

# George lopez and the unconventional comedy: a cultural sitcom critique

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George Lopez is the ideal case study for an unconventional and groundbreaking sitcom. The show features a Latino extended family all living together which, in itself, is innovative. The characters are unique in that Benny (played by Belita Moreno) is a quite different type of mother and grandmother. She is in constant conflict with George (George Lopez himself) due to her drinking, anger issues, and completely untraditional ways of behaving. George believed most of his life that his father was deceased, therefore, he was raised without a father by his single mother, Benny.

These elements make the characters unconventional in these ways, as well. Though despite the unconventional setting, the Lopez's demonstrate many conventional family values by the fact that there is a nuclear base to their family; George's wife Angie (played by Constance Marie) and his very typical teenagers, Max and Carmen (played by Luis Armand Garcia and Masiela Lucha) show typical American family issues. There is much juxtaposition in this sitcom as this unconventional Latino family demonstrates the strength overall of American families in dealing both with adversity and in the ever-changing world.

The most unconventional aspect of the show is, arguably, the relationship between Benny and George. In the episode entitled, "Who's Your Daddy", George discovers that Benny has been lying to him about his father and that his father is not deceased. He voices anger with her, but the plot thickens to show that she did this for reasons that she believed to be best. She did not want George to feel abandoned. George's wife Angie shows support and is the conventional and traditional wife in this situation.

George then begins looking for his father and all of the emotions within the family run high, but are always displayed as manageable or even joked about. George sets the example to his children that he is there for them, regardless of their sometimes outrageous teenage actions, so the strength of their family becomes even stronger. It should be noted, also, that George's son Max has Dyslexia and this angle of a child with a learning disability in a sitcom is irregular, as well. Racism is touched upon in the episode "George Can't Let Sleeping Mexicans Lie", when a neighbor puts up a statue offensive to Latinos.

Though the interactions within the family emerge as more interesting and unconventional than the theme. While the, always responsible, Angie decides to start a petition, George wants to destroy the statue, but does not. Instead, Benny does destroy the statue, setting a bad example for her grandson. Throughout the sitcom in its various episodes, the grandmother is constantly looked upon as a negative influence. In this instance, she was chastised, because she would have broken her conditions of probation.

Her troubles with the law are a recurring theme and roles are reversed, as George and his children act more responsibly than Benny. In conclusion, George Lopez is a ground-breaking unconventional sitcom that helps to illustrate to viewers the changing landscape of American families. The idea that strength can be found within chaos and irregularity makes the show morally grounded to the grand theme within the many times immoral and illegal elements presented. These episodes are wonderful juxtapositions for

life. While there may be contrast and conflict between characters, there is still shared love and strength.