The fact that the typical Mexican people living in United States are represented through robots suggests the idea that Mexicans are not seen as humans, but as machines. Is this technique suitable for addressing stereotypes of Mexicans as seen by Americans? Are these issues still relevant today?

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“Los Vendidos” Discussion Assignment

The play “Los Vendidos” by Luis Valdez presents the problem of stereotyping and dehumanizing of minorities in the US through a lens of comedy and satire. The play takes you through the many different stereotypical portrayals that is assigned to Mexicans, and utilizes the Secretary character, sent from the government, to go through the different Mexican “models” available to buy, to achieve this. This process comes off as ridiculous and ironic to the readers, as they witness the inhumane way these robots are portrayed by both Honest Sancho, the Mexican salesman whose job it is to market and sell these robots based off the advantageous factors of their respective stereotype, and the Secretary who shows pickiness and intense criticism throughout the whole process. Many stereotypes are presented, including the Farmworker, the Johnny Pachuco, the Revolutionary, and the Mexican American. The irony lies in how both these characters are Mexican. The secretary’s name being Miss Jimenez, although, as an assimilated Mexican into American society, she pronounces her name with an English accent in order to be more palatable to US tastes. The Secretary goes to Honest Sancho’s store with the hopes of acquiring a Mexican to boost an image of inclusivity in the President’s administration. This need for inclusivity is entirely shallow and insincere, as she is literally purchasing the Mexican as an object modeled to her specifications and in her price range.

Each stereotype shown throughout the course of the presentation Sancho gives the secretary is a commentary on how the entire Mexican demographic can be ascribed to a handful of different groups. The Secretary eventually shows disdain toward every model presented toward besides the Americanized version, who is displayed as patriotic and himself racist towards his own ethnicity. Similar to Miss Jimenez herself, who, like the model, looks down on Mexicans as an entire population. Even this very Americanized version of a Mexican is not considered very worthy, as the Secretary expresses surprise at its cost, deeming all Mexicans to only be worth a certain amount of money, even the ones that she believes are worthy of buying.

The main stereotypes of Mexicans presented throughout the play are farmworkers, who are worth very little and “built close to the ground”, used and discarded when needed. There is also the gang member who is portrayed as violent and undignified, programmed to be arrested and useful as a “scapegoat”. The revolutionary is portrayed as the most stereotypical version of a Mexican from Mexico, only eating raw horsemeat and tequila. The final, and most acceptable, model was the Mexican American, whose name is Eric and who thinks his own group of people is “stupid and uneducated”.

Stereotypes of Mexican people presented in this way effectively displays the logical fallacies and hypocrisies of racism and dehumanization of Mexicans in America. The ending offers a strong message, that these types of stereotypes not only harm and bring down an entire demographic but also the people who enforce the stereotypes and allow themselves to cast their judgment based off them. It effectively shows how this type of thinking benefits no one, not even the oppressor, as it allows them to make faulty judgement and be taken advantage of. Even though this is not a modern play, it nevertheless succeeds in addressing an issue that continues to this day, and to many different demographics living as minorities in the US. The stereotypes and prejudices that can be continually experienced by the minorities of America are deeply rooted and difficult to overcome and change.