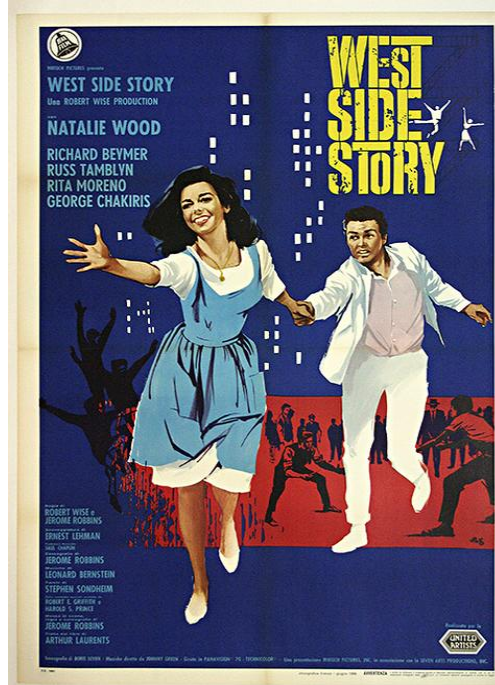




# WEST SIDE STORY

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Bree



# THESIS:

Race had a major impact towards Puerto Rican immigrants in the 1950's, along with gender, and sexuality mainly upon Puerto Rican women.



# Further into our thesis:

## Race and Sexuality

In this PowerPoint, we will show how Puerto Ricans, more specifically the women, are affected by their race.

- <https://youtu.be/1vxLue0Qgz4>
- <https://youtu.be/YhSKk-cvblc>



# SONG ANALYSIS: *America*, by Daisy Pinos

- ❖ The well known song, “America” juggles the positive and negative aspects of migrating to America.
- ❖ “America” demonstrates the collision of cultures within the Puerto Rican ethnic group.
- ❖ Anita is the more optimistic character in the song- only focuses on positive aspects of America.
- ❖ Bernardo is the more pessimistic character in the song- only acknowledges negative aspects of America as well as some positive aspects of Puerto Rico.
- ❖ This song reinforces gender stereotypes.



# SONG ANALYSIS: America (continued), by Daisy Pinos

- ❖ The Puerto Rican women were marginalized by the Puerto Rican men in this song as the men quickly refuted their hopes and dreams about America and were classified through typical women stereotypes.
- ❖ The men not only discouraged the women from believing in the American dream for being women, but also for being immigrants.
- ❖ Being a woman in the 1950s meant being a stay-at-home wife/mom, finding a husband to support them financially and emotionally, etc. Their ideas of dreaming big and breaking free from societal norms were quickly shut down by the men.
- ❖ Being an immigrant in the 1950s meant having to suffer prejudice from society (very much as it is today), settling for any job that would put food on the table, and very little opportunities for growth in society. These are the issues the men sang about in “America”.

# Song Analysis: Explaining the lyrics

- ❖ **ALL GIRLS (CHORUS):** “I like to be in America, Okay by me in America, Everything free in America”
  - The Puerto Rican Women are expressing the affection they have for America. They prefer it over Puerto Rico and are convinced that they have better opportunities given to them without a cost in America.
- ❖ **BERNARDO:** “For a small fee in America”
  - Bernardo has a more doubtful attitude of America compared to the girls. He believes that nothing in America is in fact free, that there are fees when it comes to living and pursuing one’s dreams in America, especially as a Puerto Rican.
- ❖ **BERNARDO:** “ One look at us and they charge twice”
  - Bernardo believes that the racism towards Puerto Ricans in America prevents them from having an equal opportunity to chase their dreams. As Anita mentioned having a credit card in the previous line, Bernardo doesn’t think a Puerto Rican would be able to buy on credit without being discriminated because of their ethnicity.
- ❖ **ALL BOYS:** “Twelve in a room in America”
  - During the 1950s, immigrants, such as the Puerto Ricans in West Side Story, lived in tenements and slums. They were crammed into little apartments, with many people due to what at the time were high prices for immigrants. They didn’t live in what is now an “ideal” living space.

# Explaining the Lyrics (continued)

- ❖ **BERNARDO:** “Better get rid of your accent”
  - During this time, a “regular” American was a white american. So although Puerto Ricans were in fact americans, the werent treated with the same respect as white americans. This created conflict between the races, which can be evidently scene through the conflicts among the Jets and the Sharks in West Side Story.
- ❖ **ANITA:** “Free to be anything you choose”
  - During the 1950s, America was considered by many to be a place of freedom and a place where you can be what you want. In this case, the girls were happy to have left Puerto Rico because then they wouldn’t have been able to chase their dreams as they can now in America.
- ❖ **ALL BOYS:** “Free to wait tables and shine shoes”
  - The boys are suggesting that they will only be able to hold humble, lower class jobs with a low pay because of their ethnicity.
- ❖ **ANITA:** “Everyone there will have moved here”
  - Anita is basically saying that if Bernardo does go back to Puerto Rico, everyone he knew there will already have moved to America because of the better lifestyle that is provided.

# Scene Analysis

Anita's simulated assault supports the theme of sexuality on Puerto Rican women in the 1950s. When Anita goes to Doc's store to let Tony know that Maira is going to be late, she encounters the Jets and they quickly judge her and believe she is not trying to help out because of her race and they just sexually assault her.





# Scene Analysis (continued)

Being sexually harassed really messed with Anita's mental state since the love of her life was killed the same day as she was about to get raped by the gang that killed him in the first place even though she was just trying to help. Being treated this way made her really angry which resulted in Anita lying to the Jets and giving them false information. She told the Jets that Chino found out about Maria and Tony and killed Maria instead of giving Maria's message to Tony. When Doc broke the news to Tony, it broke his heart and went out in search of Cheeno knowing that Chino will kill him. In short, Anita's lie caused Tony's murder.



# Scene Analysis (continued)

When Tony thought Maria was dead, he ran out to find Chino. Anybody's was the only one who attempted to stop this tragedy, but the first thing Tony said to Anybody's was to “get out of here.” He despises her, when Anybody tries to help him he said: “that's not a game, you are a girl be a girl and beat it.”, so it seems as if he does not trust Anybody's, and he doesn't think women in general can understand what men are trying to do. Like the Jets towards Anita and Tony towards Anybody's, if they would've taken things seriously, then the tragedy might've not have be happened.



# “Jobs that Women can’t get” NYT Bernard Roshco

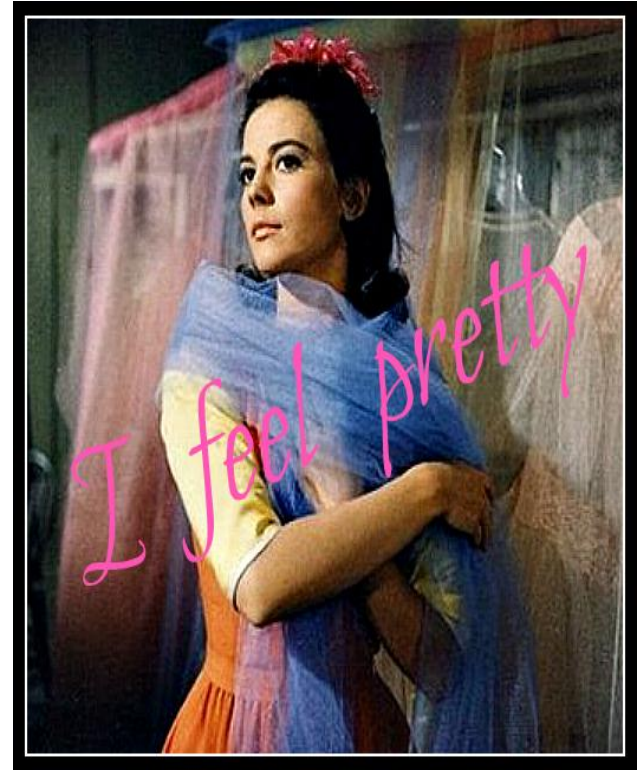
- ❖ In 1957, Jobs were given by tradition, ability and cost.
- ❖ Women were misjudged in terms of their intelligence and abilities.
- ❖ They weren’t offered same jobs as men because they weren’t considered as smart.
- ❖ Women were mostly getting lower salaries than men.
- ❖ While men were being offered jobs in media, radio stations, accounting, and other high wage jobs, women were only able to do jobs such as cook, tailor, and assistants.



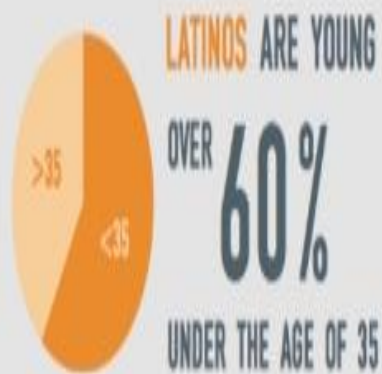
# Scene Analysis (Gender)



- ❖ Women are tailors.
- ❖ Gossip.
- ❖ Soft and dreamy.
- ❖ Openness to feeling.
- ❖ Dependance in love.
- ❖ Place full of clothes.
- ❖ Less responsible.
- ❖ More playful.
- ❖ Ability, Tradition, Cost



# Feeling Pretty By: Francis Negròn- Muntaner



IN THE AGE GROUP 18-34  
(COVETED MARKETING DEMOGRAPHIC)



LATINO MEDIAN AGE = 28  
(US NATIONAL MEDIAN = 37)

LATINO BUYING POWER  
CURRENTLY OVER **\$1 TRILLION**  
AND BY 2015 **\$1.6 TRILLION**  
(FASTEST GROWING IN THE NATION AT 48%)

IF US **LATINOS** CONSTITUTED A NATION  
IT WOULD BE THE  
**14<sup>TH</sup>** LARGEST ECONOMY  
IN THE WORLD

**94%** LATINOS  
LISTEN TO RADIO  
 EVERY  
WEEK

LATINOS BUY  
 **25%**  
 OF ALL  
MOVIE TICKETS

# Feeling Pretty - WHITEWASHING

- ❖ Negròn- Muntaner discusses the issue of **whitewashing** in West Side Story.
- ❖ The majority of people who worked on the film were **not** of Puerto Rican descent.
- ❖ The **main character**, Maria, is played by a white woman, who uses a thick, unrealistic accent throughout the film.
- ❖ Makeup was put on the actors taking on the role as the Puerto Ricans to give them a brown face looked to make them look of Puerto Rican descent.



# Feeling Pretty- GENDER & SEXUALITY

- ❖ The idea of “impossible love” is portrayed as inherently negative (similar to male-male couples)
- ❖ Women are kept inside, out of sight and away from the “action;” the one time Anita goes out alone, she is assaulted.
- ❖ Women are ignored; the main conflict is between both gangs and the police.
- ❖ Anybodys (the tomboy from the Jets side) doesn’t fit into a female stereotype and isn’t allowed into the male space.
- ❖ Baby John is a gay stereotyped character (characterized by his admiration for superheroes)



# Works Cited

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