The Negative Image portrayed of Homosexual Women Due to Machismo

By:
Jennifer Mejia

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree in
Classical and Modern Languages and Literature
in cursu honorum

Reviewed and approved by:

(Rev.) Mark De Stefano, S.J.
Thesis Supervisor

Submitted to
The Honors Program, Saint Peter's University
Spring 2016
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Fr. DeStephano for his patience and guidance, not only while I completed my thesis, but throughout my education at Saint Peter's University. You are a wonderful man and a father to all of us. Thank you for providing me with the motivation to pursue a taboo topic. I would also like to thank all of the professors who have helped me to find material for my thesis and whose contagious enthusiasm encouraged me till the end. I thank you all for your support and encouragement.
Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

Chapter 1: Homosexuality in Latin America ............................................................... 3

Chapter 2: Being Hispanic and a Homosexual Woman ............................................. 7

Chapter 3: The Negative View of Women in the Hispanic Perspective ................... 10

Chapter 4: Sex and Sexuality from a Hispanic Woman’s Perspective ...................... 17

Chapter 5: Etymology Within the Spanish Language ............................................. 21

Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 24

Works Cited ................................................................................................................. 26
Introduction

Within the Hispanic community, sexuality is a subject that is often kept in the home. Men and women are never really allowed to express their sexuality, unless they are within their gender group. In other words, men can express their sexual desires to their *compadres*, but talking to a woman about their sexual desires is strictly forbidden. Women, on the other hand, have a much more difficult time expressing their sexuality and desires. Within the Hispanic culture, men and women are treated, completely different. Men are supposed to show their virility and sexual prowess. On the contrary, women are supposed to be passive and "sexually contained." The gender roles within the Hispanic culture are well defined. Anyone, man or woman, who tries to go against the gender roles is automatically seen as a deviant. A man cannot demonstrate his emotions the way a woman can, nor can a woman speak about her "sexual prowess".

Sexuality is a human trait that cannot be taken away from an individual. Sex and sexuality are two completely different concepts. Sexuality is used to indicate what gender an individual is attracted to, while sex is an action or is used to describe an individual as male or female. One's sex does not determine his/her sexuality, nor does it determine gender. Oftentimes, sexuality and sex is considered a private and personal act or identity, yet in reality it has to do with politics, culture, and historical contexts. Depending on the social construction of a society, sexualities and sexual experiences can be oppressed or expressed without fear depending on what that specific society considers "normal". The question is, what is "normal" when it comes to sexuality?
What is "normal" is a political decision, as cultures decide which behaviors include and which to exclude from the menu of regulated sexual activities. It is political because what is declared to be "normal" is really what is "normative" — that is whatever is prescribed by any culture at any particular time (Michael S. Kimmel and Rebecca F. Plante).

In politics, sexuality can become a political identity as it has become in the United States. In the United States, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual Movement (LGBT) has become a political identity that recognizes homosexuals and their rights in society. While sexuality in the United States is not oppressed as it once was, Hispanics have a difficult time accepting different sexualities and sexual practices within their cultures. One of the reasons why that is, is because sexuality challenges gender roles, ideologies, religion, and family structures. As previously mentioned, Hispanics tend to be very conservative when it comes to gender roles and family structures. What happens when Gabriel wants to be with Juan or when Maria refuses to marry Antonio in order to be with Juana? Both of the men and women in this scenario challenge the social norms of the Hispanic society therefore, they are seen as a threat. In my thesis, I will prove. In order to understand the issues that queer women face, one must understand what it means to be a woman and queer as well as the roles that she plays in her society and household.
Homosexuality in Latin America

In order to understand the Hispanic community and their views on homosexuality, it is important to understand sexuality and homosexuality in their country of origin. For example, if homosexuality is not accepted in their country, then when they come to the United States, they will not be accepting of the diverse LGBT community. If they come from a country that is more open and accepting of homosexuals, then they might be more open to the diverse LGBT community in the United States. When immigrants cross the border to come into the United States they bring their family values and traditions. These traditions differ from country to country and family to family. Hispanic immigrants have to deal with adapting to a new country, a new language, a new culture, and new ideologies. As a result, many immigrant parents belief that homosexuality is a “white” persons issue.

Homosexuality in Mexico

Most of the writers that I have studied have been Mexican or Chicanas. A Chicana is a woman who was either born in Mexico or her parents are from Mexico. In Mexico homosexuality was legalized on June 2015. Prior to June 2015, same-sex marriage was legal in Mexico City, Coahuila, and Quintana Roo. Mexico has always been see as a machista country. In other words it has always been seen as a country where machismo plays a large role within the culture. When same-sex marriage was legalized it was a blow against machismo. Jaime Lopez Vela described the changes, “This is a blow against machismo, against the dominance of the church, and against conservatism — that’s why this ruling is transcendental.” Yet there is a difference when laws are placed and when laws are followed. As it was previously mentioned,
Mexico is a controlled filled with *machismo*. In 2008, a Mexican school principle was put in prison for being involved marching in a PRIDE parade and wearing a red dress. When he protested he was put in jail where he was repeatedly tortured and raped. Eventually Agustin Estrada Negrete, came to the United States to seek political asylum (fusion.net).

Prior to the year 2015 Mexico was not very accepting of homosexuals or any other LGBT identity. Many violence acts have been committed against homosexuals. In the years 2010 till 2013 approximately 250 LGBT members were killed. Yet the number is not exact because some of the homicides committed were not considered hate crimes. In Mexico, same sex couples do not have benefits such as social security benefits as same-sex couples were not being recognized. Even though same-sex marriage is now legal in Mexico, homosexuals do not have all of the rights that heterosexuals have.

*Homosexuality in Honduras*

While searching for homosexual literature, it was impossible to find literature from Honduras. Honduras is the most violent and homophobic country in Central America. Homosexuality is rarely talked about within family members and homosexuals are forced to silence their sexuality. Finding literature that pertains to homosexuality is impossible. Honduras, in 2016, has been ranked as the most violent country against women. On December 14, 2015 the body of Miss Honduras was found alongside the body of her sister. The crime was supposedly a hate crime. This is one example of violence against women. The death of Miss Honduras made the headlines due to her popularity, but other women are killed as well. Most of the
violence is directed by a jealous husband against his wife. Most of the violence within the country is caused due to the rivaling gangs and drugs. Many immigrants come to the United States fleeing from that violence and poverty. Violence against the LGBT community is also present. In Honduras many women and transgendered women are targeted by men because of their job. Transgendered women are often beaten and killed because they are not “complete” women. Violence against the transgendered community can be seen on youtube.com. Between 2008 and 2009, studies were done in which transsexuals and transgendered individuals were interviewed and talked about the violence against them. The article, “Not Worth a Penny”, demonstrates how even the police is violent towards the transsexuals that they arrest. The president of the Congress of Honduras, Mauricio Oliva is opposed to homosexual marriage. Mauricio Oliva stated, “como persona moral, cristiano temeroso de Dios, no apoyará cualquier iniciativa de ley que llegue a la Cámara Legislativa encaminada a permitir la unión matrimonial entre personas del mismo sexo” (honduprensa.wordpress.com). When researching homosexuality in Honduras, the newspapers talk about homosexuality all around the world except Honduras. Newspapers such as La Prensa, El Heraldo, La Tribuna, and El Tiempo do not discuss homosexuality within the country. As a Honduran woman, I doubt that the violence and silence of the LGBT community will ever seize. Both Honduran women and men are very machista and do not tolerate homosexuals, transsexuals, or queer individuals in general. In 2005, a law was passed to ban same-sex marriage and adoption by same-sex couples. Violence against homosexuals is illegal, but violence against homosexuals is ignored.
Homosexuality in Puerto Rico and The Dominican Republic

Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic are more accepting of homosexuals and gender roles. In Puerto Rico there are areas where homosexual men and women gather to interact with each other. Although homosexuality is accepted, the LGBT community still has a long way to go in order to gain all of their rights. There are organizations such as Puerto Rico Para Todos (Puerto Rico For All) that have become more respected and have gained more followers [The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America, 137-138].

In the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo has a high homosexual population, yet outside of the capital, the presence of homosexuals decreases. In the Dominican Republic one's sexuality is accepted based on the individual's social class.

Conclusion

Homosexuality varies from country to country, yet machismo plays a role in the acceptance of the LGBT community. Countries such as Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala are not as accepting of homosexuals as Cuba, The Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. Only four Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America allow same-sex marriage. Uruguay, Mexico, Argentina, and Cuba allow same-sex marriage or legal unions.
**Being Hispanic and a Homosexual Woman**

Women in Hispanic culture play a major role within the household, yet outside of the household the male partner is the one who is in control. In Hispanic and Latin American culture, men compete with each other in order to demonstrate their power and sexual prowess; this is a concept known as *machismo*. Women are expected to follow gender norms and to be subservient to their fathers, brothers, and later on, their husband. A Hispanic woman cannot express her sexuality the same way that a man can because if she does, she is seen as inappropriate. Gloria Anzaldúa states,

> I remember one of the sins I’d recite to the priest in the confession box few times I went to confession: talking back to my mother, *hablar pa’trás*. *Hocicona, repelona, chismosa*, having a big mouth, questioning, carrying tales are all signs of being *mal criada*. In my country they are all words that are derogatory if applied to women—I’ve never heard them applied to men (Borderlands/La Frontera).

A woman cannot speak her mind, as freely as a man in the household. This is more evident when it comes to sexuality and sexual encounters. If a woman talks about her sexual encounters she is seen as a *cochina* (filthy woman). In an encounter with her grandmother, Gloria Anzaldúa asks her grandmother is she has ever had an orgasm. Anzaldúa states,

> She didn’t like to talk about such things. Mujeres no hablan de cosas cochinas. Her daughters, my *tías*, never liked to talk about it--- their father’s other women, their half-brothers(132).
Women do not even like to discuss sexuality amongst themselves especially in a conservative household. If a straight Hispanic woman cannot express her sexuality, then a queer woman faces even more challenges. Not only is she a minority because she is Hispanic, she is also a minority because of her gender and sexuality. A queer woman cannot express herself to other straight women because they will not understand her and will, oftentimes, judge her. Women in general are invisible when it comes to sexuality and expression, but also in literature. Queer Hispanic women in literature are even more invisible, yet they are now starting to write. One example of this is Gloria Anzaldúa. In her writings, Anzaldúa, expresses her struggles as a woman and a lesbian.

Elena M. Martinez states,

"Restrictions imposed on women’s sexuality are central to the subjection of women’s lives and experiences in general, but in the case of lesbians there is a double exclusion, since they break with the discourse of the official (heterosexual) sexuality"([xii, Lesbia Voices from Latin America]).

As Elena M. Martinez states homosexuality breaks the norms that are present in heterosexual relationships. In a heterosexual relationship there is always a man and a woman; the gender roles are observed. Queer women are sometimes called “marimachas” which is a derogatory term used to describe a woman who is seen as manly. Fathers sometimes refuse to accept their homosexual daughters because they feel as if they have no control over their daughters’ body and sexual desires. Within the Hispanic household, the father always has to be in control over the women in the house. If a father cannot control his daughters, then he is shunned
upon for not being *el macho* of the family. All of these issues and more can be seen in the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, Carla Trujillo, and Cherrie Moraga.
The Negative View of Women in the Hispanic Perspective

In various cultures, women play a very important role within the household and within a relationship. Women, in general, are seen as passive and submissive, yet over the years they have become more independent and outspoken. In the United States, Hispanic women that grew up within the American culture do not identify with the ideologies that their mothers and grandmothers grew up with. Most Hispanic women have broken the barriers placed on them because of their gender, yet tensions still arise within the family because of those broken barriers. One of those tensions arise when a young women begins to express her sexuality. Hispanic women, regardless of age or sexuality, are often placed on a pedestal because of their gender. Fathers and sons in a family often feel as if they need to control the women in the house. This is not only evident in Hispanic culture, but also in literature written by Hispanic authors. Often times, within the Hispanic culture, women are blamed for men's faults. Yet this is not a recent theme within Hispanic culture. Throughout history women are often blamed for the downfall of men. In literature, the first work of literature that portrays women negatively is the Bible. In the book of Genesis, Eve is blamed for, not only the Adam's disobedience, but also for the downfall of humanity. When God confronted Adam, he blamed Eve for tricking him. The Bible is one of the most read work of literature in the world, especially in Latin America where the majority of the people are either Catholic or Christian.

The negative view of women is a reoccurring theme within Hispanic literature and culture. Authors such as Pat Mora, Gloria Anzaldua, Cherrie Moraga,
and Emma Perez demonstrate through their works the unfair and negative
treatment of women within the Hispanic culture. Hispanic women are raised with
many principles and values. Several of those values is a woman’s purity,
subservience, and honor. A woman is supposed to portray an image similar to that
of the Virgin Mary. As a mother she is to be nurturing and selfless, and as a wife she
is to be loyal and pure. If she disregards her values and principles she is labeled as a
woman of the street, not a woman of the house. A woman of the street is labeled
with multiple derogatory names within the Hispanic culture such as puta, (whore)
chingada, pisona, and floja (loose). Pat Mora, a Mexican poet, describes the way in
which a woman’s image is divided within Hispanic culture.

Women. Snakes.
Snakes and tongues. Snake-haired
women. Loose-haired women. Loose- tongued
women. Opened-mouthed women. Open
Virgin mothers.
Women of closed
uterus. Women
of closed mouths. Women
of covered
hair. Women of
cloaked bodies. Women
who crush
viboras. Women
who crush their
own tongues.
Silent women.
Altered women. (Malinche’s Tips: Pique from Mexico’s Mother, 1856)

In her poem, Pat Mora refers to a bad woman as a snake, while the good
woman is the one that crushes viborae and keeps her mouth shut. The first five
verses demonstrates what a bad woman in Hispanic culture is. She uses the mythical
Greek monster medusa to describe a bad woman. Yet the snake is also a religious symbol for Eve, the woman who tempted the first man and brought disaster into the world. A bad woman is a woman is “loose-haired” and seductive; she is an “open woman”, a whore. At the end, of the end of the fifth verse Pat Mora calls the women, “Mothersssss.” The usage of onomatopoeia makes the reader aware of the hissing sound of snakes, yet her observation questions the image of a woman. In other words, whether a woman is pure or not, once she becomes a mother she automatically becomes devoid of her purity because she births more snakes. A good woman is a woman who hides her hair and her body; therefore, she is not seductive. A good woman is like the Virgin Mary. A silent woman is one who does not question, but instead, does as she is told. The theme that Pat Mora presents in her poem is known as Marianismo. Marianismo is the opposite of machismo as it applies only to women, not men. It is the standards by which women are judged.

As Pat Mora mentioned a loose-haired woman and open woman is a bad women because she is seductive. A woman’s beauty and intelligence is enough to call her seductive. Women, sometimes, become the scape-goat for a man’s or societies downfall. This is evident in the Bible with Eve, Lot’s Daughters, Delilah, and Salome. The three women in the Bible are seen as seducers who used their beauty and trust to bring forth the downfall of men. Eve, is the original sinner who brought lust and pain into the world. After the couple ate the fruit from the forbidden tree, they were ashamed of each other’s bodies and had to hide. Lot’s daughters, seduced their father in order to have to populate the world, yet the children they birthed formed rival tribes. Each of them formed a tribe that would fight each other for
centuries. Delilah was the lover of Samson, she is blamed for bringing his downfall by revealing the secret to his supernatural strength, his hair. Salome is accused of seducing Herod and for being responsible for John the Baptist’s death. The women, in the Bible, were pawns used by other men to reveal men’s weakness. Eve revealed Adam’s lack of judgment. Eve did not have the desire to ruin the perfect society, she was persuaded by a snake to eat the forbidden fruit. Lot’s daughters demonstrate their father’s lust for a woman and the consequences of incest. Even today, if an incest relationship is discovered, the woman or girl is often blamed by the perpetrator. Delilah brought Samson’s downfall by revealing his secret to his enemies, yet it is important to realize that Delilah was a prostitute and Samson was her client. Delilah did not go after Samson, he approached her. The bad women that are portrayed in literature represent the lust of men; therefore, they become their weakness.

In Hispanic culture and literature *La Malinche*, and *La llorona* are two women who are seen as bad women within Hispanic culture and folklore. *La Malinche* is accused of bringing the natives downfall at the hands of the Europeans. *La Malinche’s* original name was Malinalli Tenepal, she served as an interpreter for Cortés and was given to him, along with other girls, to provide sexual and domestic services. *La Malinche* is often called the one who got screwed over, *la chingada*. She is blamed for helping Cortés destroy and conquer the native tribes. Malinalli Tenepal was given as a present to Cortés, she was forced, yet she is still seen as a traitor to her people. In Mexico, a betrayal is known as a *malinchismo*. *La llorona*, is similar to the Madea in greek literature. The folklore of *La llorona* demonstrates the
cruelty of a woman who drowns her own children because he left her for a younger woman. La Llorona is an example of a bad women and bad mother. Instead of being nurturing she is a killer. If her husband had never left her, would she have drowned her own children? How would she have supported her two children without her husband? If the Malinalli Tenepal was never given to Cortés as an object, would she be known as a traitor today?

The negative image of women in Hispanic cultures is derived from machismo. It is easier to blame a woman for a man’s decisions and weakness than it is to blame himself. If a man admits that he is at fault, he is admitting that he has flaws; as a result, he has weaknesses. Gloria Anzaldúa demonstrates how a woman’s image is dependent of the behavior of men. The feminists notes,

The struggle of the mestiza is above all a feminist one. As long as los hombres think they have to chingar mujeres and each other to be men, as long as men are taught that they are superior and therefore culturally favored over la mujer, as long as to be a vieja is a thing of derision, there can be no real healing of our psyches...
The first step is to unlearn the puta/virgen dichotomy and to see Coatlapopeuh- Coatlicue in the Mother, Guadalupe (Borderlands/La Frontera, 106).

Gloria Anzaldúa points out the core values of machismo Borderlands/La Frontera. A mestiza is a women of mixed cultures and of ideologies, she is a Hispanic woman. As Anzaldúa mentions a vieja is a derogatory term, oftentimes, used to describe a woman. A vieja literally means an elderly woman, but it is also used to refer to one’s mother, or a woman who has been “used” and is no longer pure. A vieja is a woman who is older, weak, chismosa (loose-tongued), and full of malice.
As lesbians, the negative image that is portrayed of women, affects them even more. A lesbian is still obliged to follow the social norms of her Hispanic culture, yet she naturally deviates from those social norms. A lesbian woman has no desire for a man, yet she still loves her father, brothers, and male friends. Unfortunately, many lesbians are portrayed as cold hearted women who hate men. Sometimes, they just fall in love with a woman who is straight and envies the men who she goes out with. Lesbians have to, first come into term with their sexuality, and then discover what it means to be a lesbian. Women are not supposed to acknowledge their sexuality, yet lesbians have no choice.

“As lesbians, however, we have no choice but to confront our sexuality before we can confront our lesbianism. Thus the commonly held viewpoint among heterosexuals that we are “defined by our sexuality” is, in a way, partially true. If we did not bring sexuality into consciousness, we would not be able to confront ourselves and come out” (Chicana Lesbians, 187).

In her short story Gulf Dreams, Emma Perez describes the issues that she had to face as a lesbian in love with her friend. Eventually, she became involved with a man because he provided her with protection against the white people who did not like her ethnicity and skin tone, yet she knew she wanted to be with a woman.

I know now that his white skin stood like armor between me and an unjust town. We became lovers who kissed on Friday nights at drive-in theaters where I avoided sex. His demands doubled. Familiarity gave him license to give me orders. My resistance gave to petty arguments. The kisses no longer stimulated. My eyes wandered, but at night I waited for her (Chicana Lesbians, 106).

Emma Perez tried to maintain the image of a heterosexual woman, yet she knew that she was a lesbian. Even though she pretended to be a heterosexual woman she was still not a proper woman. Regardless of how pure a woman is or how subservient she is, if she is a lesbian she automatically becomes a bad woman, a marimacha (the dyke), la loca (the crazy one), la seductora (the seducer), who makes the good women fall from their altar.
Sex and Sexuality: From A Hispanic Women's Perspective

Sex is different for both men and women. For a Hispanic man, his machismo becomes stronger the more relationships he has. On the other hand, the more men a woman sleeps with, the dirtier she becomes. Sex as Anzaldúa’s mother told her makes her coshina (dirty). A woman’s body is treated differently than that of a man’s. A man is not objectified. A father does not feel the need to protect his son’s body from other men or women. A woman’s body is oftentimes seen as a vessel for pleasure and it is believed that it is the father’s duty to protect his daughters from men. A woman’s sexuality is is control of the male’s in the family and in the relationship. A woman does not even need to approach a man, her curves, seem to be a silent invitation.

She is only made for sex, the way she’s dressed
On billboards, magazines, in neon lights.
Her open mouth, those luscious lips suggest/
Curvaceous entrance, a soft place to rest,
A sumptuous menu offering tasty bites.
She’s only made for sex (Chicana Lesbians, 137).

The poet refers to the female body as both a place to “rest” and as a place to eat. In the first two verses the poet makes it clear that a woman’s body is only seen for the pleasure that it can bring to a man. As a result, sex for a woman is not the same than it is for a man. When a man has sex for the first time it is pleasurable. The same cannot be applied to a woman because when a women has sex for the first time, she is “ravished”. Something is stolen from her, her virginity. The lose of a woman’s virginity is painful, but it also symbolizes that she has become a woman. The act of becoming a woman also means that she is dirty. Sex for a woman is
pleasurable, but it comes at a high price, one's reputation. A soiled reputation means that they can never be cleansed. The reputation that is gained after a sexual act is committed can cause a woman to hate her own body. Such is the example in this poem by Natashia López.

i am so tired of my flesh
i feel so dirty sometimes
i want to shed myself
i try each day i struggle
with a new birth/
she thinks i am dirty
used tainted flesh/
even with women
men interfere with my life
men
their penises hover over me
their semen a black scarf
(Chicana Lesbians, 182).

Even though the narrator in the poem is having sex with a woman, she still feels as if her body is “tainted.” Being a lesbian does not mean that the individual is no longer a woman, she is still plagued by the standards placed on her by society. The poet realizes that even though she is sleeping with a woman, she cannot purge her body from her previous male partners. Instead, the poet feels guilt by stating that she has always been the “wrong way with men”, and now she is the wrong way because she loves women.

From a young age women are advised by their mothers or other female members in the family to be afraid of sex. The women within the household try to protect the women from the wrong men who will only take advantage of the “innocence” of a young woman.
No vayas al escusado en lo oscuro. Don’t go to the outhouse at night. Prieta, my mother would say. No se te va a meter algo por allá. A snake will crawl into your nalgas, make you pregnant. They seek warmth in the cold. Dicen que las culebras like to suck chiches, can draw milk out of you (Borderlands/La Frontera, 47).

Gloria Anzaldúa refers to a men’s sexual organ as a snake. Men are the ones that can get a woman pregnant. Anzaldúa defines a woman’s body as a place where snakes like to find warmth. Usually, women are the ones accused of being the snakes; the ones that are the seducers, yet in this case men are the snakes. Anzaldúa demonstrates that it is not just the women who is the seducer, yet she is the one is who blamed. Most men claim to want a pure woman, yet once a woman gets involved with a man, she is no longer a pure woman. Therefore, men are always looking for the good girl. In the poem Hombres Necios, Sor Juana de la cruz demonstrates the cruelty and irony that a woman’s sexuality is subjected to by men.

Sor Juano states,

Opinión ninguna gana,  
pues la que más se recata,  
si no os admite, es ingrata,  
y si os admite, es liviana.

Siempre tan necios andáis  
que con desigual nivel  
a una culpás por cruel  
y a otra por fácil culpás.

Sor Juana, a nun, demonstrates in her poetry the difficulties that women have always faced. If they effuse to give into the temptation of men, then they are cruel. If they do give in, then they would give it up to anyone. Sor Juana’s poem, Hombre Necios, depicts the trap that is almost impossible to break out of. No matter what a
woman does, she can never be a good woman. The only way for a woman to be pure and good is if she ignores her sexuality.
Etymology Within the Spanish Language

The Spanish language is one of the most expressive languages in the world, as it is also the most diverse. The Spanish language can differ depending on the region in which it is spoken. The Spanish Language is spoken in Europe, Central, North, and some parts of South America. When it comes to sexuality, the Spanish language has various used to describe, not just sexuality, but sex.

Within the Hispanic culture, sex and sexuality is a topic discussed among close friends of the same gender or family. Within the household, sexuality is an open topic in which family members guide their younger siblings. Older women encourage the younger women to “behave” themselves and not to become involved with a man due to the shame that it will bring to the family. The men encourage the younger men to find the right woman, yet also to experiment with as many women as possible. Throughout a man’s lifetime, the more women he had, the higher is his virility and pride. On the contrary, the more men a woman has been with throughout her lifetime, then she is a vieja sucia (a dirty woman). Sexuality within the Hispanic culture is used to insult mostly women, but also men.

In comparison to other languages such as English, the Hispanic language has approximately seventy-five profanities that are used interchangeable. Of course, depending on the country, other words can be added to the list of profanities and insults used by Hispanics and Spaniards. Words such as puta, vieja, perra, and chingada demonstrate how the Spanish language uses sexuality and sex to control women. Likewise, men are also controlled by the social norms of sex and sexuality. Most of the time when profanity is used against a man, it is an indirect insult
towards his mother or a woman in his family. An example are insults such as *chinga a tu madre* (I fucked your mother) and *hijo de puta* (son of a bitch), do not insult the man, but instead insult his mother. It is in this way that the Spanish language is very misogynist.

In order for a man to be insulted directly in Spanish his sexuality has to be threatened by the insult. For example calling man a *hijo de puta* insults his mother not him, but if he was to be called a *puto*, (male prostitute) *maricón* (homosexual), or *culero* (homosexual in Honduras, or asshole in Mexico), then he is being insulted because he is being called a homosexual. Calling a man a homosexual is an insult because he is being stripped of his *machismo*. The language demonstrates the homophobia within the Hispanic community not just towards lesbians, but also homosexual men.

Homosexual men and women are insulted as well. Yet when it comes to homosexuality, homosexual men are insulted more than homosexual women. This is due to machismo and the invisibility of lesbians. It is not that lesbians are tolerated within the Hispanic culture it is the fact that they are, for the most part, ignored. Homosexual women are called *marimacho, tortillera, areperas,* and *marimachas.* These epithets are used to describe a lesbian and are insulting. In Spanish the word for lesbian is *lesbiana.* The term *marimacha* and *marimacho* refers to a young woman who is boyish. It is equivalent to the term tomboy in English. Yet it is often used to insult lesbians because some people believe that lesbians want to be men. Hence the term *marimacha* is taken from the word *macho,* but an “a” is added to make it feminine. The suffix “mari” comes from the concept of *marianismo.*
A lesbian is sometimes called a *tortillera* because during sexual intercourse there is no male genitalia and a woman's genitalia is flat, just like a tortilla. The term *tortillera* is a sexualized term because it refers to the sexual practices that two women perform in the bedroom.

Most people do not realize that they insult others just by talking. The slang against homosexuals is present, but we are not aware of it, unless we analyze the language. In our everyday language we insult homosexuals whether we mean to or not. As Pat Mora mentioned, insults towards women and homosexuals are present in our language, our music, and our expressions.
Conclusion

Machismo plays a major role within the Hispanic community, both in the United States and Latin America. Within the Hispanic community in the United States, machismo has decreased but it is still present within the household. The men still play a large role in within the household, but many women in the United States have the chance to defy those gender roles. Here in the United States, homosexuals are protected by laws that support the LGBT community. Machismo is an ideology that is taught in the home.

Machismo is not always a negative aspect of the Hispanic community. Machismo also serves to teach men that they should be respectful of their wives and provide for their household. It teaches men to protect their household and respect. According to Gloria Anzaldúa, machismo is the result of men being overwhelmed when they immigrate into the United States. In the United States, the head of the household has to keep the family intact and protected while also trying to survive in a new country and master a new language. The stress and “the loss of a sense of dignity and respect in the macho breeds a false sense of machismo which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them” (105). Most of the violence present in Latin American countries is caused due to machismo and greed. Violence is also present within the household, but it usually goes unreported because of fear.

Violence is also present within queer women, yet it becomes invisible because most people assume that it is only two women having a “cat fight”. Hispanic-queer women are not only oppressed by men, but they are also discriminated against by their own people due to their sexuality. Machismo leads to
lesbian invisibility. Violence among lesbians is not treated the same way as violence against heterosexual couples. In order for the LGBT community to flourish within Latin America the concept of machismo must disappear.
Works Cited


