the media has been negative. Latinos are often stereotyped into roles of criminals, janitors, or other sketchy personalities. Their home countries are also often portrayed as disrupted places full of instability and crime. This often takes away from the beauty that these countries offer especially with the traditions of their people. These films accurately portray Latino culture allowing audiences to feel included as they see themselves being represented in mainstream media.

This leads us to the second research question: What themes or patterns emerge regarding Latinos from an analysis of Disney films? One aspect of this question dives deeper into the relationships between characters in both films. Attachment theory plays a pivotal role in shaping the narrative and character dynamics. The films dive into attachment theory with the examples they provide of secure, anxious, and avoidant attachments. This concept falls under the themes of intergenerational trauma and family dynamics since it primarily affects an individual's perspective on relationships.

In "Coco", the protagonist Miguel's attachment to his family, particularly Mama Coco and Abuelita, is central to his character development. His secure attachment provides him with emotional stability, a theme that is further emphasized through the ancestral connection via the "ofrenda" or offering. This exemplifies secure attachment and underscores the importance of

family bonds. In contrast, Héctor's attachment to Imelda, initially secure, becomes anxious due to secrets and misunderstandings. Imelda's avoidant attachment to Héctor, stemming from her grief and feelings of betrayal, further complicates their relationship.

The film "Encanto" presents a different but equally complex set of attachment dynamics. Mirabel's attachment to her family is complicated by her status as an outsider, lacking the magical gift that the rest of her family possesses. Her anxious attachment to her family's expectations drives her quest for belonging. Similarly, Isabela's secure attachment to Antonio is disrupted by her family's expectations, while Antonio's avoidant attachment to Isabela reflects his fear of vulnerability.

This study uncovers other themes as well including cultural identity, intergenerational trauma, family dynamics, and music. All of these themes connect with audiences who come from similar situations as they can often make connections to their culture through authentic representation in these films. A powerful opportunity explored through narrative transportation are the decisions that both the older and younger generations can make to improve relationships with one another. In both films, there are traumatic situations that happen to some of the characters and various perspectives of healing and reparations are portrayed throughout the films.

In the film "Coco", Miguel's great-great-great grandmother was mistakenly abandoned by her husband who later turned out to have actually been murdered by his close friend and music partner. She never learned of his fate and assumed he left her and their daughter to fend for themselves in his pursuit of music. From then on, she bans music to her own daughter who continues this rule to her own children and then to their children and so on. No one in the family questions this rule as it is often taboo in the culture to talk about the hard things that happen in

life. It is easier to suppress these emotions and adhere to the trauma that is often misunderstood and overlooked. Towards the end of the film, you see a learning opportunity for the audience as they show her healing from her trauma as she learns truths and listens to Miguel's pleas. Despite her stubbornness and the intergenerational trauma she passed down to her family, she ultimately made them happier by letting go and forgiving."

In the film "Encanto", Mirabel's grandmother saw her husband die in front of her as they escaped violence in their hometown as young parents to triplets. She continued to carry this pain with her and passed it on to her family as she set unrealistic expectations for them to make up for the tragedy and loss she felt the day she lost her husband. She was able to heal when she saw the truth through the eyes of her granddaughter. Again, another learning opportunity for the audience to reflect on in their own lives. Overall, these themes are essential to the authenticity of Latino representation because they discuss topics that are important to this culture and help specify more about situations that most real-life families go through.

Conclusion

This study delved into the semiotics and emergent themes from a narrative analysis of Latino representation in the Disney films, *Coco* and *Encanto*. It facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the authenticity of Latino portrayal and the impact it would have on Latino audiences. By analyzing 23 distinct characters across both films, the research identified four pivotal themes that contributed to unveiling the authenticity of Latino culture as depicted in these cinematic works.

First, the study found that there were accurate patterns of authentic portrayal of each film's respective country. *Coco* centers around the Mexican tradition of the Day of the Dead,

showcasing elements like the ancestral altar and traditional foods. It also highlights other aspects of Mexican culture, such as mariachi music and family dynamics. *Encanto* features characters in traditional Colombian attire and includes scenes with traditional Colombian foods. These authentic portrayals are significant as they counteract the often negative representation of Latinos in media, allowing Latino audiences to see their cultures positively represented in mainstream media. This plays an important role in representing this minority group that has often felt left out of the media.

Cultural representation accurate to the Latino audience's experiences was important to cover in the film as physical traits were just as impactful to the story as family dynamics and emotional nuances. Both Mexico and Colombia, countries depicted in the films, have been shaped by colonization which has led to a modern-day mix of indigenous and mestizo roots. This has resulted in a spectrum of skin tones and other distinct facial features. Both films represent this mix in the accurate range of physical characteristics of their characters. Thus, it helps future Latino audiences find relatable representation in the media.

Second, the study found relatable themes that emerged from both films that give an in-depth view into the emotional experiences of Latino families. Cultural representation and intergenerational trauma are key themes, reflecting the experiences of many Latino families. Music is also a theme that aids in the storytelling aspect of the story by giving the audience more insight into the character's experiences. Both films depict families dealing with past traumas. In *Coco,* a ban on music is imposed due to a tragic misunderstanding, while in *Encanto*, the matriarch's loss and grief lead to high expectations on her family. These traumas impact family dynamics, often leading to certain members becoming "healers".

Overall, the study found themes in these films that are essential to the authentic representation of Latino minorities. In America, the Latino population has felt undermined in their role in mainstream media as they are often portrayed as a criminal or often an unintelligent individual. The characters depicted in the film represent Latino audiences everywhere who find connections with them as they find familiarity in their experiences. Through the lenses of narrative criticism, there is further understanding of the meaning of both of the storylines in each of these films.

Limitations

This research study has focused solely on the portrayal of Latino Disney films as well as the themes and patterns that emerge from them. However, there are limitations to the study that demonstrate some weaknesses in the paper. The first limitation of the paper is that the researcher is a first-generation American with parents who immigrated from Mexico. This is a limitation when it comes to the analysis of the film *Encanto* since it is based in Colombia. The lack of knowledge of Colombian culture and growing up with Mexican parents gives more bias toward more personal connections to the movie *Coco*. However, it is still an advantage that the research has first-hand experience in being able to relate to the characters and themes that emerge from both films.

Thus, another limitation of the study is that there is a limited perspective on Latin culture due to the lack of representation of more Latin countries. *Coco* is a movie based on a Mexican family and *Encanto* takes place in Colombia. Other Latin American countries have other traditions and ways of life that are not accurately represented in this paper since they are not represented in Disney films. An added limitation is that often Disney will add their twist to films

that include minorities and even though these films have done a better job than other films, the "Disneyfication" of films still allows room for some crucial aspects of authenticity to be excluded from these movies.

Another limitation of the study is that animated films don't always offer as many specific or relatable ways of storytelling as live-action roles do. Although both of these films depict Latino characters, there is more sense of realness in live-action films or shows since audiences can connect more with real humans. This also brings in the limitation of U.S-centric perceptions in the study. These representations of Latino characters in these films may have been more influenced by American perspectives on Latinos living in the U.S. There may be Latino audiences outside of the U.S. who don't connect as much as those who live in America.

Lastly, a limitation of the study is that the films may highlight certain aspects of Latino culture and not others. It is not known if all of the in-depth topics that impact Latino minorities are fully represented in both of these films. This limited scope could possibly skew the representation of a certain perspective that might not be telling the full story.

Future Avenues of Research

This research study has touched on important themes that are impactful to the overall meaning of the storylines in both films. However, there is still a wide variety of opportunities for more research. The study discusses a psychological theme, intergenerational trauma, there is an opportunity to explore this avenue further. A deeper exploration through a psychological lens could be impactful as mental health, family dysfunction and emotional stressors are an important aspect of both stories. Likewise, another realm of study through the societal lens would be impactful for research. Like the literature review finds, there is a lack of accurate Latino

representation in the media, but it would be interesting to find more in-depth research on how some of the few films have affected the self-image of young Latino children who have watched these Disney films.

Another example of stepping into a comparative lens to further enhance this specific study is to compare Latino representation in these films with other Disney films that represent other minorities or cultures. The researcher could find similarities and differences in the authenticity of these cultures. To expand on this type of comparative study, the researcher could also find how different audiences react to these films. They could compare the perceptions between audiences and find missing gaps regarding respective representations. This could help find more information on how different minorities also perceive seeing other minorities represented in Disney films.

Another theme that could be further explored is the concept of romantic love in films with minority representation. For example, within this research family dynamics are explored, but the researcher could analyze romantic relationships in these films and compare them to other Disney films. It would be interesting to find any differences as well as explore further into the authenticity of romantic relationships in these cultures. This could also dive into friendships between individuals and how accurate that is to their culture. Furthermore, there is room for exploration in the further impact that these relationships have on the audience's perception of relationships in their own life. If what they see in these films feels accurate to what they experience in real life with their own families, friends, and significant others.

Lastly, another opportunity for further research in this area is to find live action shows or films that include Latino characters and explore authenticity in this realm. How have they influenced perceptions of Latin culture in mainstream media? Mainstream media builds

reputations and stories of all different kinds of people, so it is important to be as accurate as

possible. Overall, there are many opportunities to further provide more understanding of

minority representation in the media and the importance of authentically sharing their stories.

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