The representation and portrayal of college students has been heavily dictated by American media including films, literature, and music. Over time, the construction of the identity of a college student has been reiterated and reinforced through different stereotypes. To partying all day and through the night, sleeping at any hour of the day, eating the unhealthiest foods, and being a part of Greek life, the idea of being a “normal college student” comes with many various characteristics, some true and some completely false. Genres including romantic comedy film *Pitch Perfect,* musical album by Kanye West called *The College Dropout,* comedy drama TV show *Shameless,* and personal blog entry “Top 5 Stereotypes of College Students” create a conception of the identity of college students which paints them as careless party animals, while rarely touching on how a majority of these students are actually studious, responsible young adults.

The development of the modern vision of a college student has evolved with the aid of movies. Settings that are established in college campuses saturated with college students have plagued the cinematic life in the 21st century. For example, the romantic-comedy film *Pitch Perfect* directed by Jason Moore chronicles the life of a rebellious freshman, Becca Mitchell, who struggles to find her true identity as a new college student and discovers herself to fit in with an acapella girl group. Relying particularly on pathos, *Pitch Perfect* evokes various emotions, such as joy, sadness, and anxiousness when telling the ups and downs of Becca’s first year college experience. For example, after Becca performs an unexpected and daring remix to one of the Bella’s, the acapella group, songs, the leader of the group, Aubrey, berates Becca which in turn, causes Becca to quit. With no support or interjections from her so-called new “friends,” Becca is left as she was when she first got to college, alone and unaccepted. Through this, *Pitch Perfect* reinforces the characteristic of a college student that feels that they don’t belong or one that feels lonely when they are just beginning. The film also reinforces the stereotype of the hype of big organizations that colleges offers, such as in *Pitch Perfect*’s case, an acapella group. With the intended audience of college students or students that aren’t feeling like they belong at their school, *Pitch Perfect* portrays a freshman’s experience at a traditional campus with the utilization of the college life stereotypes.

Another genre that has shaped our understanding of being a college student is music, such as Kanye West’s rap song “School Spirit” featured in the album *The College Dropout*. As a college dropout himself, Kanye West features his commentary on the educational system and his perspective of his time in college. Specifically, West’s song “School Spirit” explores the stereotype that college is just a great place to do drugs and hook up with people. The opening of the song mentions a bulk of the Greek alphabet, including Alpha, Omega, Kappa, Sigma, etc. By utilizing this rhetoric in his song, West emphasizes the hype and importance of sororities and fraternities in universities and how many people fit in because of these Greek organizations. West’s sets the tone of alienation, since he disregards the need for these types of organizations and the perfect performance they put up, hence the repetitive diction of “step.” West also includes the typical white girl names “Tammy, Becky, and Laura, or a Shirley” which emphasizes the large community of girls that are all universally the same sorority girls. He includes these names followed by his desire to hook up with them, therefore reinforcing the stereotype of random hookups that college students experience during their years at school. West’s intended audience are those who are thinking about dropping out too, since he speaks about how he dropped out to pursue his solo musical career. Kanye West’s huge success and celebrity status fame provides ethos, or credibility to his words in which his decision to drop out allowed him to focus on his musical career, thus leading to the achievement of a record deal.

The comedy drama TV show, *Shameless,* features an episode in Season 4 titled “Simple Pleasures” that shows the genius, though financially challenged, Lip Gallagher’s entrance into his first year at top school Chicago Polytechnic University. This episode of *Shameless* shows various stereotypes that label college students such as doing drugs and the difficult attempt of making ends meet. For example, Lip is seen entering his dorm room and immediately starts to smoke with no objection from his roommates. This scene reinforces the normality of drug use in college, with Lip smoking and getting high even in his dorm room. This episode further explores Lip’s college experience, with him trying to make money working at the school’s cafeteria. This also emphasizes the “poor college student” stereotype that is attributed to college students, with most students needing jobs to pay for everyday necessities such as food and clothing and just their own spending money. This comedic drama reinforces this generally true stereotype in which college students are usually frugal with their money. This episode relies on pathos, evoking emotion from viewers to feel bad for Lip since he seems caught up with his lousy job as a cafeteria boy that he seems to be doing increasingly bad in his classes, moreover adding to the episode’s pessimistic tone. For example, Lip receives a D on a paper that he thought he did well on, with his T.A. failing to understanding Lip’s wit. From this, Lip crumples and throws out his paper, seemingly ready to give up. Furthermore, *Shameless’* episode“Simple Pleasures”targets the audience of young adults and college students who are also on the brink of giving up. Through Lip’s defeat at his dreadful job accompanied by his failing grades, college students are able to relate to him.

In a personal blog entry posted on *TheOdysseyOnline* titled “Top 5 Stereotypes of College Students,” the stigmas that college students face is once again reinforced by writer Rachel Allyn. With the use of screen grabs from famous movies such as the insane party scene from the movie *Project X* and a traditional sisterhood photoshoot from a sorority chapter, the writer clearly relies on ethos. With her inclusion of a big box office movie and photos straight from a college sorority itself, the writer uses that credibility to reinforce her top college stereotypes. By using short and concise statements and blatantly labeling the top 5 stereotypes, the writer fits in quipped, yet witty jokes which provides a comical tone to the blog post. Furthermore, with the choice of such short statements, the writer most likely targets the post to college students due to the fact that busy students can read her short post about themselves, especially with the eye-catching, bold title that includes the rhetoric “college” and “students” fast and easy. The writer’s choice to post her blog entry on a predominantly college-writer -friendly site where the audience is made up of university students from all over the country further emphasizes her intended audience. In Allyn’s first topic, she points out that everyone thinks that college students party all night. She then resists this stereotype, stating “…I don’t know anyone who parties every night. This is just irrational.” From this, readers can sense Allyn’s disbelief at this social construct. She then uses another example of how college students apparently gorge on unhealthy foods such as burgers, fries, chips, and ramen almost every day. She, again, rejects this stereotype stating that most of her friends care for their diet and have lifestyles such as vegetarianism and veganism. Moreover, this blog post destructs the social construction of the identity of the average college student topic by topic.

Conclusively, a plethora of various genres portray college students in the media and have constructed a stereotypical identity amongst them. Representing irresponsible partying, drug use, tendencies of being stingy, and organizations around college campuses, the media has interrogated and glued stigmas and stereotypes to college students. While some may be true, this constructed identity has exaggerated the true meaning of what being a student at college really entails. By most of these genres utilizing the use of pathos to target reader’s and viewer’s emotions, stereotypes are therefore more explored and related amongst people due to the connection they feel towards these media representations. With most of these genres reinforcing the stereotypes made against college students, one did resist them, which furthermore revealed and deconstructed the identity that society has established of college students. With busy and chaotic schedules and responsibilities that include studying for multiple exams at a time, attempting to live off small budgets, and trying to have a consistent sleep schedule, the manufactured identity of college students is far from the actual realities of them. Additionally, these genres that are heavily examined shape the way people of today’s society scrutinize and judge the actions of college students, thus, outlining the importance of exploring these many stereotypes made and how easily we agree with them due to popular genres in the media.

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