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Latina/o Representation on Teen-Oriented Television:

Marketing to a New Kind of Family

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by

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The ABC Family cable network has become a leader in television for the millennial audience through a strategy of increased diversity on screen and an emphasis on complexity in family life. These goals have both been aided by representing Latina/o characters in the network's flagship series: *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, *Pretty Little Liars*, *Switched at Birth*, and *The Fosters*. In this thesis I engage in industrial, textual, and discourse analysis of these series, finding that Latina/o representation is increasing in both quantity and quality as network executives and producers attempt to appeal to the ethnically diverse millennial generation. These attempts, however, are not perfect. This project pinpoints a span of time in which ABC Family shifts towards more Latina/o inclusion both on-screen and behind the camera. At the same time, ABC Family programming dominates ratings in its key millennial

demographic, indicating a correlation (of undetermined causation) between increased

Latina/o representation and ratings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, there has been a surge of teen-oriented television dramas focused on reaching young millennial audiences. In particular, these new series appear to be more inclusive of Latina/o characters and themes at times by moving away from one-dimensional stereotypes. In 2008, the cable network ABC Family found its footing among the 12-34 demographic with the premiere of the controversial but highly topical—following after the success of *Juno*—series *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, about plain-Jane high school freshman Amy Jeurgens (Shailene Woodley), who becomes pregnant after her first sexual encounter during band camp. Minutes into the pilot, we are introduced to the rest of the ensemble cast, including Ricky (Daren Kagasoff), who impregnated Amy, as he walks the halls with his arm around the curvaceous Adrian (Francia Raisa), the opinionated and outspoken Latina majorette who has a reputation for sleeping around and is quite proud of it. Despite her seeming desire for a real relationship with the equally promiscuous Ricky, Adrian is immediately identified as a sexually promiscuous slut, who engages in sexual activities with multiple partners throughout the series. When she overhears the popular Christian couple Grace and Jack discussing their abstinence vow, she immediately steps in to seduce Jack, literally biting into a large apple in their last scene before we find out they have sex later that night. The message is clear; we are lead to believe that Adrian is a harlot—a common Latina stereotype which will be

discussed later in this chapter--and is literally depicted as a sinful temptation to the white man.

Though Adrian is immediately identified as the Latina slut, or harlot—a long-term negative stereotype in film and TV–there are other things to take into consideration. For one, she is very much in charge of her sexuality. When Jack feels guilty about what they have done and apologizes for taking advantage of her, Adrian snaps back saying, "No one takes advantage of me and no one does anything they don't want to do." While she had sex with Jack, she refuses sex to Ricky, telling him she doesn't have sex on the first or second date. Though her intentions may not be the most noble, she is very much an agent of her sexuality.

Second, despite being identified as the school "slut," Adrian is also the band's majorette and is a top student—though she prefers people not know about her intelligence. Adrian's decision to hide her intelligence acknowledges to the audience that she is putting on a stereotype like a mask. She knowingly chooses to embrace the harlot stereotype so that she can better manipulate others. This also opens the door for the character to be more than just a stereotype.

Adrian appears in every episode of the series, which aired its series finale on June 3, 2013. While the series was not a hit with critics, Raisa received Imagen and ALMA (American Latino Media Arts) awards for her portrayal of Adrian Lee, who on the show is depicted as being half Mexican and half Colombian. The aim of the Imagen Awards is

to recognize and reward positive portrayals of Latinos in all forms of media, as well as to encourage and recognize the achievements of Latinos in the entertainment and communications industries. The NCLR (National Council for La Raza) ALMA Awards has honored outstanding Latino artistic achievements in television, film, and music since 1995. That Raisa received both awards for her portrayal of Adrian Lee speaks to the significance of having a Latina/o lead character on a popular television series, even when that character is not depicted in the most positive light. In real life, Raisa is the daughter of L.A. radio announcer, Renán Almendáriz Coello (also known as *El Cucuy*) and is vocal about her real-life Latina Mexican/Honduran roots[1]. The actress has also addressed concerns about her character's portrayal, often defending the role by claiming that the series producers were not specifically seeking a Latina to play Adrian ("Q&A: Francia Raisa"). While Raisa states she was simply the best person for the role, she ignores the larger issue. It is probable that the producers of the series thought she was the best fit because she was Latina, and, therefore, more recognizable as a harlot character.

That Raisa's Latina character is included in the ensemble cast of a popular series is significant, as is the fact that her character, despite being the stereotyped harlot, is given additional character traits that add nuance. Following *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, ABC Family continues to develop original content targeting

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[1] To gather information on actors' racial and ethnic backgrounds, I first performed google searches looking for interviews in which the actor specifically identified their ethnic heritage. I also searched the Internet Movie DataBase (IMDB) website for biographical information. As a last resort, I turned to Wikipedia for personal information regarding the actors' background.

millennials, and arguably making more diverse television in the process. That ethnic diversity, its new modes of representation, its changing scope, and its market motivations will be explored below.

This thesis examines teenage and young adult Latina/o representation on contemporary U.S. English-language television, specifically in programs targeted to the 12-34 demographic–millennials, or those born roughly between 1980 through 2000. Because of the dearth of Latina/o images on television, the question I seek to answer is whether Latina/o representation is changing in relation to the growth of the Latina/o population as millennials come to power in the workforce and as, according to my hypothesis, networks and production companies try to produce television that appeals to the profitable millennial demographic.

To date, little scholarship has been conducted documenting Latina/o representation on television, and the work that has been done is now dated. Millennials, however, are likely the most studied generation. At the same time, marketers are trying hard to reach this demographic, which now includes a large number of young Latina/os. With this project, I look at current television programming targeting teenage and young adult millennials to identify whether Latina/o representation is improving in both quantity and quality. To narrow the scope of television series, I will look primarily at teen-oriented television series that rank highly among the 12-34 demographic on Nielsen ratings for scripted drama television series. In addition, I will also be looking at series

that produce the most activity on social media, as millennials are known for their engagement with social media.

From this point on, the terms Hispanic[2] and Latina/o[3] will be used interchangeably because both terms are still heavily used among the general population and by marketers. In her book *Latino, Inc*, Arlene Dávila notes that though the term Latino is preferred among the younger generation of marketers, the Hispanic marketing founders and most established [marketing] practitioners more commonly use the term Hispanic when referring to themselves as representatives of this particular demographic (16).

The scarcity of Latina/o representation on U.S. television starkly contrasts the latest census data, which shows how rapidly the Latina/o population is growing in America. According to the Census Bureau's 2010 headcount, the U.S. Hispanic population surged 43% over the last ten years, rising to 50.5 million and constituting 16% of the nation's total population of 308.7 million. The total number of people under age 18 rose by nearly 2 million over the last decade with the number of white children falling

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[2] The term "Hispanic" was officially adopted in 1976 when the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 94-311, called the "Joint resolution relation to the publication of economic and social statistics for Americans of Spanish origin or descent"–or those U.S. residents of Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Central American, South American and other Spanish-speaking country origins. The Office of Management and Budget then outlined the details of data collection for the federal government. In 1997, the OMB added the term "Latino," which more accurately ties the demographic geographically to persons of Latin American descent, rather than Spanish/European descent. Many Latina/os embrace the newer term because it offers an alternative to the government-imposed "Hispanic" label. ("When Labels Don't Fit")

[3] In Spanish, words are gendered by their ending "o" for masculine and "a" for feminine. Because Latino is masculine, here I use Latina/o to include both Latina (feminine) and Latino (masculine).

while the number of Hispanic children rose sharply. In fact, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, Latinos make up about 18% of all youth in the U.S. ages 16-25, with two-thirds being native-born Americans. Therefore, the increasing racial diversity among U.S. children shows a shift that is likely to make whites a minority by the early 2040s ("Latinos Fuel Growth in Decade").

This growing population of young Latina/os is not lost on advertisers who rely heavily on popular television to run their ads. New research from Nielson illustrates that this growth is taking place outside immigrant gateways, such as New York and Miami. The study identifies Charlotte, North Carolina as having the fastest growing Hispanic population in the country. Reny Diaz, Nielson's Director of Client Engagement says, "The Latino boom has expanded beyond traditionally Hispanic markets and continues to fragment ... It's imperative that brands' messages speak to these new Hispanic segments" ("Latino Populations Are Growing Fastest"). For example, it is increasingly clear to marketers that multi-generation Latina/os are different from recent immigrants and Cuban Americans are different from Mexican Americans, who in turn are different from Puerto Ricans, etc. In addition, the Latina/o population is moving away from urban cities and into middle America, creating evermore diverse groups of Latina/os. With marketers' interest in reaching the growing young Latina/o population now expanding beyond select markets, it will be important to explore whether representation of this target audience is changing.

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To break the statistics on the diverse Latina/o population down further, the 2010 census shows that 63% of the Hispanic-origin people in the United States are of Mexican origin, with Puerto Ricans making up 9.2% and Cubans 3.5%. It has been my observation that despite their large population, Mexican Americans are represented less frequently than other Latina/os on television. Therefore, as part of this project, I will also explore whether Latina/o characters are identified by national origin. Though the recently weakened U.S. economy and heightened border enforcement has essentially stopped the migration flow from Mexico, the largest immigration growth over the last decade has come from Mexico. The Center for Immigration Studies (www.cis.org) provides analysis of immigration by country of birth, which shows Mexico remaining the top sending country in the last decade with more than four million immigrants arriving from Mexico between 2000 and 2010. Therefore, if television industry executives looked at the numbers, and if they valued all viewers equally, then we would see an increase in Mexican and/or Mexican American characters represented on television. There is, however, a history of hierarchical interethnic categorization even among Latina/os in which Mexicans and Mexican Americans remain at the bottom. In her article on the educational crisis of U.S. Latina/os, Frances R. Aparicio notes that "discriminatory practices towards newly colonized Mexican Americans were institutionalized along with the annexation of Texas and the entire western seaboard" (95). Mary C. Beltrán argues that "the internal colonization of Mexican Americans continues to deny their presence or

frames it in relation to 'minority status'" (129). In light of this double minority status imposed on Mexican Americans, I will note instances in which a Latina/o character's national origin group is revealed and how. For a character whose national origin is not explicitly revealed, I will examine how the character's ethnicity is coded and what connotations are associated with that particular ethnic/racial group.

The history of Latina/o representation on television has been documented by few scholars; the majority of research has been in the fields of film and Hispanic marketing. A brief overview of this research is helpful because it provides insight into how Latina/o images have been formed and maintained, as well as insight into the complexity surrounding the definition of Latinidad. Various scholars, including Frances R. Aparicio and Arlene Dávila, have differing definitions of Latinidad, which deal primarily with how Latina/os self identify. For the purpose of this project, I will use Mary C. Beltrán's definition of Latinidad found in her book *Latina/o Stars in U.S. Eyes*, which she terms "Hollywood Latinidad." While I will not be focusing on Hollywood films in this project, I will use Beltrán's definition of Latinidad as the industries' construction of a collective, imagined "Latin-ness" through media products and star publicity, or how the media constructs Latina/o identity and culture (3).

LATINA/O STEREOTYPES
In his book *Latino Images in Film*, film scholar Charles Ramírez Berg states that "Latino stereotyping in mass media involves a discursive system in which the

construction of Latin America and its inhabitants and of Latinos in this country is used to justify the United States' imperialistic goals" (39). Ramírez Berg argues that Hollywood perpetuates North American hegemony in film through Latino stereotyping meant to show Latinos as lesser beings in order to rationalize the "expansionist goals laid out by the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny" (39). Ramírez Berg goes on to identify six defining Latino stereotypes: the *bandido*, the harlot, the male buffoon, the female clown, the Latin lover, and the dark lady (68-78). These common stereotypes have evolved over time but have remained intact for over a century and can be found across media.

While these Latina/o stereotypes existed long before the birth of Hispanic marketing in the 1960s, the first generation of Hispanic marketers, which was comprised by a small group of recent immigrants primarily of Cuban origin, is credited with both the industry's gains, as well as the stereotypes passed on to the next generations (Dávila 23). Dávila cites the first generation's lack of experience with U.S. racism as being crucial to their success in furthering "Hispanidad."[4]They, as recent immigrants, and the majority of other Latina/o advertising executives who were imported directly from ad agencies in Latin America, were not U.S.-born Latina/os and did not suffer punishment for exhibiting their Latinidad, or "Latin-ness." As such, while Cubans were aware of racism, they distanced themselves from it and positioned themselves as "the primary example of

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4 Here, Davila may be using "Hispanidad" rather than Latinidad because the Cuban [Hispanic] marketing founders distinguished themselves from most Latina/os.

Hispanidad and the 'Uplifters' of all things Hispanic, while distinguishing themselves from most Hispanics" (Dávila 33-34).

Further, according to Dávila, middle and upper-class Latin American-born corporate intellectuals are primarily found in creative departments at ad agencies where demands for "perfect language skills" exclude most U.S.-born Latina/os that are more in touch with the "average" Latina/o. These privileged and highly educated Latin Americans are therefore primarily responsible for the creation and dissemination of "Hispanic" images in the U.S., but are at odds with the average Hispanic consumer in terms of class, race and background (36). This illustrates ethnic and class biases within Hollywood Latinidad that further complicate representation.

The idea of nationwide campaigns for the Hispanic market came about when in 1976 Univision (then Spanish International Network) became the "first major broadcaster to distribute programming to its affiliates via domestic satellite" (Dávila 62). Dávila credits Spanish networks such as Univision (SIN) with helping promote and fund the first nationwide Hispanic market studies that would show the differences among Hispanics, while still reinforcing the early generalizations about Hispanic values and culture (Dávila 63). This research also helped unify and legitimize the Hispanic market, as evidenced by a variety of research consultation firms as well as general market research companies that had also opened their own Hispanic divisions. Of significance to this project, in 1992 Nielsen inaugurated its Hispanic Television Index, which traces Hispanic TV habits

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(Dávila 64). That nationally recognized firms such as Nielsen provided data on the Hispanic population gave further credibility to this market. This new research, along with knowledge about the growing Hispanic population, has made Hispanics a "coveted target population for prospective marketers" (Dávila 65). However, while this may be the case, it is also apparent that the picture that has been painted of Latina/os is not all-inclusive. Rather, Dávila argues that research has not presented a more complicated picture of Latina/os than that of Guernica's 1982 study on the Hispanic market, in which the Hispanic world view was ultimately shaped by three determining characteristics: prevalent use of the Spanish language, close family ties, and strong adherence to Roman Catholicism" (Dávila 65-66).

The mainstream media has also aided in the "othering" of Latina/o identity. In her book *Latina/o Stars in U.S. Eyes*, Mary C. Beltrán discusses the American news media's declaration of the 1980s as the "Decade of the Hispanic" in which the first Latino-helmed independent films were produced and distributed to national audiences (108). While the "Decade of the Hispanic" was a significant turning point for Latina/o representation, Beltrán questions whether Latina/os actually experienced the opportunity then that the term implied. She notes that an "ambiguous strain ran through the mainstream media's description of these films and their stars," noting that the term "crossover" was used later (mostly in the 1990s) to describe successful Latina/o films and actors, ultimately exoticizing the actors, "regardless of whether they were American or Latin American-

born and whether they spoke English, Spanish, or both" (Beltrán 123). News magazines such as *Newsweek* and *Time* contributed to this "othering" of Latinidad. In a *Time* special issue which featured Edward James Olmos on the cover, the magazine reported on rising Latina/o visibility in popular culture, stating: "More and more, American film, theater, music, design, dance and art are taking on a Hispanic color and Spirit. Look around. You can see the special lighting, the distinctive gravity, the portable wit, the personal spin. The new marquee names have a Spanish ring: Edward James Olmos, Andy Garcia, Maria Conchita Alonso" (Beltrán 124). To deconstruct *Time's* statements, Beltrán points to Kathleen Newman's apt assessment that *Time* magazine believed it permissible to state that (a) Latino culture is not U.S. culture, (b) it is new, and (c) it principally involves entertainment and aesthetics but not the political-economic structures of the nation (Beltrán 123-124).

Over the years, the country's ambivalence towards Latina/os continues. In "The Hispanic Consumer: That's 'A Lot of Dollars, Cars, Diapers, and Food,' " Arlene Dávila discusses the conundrum in contemporary representations of Latinos. She argues that "on the one hand, Latinos are presented as a booming and profitable market, while on the other hand, they continue to be stereotyped as 'illegal' and a burden on the nation's economic welfare. Therefore, regardless of their history or legal status, Latinos are always potential aliens and outsiders and hence 'immigrants'" (73).

Dávila suggests that despite the increased growth and complexity of Hispanic marketing, commercial definitions of Latinos as a market have continued to narrow (73). She notes that it is "Latinos' supposedly cultural and linguistic uniqueness apart from 'mainstream' society, and hence dependence on culturally relevant marketing, that has historically underlined the operations and profitability of Hispanic marketing" (74). Therefore, the image of the Latina/o immigrant, with his or her foreign culture marked by Spanish language usage is more culturally "authentic" and more easily marketed to. Thus it is this image which has been construed for decades as the model Latino consumer, regardless of how Spanish-speaking the Latina/o consumer truly is (74).

In sum, there are various factors that contribute to the representation of Latina/o identity. Since the 1980s the Latina/o presence has been acknowledged to a greater degree by the mainstream, but the way in which Latina/os and Latinidad as a whole have been represented has been problematic. At a time when the fastest growing Latina/o population consists of U.S.-born youth, it will be interesting to see whether visibility is increasing. That is, are we seeing more Latina/os represented in the mainstream media targeting American teens and young adults?

THE STRUGGLE FOR LATINA/O TELEVISION REPRESENTATION

Because there is no extensive research on Latina/o representation on television, it is difficult to piece together this history. To begin, Chon Noriega has done extensive

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work on public television's role in Chicana/o cinema[5]. In his 2000 book *Shot in America,* Noriega gives a detailed history of how the deregulation of television encouraged the growth of early Chicana/o cinema and emphasized it as a film movement that emerged via television and its regulation by the state (24-25). He argues that television has helped shift conversation and dialogue about popular (mainstream) culture from the theater to the home and proposes that "we understand the U.S. public sphere in the 20th century as rooted in a national telecommunications infrastructure (27)." In this respect, television 1) expresses an "imagined community" through a shared national televisual experience broadcast on airwaves owned by the people, and for that reason 2) is regulated by the state. At the same time, 3) it operates as a commercial enterprise that presumes property rights; and when all is said and done 4) television situates its "public sphere" in the home (27). To summarize, Noriega explores how deregulation replaced the "real" community with an "imagined" community that only included a select few "Latino" celebrities to serve as representatives of the Latina/o population. Anyone else who wanted into the community had to produce independently, which generally meant only a small viewing audience. The majority of home viewers, therefore, are only exposed to what is presented on mainstream television. Historically, as Noriega notes, only a select few Latina/os have

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[5] As noted by Rosa Linda Fregoso in the introduction to her book, *Bronze Screen*, Chicano film culture developed with the Chicano Power Movement in the late 1960s and is linked to early expressions of Chicano nationalism. Chicano films interjected onto the social/cultural imagination Chicano countervisions of history, identity, social reality, and resistance politics. Fregoso states that the project of Chicano cinema may "succinctly be summed up as the documentation of social reality through oppositional forms of knowledge about Chicanos" (xv).

been visible on television. With this project, I look at whether this visibility is increasing, specifically among young Latina/o millennials. While more work is needed documenting Latina/o representation on television targeting all ages, I chose to focus on television series targeting millennials because it seems to be a missing topic despite the dramatic increase in young Latina/os that fall into this category.

Despite the continued growth of the Latina/o population since the 1980s, television representation of recurring Latina/o characters has not kept pace. In response to the under-representation and lack of access to Hollywood, Latina/os needed a voice. To advocate for Latina/o representation and employment in television production, the National Hispanic Media Coalition was formed in 1986. Later, in 1999, NHMC joined forces with the National Latino Media Council, which was established as an umbrella organization comprised of prominent national Latino groups. In addition, NLMC partnered with Asian Americans, Native Americans and African Americans to take action as an ethnically diverse group in response to news that of the 26 new shows debuting in the fall of 1999, not one had a single non-white actor cast in a primary or secondary role. This led to a "brownout"—or boycott– of ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX. The result was a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Hispanic Media Coalition and other NLMC members and partners and the four major networks in an effort to "diversify the Networks' workforce and Board of Directors, as well as to open up procurement opportunities to all people of color" (nhmc.org). To monitor these efforts, the NHMC and

NLMC issue yearly reports documenting each network's efforts to increase Latina/o representation and the hiring of Latina/o creative personnel behind the scenes. In addition, the NHMC partners with various organizations to compile studies that assess Latina/o visibility and representation which can be found on their web site.

In the early 1990s, in order to collect the most complete and recent data available, The National Council of La Raza–a broader Latino advocacy group, also a member of the NLMC, commissioned a special analysis of television series from the 1950s through the 1992-93 television season. The study showed that while black representation nearly tripled from 6% - 17% over the 1955-86 period, Hispanic representation dropped from 2% to 1% in the early 1990s. And in addition, the Hispanic representation documented was overwhelmingly based on negative stereotypes. What is unclear is why networks would choose to narrowcast to black audiences and not Latina/o audiences, especially when Latina/os were projected to have a much larger population. Perhaps the lack of Latina/os in creative and executive positions in the industry contributed to this exclusion.

Another possible reason why networks have not been in any hurry to increase the number of Latina/os on television is the common misconception that Latina/os only consume Spanish-language television. Dávila, in *Latinos, Inc*., explains that this view is backed (and propagated) by Spanish networks and is also guided by corporate clients' marketing plans and priorities for reaching the maximum number of potential customers. As a result, corporations almost always approach Hispanic marketing agencies having

already decided to limit their efforts to Spanish-speaking Latinos. Univision, for example, manipulates the numbers included in media kit materials claiming that two thirds of Hispanics are foreign-born, but they do not state that this percentage is only among adults, and not among the youth, which the same report claims is the fastest growing segment of the Hispanic population (Dávila 72). "These statistics not only corroborate Univision's dominance among Hispanic viewers, but also convey that Univision's viewers are the totality of the Hispanic population, hereby defined as the Spanish-speaking, Univision-watching consumer" (72). When in fact, in 2012 the Pew Research Center conducted a study that showed that among all "Hispanics," more watch English-language television than Spanish-language programs–45% versus 28%, while 26% say they watch both. In addition, the degree to which this occurs varies by generation. Viewership of English-language television rises and Spanish-language television falls the longer Latina/os are in the U.S. Only 5% of third-generation "Hispanics" say they watch majority Spanish-language television ("When Labels Don't Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity").

The use of Spanish language to determine Latina/o television viewership is not without its critics. The "Latino Television Study" (Rincon and Associates 2004) was commissioned by the national Hispanic Media Coalition and produced by Rincon and Associates. The study challenged the home-language measure used by Nielsen as "unstable and inadequate," finding that the audience for English-language television

programs was underestimated (Dávila 77). In response, Nielsen commissioned the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute to review and challenge the report (which sided with Nielsen). Despite Nielsen's victory, Dávila points to Nielsen's lack of transparency as well as its status as an unregulated monopoly in her assertion that the measuring of Latino audiences is connected to larger economic and media interests rather than reality.

Producers of English-language media have proposed a system based on the U.S. Census, using nativity, or whether Latina/os are immigrant or U.S.-born rather than Spanish-language usage. While this would technically provide better statistics, Dávila cautions about a possible backfire to such classification in which Latinos are categorized as "rightful" or "illegal" (Dávila 77-79).

Dávila goes on to note, however, that more recently, some marketers are taking steps to move away from emphasis on Spanish language, which is crucial to asserting their dominion over the bilingual and English-language Latino segment of the market. In fact, these marketers are bypassing Hispanic marketing altogether (79). This is especially important to my study, because I want to know if representations of Latinidad– specifically through the inclusion of Latina/o characters on television– are being included as part of mainstream marketing, as marketers target the heavily Latina/o populated millennial audience.

Returning to *Shot in America*, Noriega points out that "from a market-based perspective, minority under-representation is explained as a result of the need for

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"universal appeal" that will satisfy the perceived taste and expectations of the prime time audience" (173). In effect, we are told that minority themes and characters represent too much of a risk factor. However, Noriega also points out that around 75% of new television series are cancelled in their first year, which shows that even those series with this "universal appeal" are likely to fail. Though Noriega is talking about the 18-49 prime time audience, the need for "universal appeal" still holds true for teen-oriented networks as the success of their series still depends on ratings. And despite their targeting of millennials, these teen-oriented networks, specifically ABC Family and the CW, still rely on the 18-49 demographic for ratings, particularly among women. Without oversimplifying the process by which production decisions are made, this does beg the question: which shows are worth the risk? Or how much riskier could a more ethnically diverse series be given that most new series fail anyway? The argument here is not just for creating Latina/o-specific series, but for more ethnically diverse casts that better reflect the diversity of the United States, particularly the younger millennial generation that embraces its diversity.

A GLIMPSE AT LATINA/O TELEVISION REPRESENTATION

In *Latin Looks: Images of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. Media*, Clara E. Rodriguez was editor for an anthology of existing studies in the 1990s on Latina/o media representation. Rodriguez's first chapter, produced by the National Council of La Raza mentioned earlier, found that Latina/os were underrepresented on television (even more

so than African Americans), and that when they were represented, portrayals were often negative. *Watching America*, an analysis of programming by the Center for Media and Public Affairs, summarizes Lichter and Amundson's study, which was commissioned by the NCLR. The study found that between 1955 and 1986 Hispanics hovered around the 2% mark of television characters over the thirty-year period. Even worse, the Center found a trend going in the wrong direction; they found that the proportion of Hispanics on television had actually decreased from about three percent in the 1950s to around one percent in the 1980s (23). In a subsequent study, the Annenberg School found that from 1982 through 1992, Latinos averaged only 1.1% of prime-time characters over the ten years of the study (23).

Further in her book, Rodriguez includes an excerpt from Lichter and Amundson's complete findings in the chapter titled "Distorted Reality: Hispanic Characters in TV Entertainment." Here, Lichter and Amundson break down Hispanic representation on television by decade, stating that despite the increase in non-northern European roles in the mid-1960s, between 1955-1975, Hispanics remained invisible or simply not part of "television's new ethnic 'relevance'" (60). Lichter and Amundson found that during this time, most Latinos were found in episodes of international espionage series that used Central and South American locales, and often depicted negative stereotypes. The few exceptions during this time included western *High Chaparra*l (1967-1971) and short-lived social relevancy series *The Man and the City* (1971-1972).

The 1970s began to broadcast a new message about minorities, most prominently with black sitcoms like *The Jeffersons* and *Good Times*, which were spawned from the top-rated series *All in the Family*. Lichter and Amundson note that, while the trend never extended from the ghetto to the barrio, there was one exception with *Chico and the Man* (to be discussed later in this chapter*)*, which was the first series with a Latina/o lead since Desi Arnaz in *I Love Lucy*. But by the late 1970s, ethnic characters were beginning to lose their novelty and while Hollywood was creating some positive models for black males, few efforts were extended to Latina/os.

Despite being termed "The Decade of the Hispanic," the 1980s did not offer much in terms of ethnic or racial portrayals, as Lichter and Amundson note that racial themes were no longer in vogue, stating that "integration was assumed as a backdrop, as the prime time world became less polarized—the age of pluralism had arrived but the thrill was gone" (65). While positive black role models continued to appear throughout the 1980s, the occasional Latina/o character was often negatively stereotyped as a criminal. Occasional attempts to showcase Hispanic-cast series all proved unsuccessful, including two series (*A.K.A. Pablo* and *Trial and Error*) headlined by Latino stand-up comedian Paul Rodriguez (66-67).

By the early 1990s, about one eighth of prime time television series were exclusively or mainly about "blacks," while only one short-lived series, *Frannie's Turn* (1992), in the previous seasons, was based on a Latino family or characters (69).

Otherwise, Latina/o characters were found in "generic" secondary roles, with no reference to national origin and no past. As Lichter and Amundson note, the cultural diversity within the Latino community was almost completely absent from prime time (70).

More recently, through the Race and Independent Media Project hosted by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, Alison R. Hoffman and Chon Noriega have conducted a series of studies titled "Looking for Latino Regulars on Primetime Television," with the Fall 2004 being the latest season examined. In looking at the lineup on the six commercial broadcast networks at the time, ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, UPN, and WB, Hoffman and Noriega found that of the 23% of recurring minority characters, only 4% were Latino. According to the 2004 Census, the Latina/o population had grown from 9.1 million in 1970 to over 40 million (or 14.2%). Hoffman and Noriega's work shows that at that time the significant growth of the Latina/o population was not reflected on television.

As for documenting the few instances of Latina/o representation on television that did exist beyond secondary roles, most scholarship begins with discussion on Cuban-born star Desi Arnaz and his role as Ricky Ricardo on *I Love Lucy*. And though I do not want to dismiss Arnaz's success completely, there were circumstances that helped him achieve his status. For one, he was Cuban-born in a time when, as Beltrán notes in *Latina/o Stars in U.S. Eyes*, the U.S. and Cuba (pre-Communist regime) were on friendly terms and

Americans welcomed this America-loving Cuban (41). Secondly, and most importantly, Lucille Ball (then film and radio star) fought for him to be given the role. Had these circumstances not been in play, Desi's stardom at that time may not have been possible. However, an issue for later discussion in this thesis is the way in which Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans continue to be the most visible ethnic Latina/os on television as well as other media, despite their small numbers in the U.S. population when compared to Mexican Americans. With regard to Cuban and Cuban-American visibility, Gustavo Perez-Firmat, in *The Havana Habit*, states that Cuba often functions as a proxy for Latin America for various reasons (19). He argues that part of the answer is in the island's proximity and with the traditional "Northeastern-centrism" of American culture, noting that distances are measured from New York City rather than Los Angeles, and Havana is closer to New York than Mexico City is. In addition, the racial and class makeup of Cuba, like the United States, lacks a significant indigenous population and has a prevalence of whites in the middle and upper classes (19-20). What this suggests is that Americans choose to embrace Cuba over other Latin American countries because in their imaginary, Cuba is most like America. Cuban is the acceptable "other."

After Arnaz, television doesn't see another recurring Latina/o protagonist until the NBC sitcom *Chico and the Man*, which ran from September 13, 1974 through July 21, 1978, and as noted by Beltrán in , was an "anomaly at the time for featuring the only Mexican American lead character to be found among the 'socially relevant' television

programming of the decade" (86). Further, it remained the only network series lasting longer than one season with a Latina/o protagonist for the next two decades (Beltrán 86).

Chico and the Man was in part a response to Chicana/o lobbying against the Big Three networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) for increased Mexican American and Latina/o representation. As Beltrán documents, the 1960s saw a number of social and industrial shifts, including rising social awareness on the part of Americans of various ethnic backgrounds that would later impact the racial politics of film and television casting. By the end of the decade, there was a spike in civil rights, anti-war, women's and gay rights activism. During this period, a majority of the film and television audience was under thirty and began to directly influence casting and the related star system. Simultaneously, many Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, in response to continuing social problems, began an aggressive fight for equal rights and respect for Latina/os (Beltrán 89-90). Noriega documents also that around this time marks the beginning of wide-scale Chicana/o demonstrations to protest the negative Latina/o imagery in film, television, advertising, and radio.

During the 1970s, diversity began growing on television but was predominantly African American. At this time, Latina/o characters only appeared in walk-on roles on shows such as *All in the Family* and *Sanford and Son.* It was this absence that prompted *Chico and the Man* creator James Komack to step in with his initial pilot script in 1973 (Beltrán 89). The sitcom starred Jack Albertson as Ed Brown (the Man) and newcomer

half-Puerto Rican comedian Freddie Prinze as Chico Rodriguez. The series follows *The Odd Couple* trope featuring Ed, the "crotchety" owner of an auto shop in East L.A., and Francisco "Chico" Rodriguez, the young, free-spirited Mexican American in need of a job. Ed, a bigot who refuses to adjust to his neighborhood's shifting demographic, initially refuses to hire Chico. It isn't until Chico sneaks in to clean the garage, proving himself to Ed that their relationship takes off.

Despite being written without feedback from Mexican Americans writers, series creator James Komack always "maintained that his interest was to showcase a Chicano character who could be seen as a positive role model," despite the original pilot script's hugely problematic depiction of Chico as a car thief with no family ties (Beltrán 92). Komack, a Jewish American, claimed to have based the character of Chico on Mexican Americans he knew, including Cheech Marin and lesser-known actor Ray Andrade. Ironically, Andrade had been the president of the media advocacy group Justicia and was signed on as a consultant of the series, most likely as a defensive maneuver against those attacking the way in which Chico was depicted (Beltrán 93). Despite these efforts, Latina/os, and particularly Mexican Americans, were not impressed with the series. To add to the problematic depiction of Chico's character, Prinze was half-Latino, but not Mexican American, and his "White" Hungarian half was often referenced in interviews. When asked about the casting process, Komack told reporters that as many as 41 actors were considered for the role that eventually went to Prinze (93). Known for his ethnic

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humor in which he poked fun at various ethnic groups, some of Prinze's stand up material was used to develop Chico's character (Beltrán 98). The show's humor was not well received by Mexican Americans who were actively fighting against these racial stereotypes. But despite these protests, *Chico and the Man* was successful and Freddie Prinze became a star until his tragic suicide in 1977. The show lasted one more season after Prinze's death, but as noted earlier in this section, *Chico and the Man* remained the only series with a Latina/o protagonist.

Aside from research on ABC's *Ugly Betty (*2006-2010) by a number of scholars, little to no work has been done on what comes after *Chico and the Man*. My project aims to jump ahead 40 years and see what progress has been made with regard to Latina/o representation. Scattered within those 40 years, there were notable instances of Latina/o representation that will not be discussed in detail because of time and space constraints and because this project focuses solely on one-hour dramas. For instance, in 1984, the sitcom *a.k.a. Pablo* about a Mexican American comedian and his family ran on ABC for six episodes. And in the early 2000s, prominent Latino/o actors were seen in Showtime's *Resurrection Blvd* for 3 seasons and PBS' *American Family* for 2 seasons. In addition, *The George Lopez* show was a success for five seasons from 2002-2007 and featured Latina/o (predominantly Mexican American) actors.

Much like its predecessors on network television, *The George Lopez Show* was a sitcom headlined by a comedian known for his ethnic humor, and it should also be noted

that Lopez's friendship with Sandra Bullock helped bring his show to life. In the final episode of his TBS talk show *Lopez Tonight* on August 11, 2011, Lopez thanks his long-time friend, saying "I never realized I could love people as much as I do now, and most importantly I want to thank Sandra Bullock, who 11 years ago took a chance on me." In an interview with *People*, Lopez takes it further stating:

> If it wasn't for her involvement in me, or her belief in me, I would have had a very different last 10 years ... She invested in me, and she wouldn't take no for an answer. And with that, and just who she is, she has my undying love, and my undying loyalty ... Every day I thank her for believing in me. (Alexander and Nudd 2011)

In this sense, Lopez's success can be compared to that of Arnaz. Both were made possible through their relationships with much more successful white female entertainers.

Recent evidence suggests, however, that the need for a powerful white supporter is changing. The Latina/o-centric series *Ugly Betty* garnered media attention when it was executive produced by popular Mexican-born actress Salma Hayek and her production company Ventanarosa. More recently, and of more relevance to younger millennials, Jennifer Lopez and her production company Nuyorican Productions are producing the ABC Family drama *The Fosters* (to be discussed in chapter 3), about a bi-racial lesbian couple raising a multi-ethnic family, including Latina/o teen-aged twins. *The Fosters* premiered June 3, 2013. Despite controversy surrounding the lesbian couple raising

children, the series saw a surge in viewership for its second episode, which aired June 10, 2013. The series was cable's number 2 scripted program in the 9PM hour among females 12-34—increasing 20% from its premiere to 798,000 viewers in the demo. It was also up 20% in total viewers (1.70 million v. 1.42 million) ("ABC Family's 'The Fosters' Surges in Second Week").

What I hope to reveal with this project is that it is possible for Latina/o representation to move beyond the sitcom genre and ethnic humor. And, by extension, that this can now happen with the help of powerful industry relationships with established Latina/o celebrities (like Hayek and Lopez) who want to see more Latina/o representation and are willing to use their celebrity status to make this happen.

MILLENNIALS AND TEEN TV

Because the largest percentage of Latina/os in the U.S. are teens and young adults, I will specifically be focusing on television series targeting this demographic. For the purposes of this project, I will identity these youth, born between 1980-2000, using their generational label: millennials. According to the U.S. Census Bureau statistics, there are over 80 million millennials, making them the largest cohort size in history. This is the age group for which Teen TV[6]—with the WB (now CW) net work at the forefront—was primarily created. Ironically, while the CW paved the way for the teen genre, it now lags behind other networks that have since excelled in teen-oriented television, such as ABC

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[6] In 2004, Glyn Davis and Kay Dickinson published *Teen TV: Genre, Consumption, Identity*, in which teen television is discussed as a genre.

Family and MTV. Because so few networks are dedicted to creating series to reach this 12-34 demographic, I will pay special attention to the aforementioned teen TV networks in my search for Latina/o representation on television.

The millennial generation is the most diverse American generation in several ways. According to a 2009 article published by the Pew Research Center, millennials are the most ethnically and racially diverse cohort of youth in the nation's history. Among those ages 13-20: 18.5% are Hispanic, 14.2% are black, 4.3% are Asian, 3.2% are mixed race or other, and 59.8%, a record low, are white. In addition, millennials are proving to be more politically liberal, voting for Barack Obama over John McCain by 66%-32% in the 2008 election, while adults over the age of 30 split their votes 50%-49%. This suggests a dramatic shift in thinking between this generation and the last—a shift that may also be manifest in other areas, such as more diverse representation on television that better reflects the viewing audience.

As noted in the discussion on Latina/o representation on television, the social changes that led to the creation of *Chico and the Man*—flawed as it may have been— were brought about primarily through the activism of politically driven young adults under the age of 30. What I hope to unveil in this project is that such a phenomenon is being replicated by millennials today. Though the millennials may not be protesting

ethnic representation in the same manner as the boomers,[7] their buying power and influence is for sale to advertisers who can get their attention. In turn, these advertisers must run their commercials on the television programs that millennials find most appealing: teen genre television.

Television series identified as teen genre television primarily target the millennial age group. In a chapter from Sharon Marie Ross and Louisa Ellen Stein's anthology *Teen Television: Essays on Programming and Fandom* titled "Teen Television and the WB Television Network," Valerie Wee identifies the characteristics that comprise the teen genre rubric. According to Wee, the characteristics of the "quality" television show found their way into the WB's teen texts, namely: 1) ensemble casts in hour-long dramatic format, 2) narratives that focus on friends while preempting family, 3) liberal humanism, 4) self reflexivity, and 5) cinematic aesthetics and techniques (59). In the introduction of the same anthology, Ross and Stein point out that much of teen television is serial in narrative structure, comprised of consecutive episodes of plot points and turns which build into layered season-long and series-long story arcs (7).

Because this study examines Latina/o representation on teen genre television as defined by Wee, Ross, and Stein, this project will discuss serial one-hour dramatic series specifically targeting millennials.

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[7] Here, boomers refers to the generation known as the baby boomer generation. Various sources, including the U.S. Census, identify boomers are being born between 1946 and 1964.

In addition to formal considerations, Wee gives insight into the business strategies that generate teen genre television by giving the history of the WB network. In their decision to create the niche teen network in 1995, Paramount and Warner Brothers recruited Jamie Kellner, who was responsible for launching the FOX network. Kellner was convinced that the new network needed to deviate from the traditional model, arguing that the future lay in niche marketing and narrowcasting[8]. Unlike the established networks and their commitment to targeting a general 18-49 audience, Kellner decided to target a younger, more narrowly defined demographic of 12-34 year olds of both sexes (Wee 46). This decision coincided with a demographic shift that occurred in the mid 1990s, which paved the way for a "renaissance of the teen market and teen culture" (46). Whereas the teen population began to decline in 1976 after the last of the baby boomers aged out of their teens, beginning in the mid 1990s, a significant number of children began entering their teen years. These are the oldest of the millennial generation. In addition, it must be noted that the "Hispanic" population more than doubled in size from 1980 to 2000, thereby contributing significantly to the surging population.

These teens represented the largest niche market to come along since their boomer parents and yielded significant economic power. Teen genre television exists primarily to exploit this watershed commercial opportunity at the confluence of narrowcasting and population surge. In response, Wee notes that "the advertising, marketing, and media

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[8] Narrowcasting (essentially niche marketing for broadcasters) is a common practice in broadcasting, branding, and marketing which requires that products be designed to match the needs and interests of a highly specific niche market.

industries, eager to access this niche, constructed a youth/teen demographic market encompassing 12-24 year olds" (47).

A major hurdle to the business strategy of teen television is that historically teen television is stigmatized, and youth culture is fickle, so attracting an audience is difficult. Teen television bears a history of ridicule as didactic "after-school specials," superficial "eye candy," and low-brow "guilty pleasure." Ross and Stein point out that much of teen television is serial television, which is "highly suspect due to its soap opera heritage" (7). Soaps have been denigrated in mainstream culture for their seriality and highly engaged yet distracted female viewers and teen television bears similar derision because of this heritage (Ross and Stein 7). Teen television is less respected culturally because of the "negative perception of youth culture as commercialized and conformist" which deems that "those engaged with Teen TV programming may be impaired in their ability to distinguish between reality and fiction, or between consumerism and self-expression" (Ross and Stein 8).

However, teen television today is not wholly marginalized, neither culturally nor commercially. Ross and Stein continue, "Teen TV's association with commercialization and the gendered seriality and emotionality of soap opera always intersects with its engagement of discourses on 'quality television,' positioning 'Teen TV' somewhere between 'mainstream' and 'elite'" (8). Indeed, teen genre television lends itself to cult

status with endearing devotion, with much of it existing on smaller networks and relying on a core audience to "spread the word" about any given program.

Teen television is thus at a nexus of three powerful commercial forces: 1) the immediate advertising value of a highly engaged soap-opera-style audience, 2) the lifetime commercial value of a highly loyal very young audience, and 3) the sales liquidity of an audience who consume products as a form of self-expression. This linking with consumerism is precisely what makes teen genre television significant to my study because Latina/o youth account for a large percentage of teen genre television's target audience.

Additionally, teen television lends itself well to evaluating change in ethnic representation over time, as we can expect any commercially-motivated trends in teen television to point to upcoming tr,ends on mainstream (ages 18-49) television as audiences age. That marketers are targeting this group so heavily shows how influential millennials are. Knowing this, I will explore how that commercial power may or may not impact the ethnic representation on teen genre television.

METHOD

Because of time constraints and the wide range of texts that fit into the rubric of teen oriented television, this project will not be comprehensive. I will be focusing on post-2008 one-hour scripted drama series run on the ABC Family network specifically targeting the millennial audience. A branch of Disney/ABC Television Group, ABC

Family targets millennials by creating original programming that incorporates diversity and family, two core values which the network associates with millennials. To distinguish itself further from other teen-oriented networks like the CW and MTV, ABC Family also draws on technology and social media, both of which are heavily consumed by millennials.

Relevant to this study, as a vast number of young Latina/o-American families are statistically larger than average[9], the emphasis ABC Family places on the family aligns well with the Latina/o segment of the millennial audience. It stands to reason that the large proportion of Latina/o millennial bias the attitudes of the generation as a whole in this direction.

While my original intent for this study was to focus solely on Mexican American characters, I switched gears, instead focusing on more pan-Latina/o representation. The limited number of Mexican American characters on any network made it impossible to constitute a thesis research project. However, in this project, I will note the national origin of characters, some of which do happen to be Mexican American.

My method for this project involved conducting a survey and engaging in industrial analysis, textual analysis and discourse analysis of various series that fit the previously mentioned criteria for teen genre television. Using Nielsen ratings published on tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com, I chose the highest-rated one-hour scripted dramas

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[9] According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, the average Hispanic household size has 3.4 people versus 2.4 for non-Hispanic households. Hispanics are also more likely than non-Hispanics to have children under the age of 18 in the household.

among the 12-34 demographic. In addition to this, each series was required to have at least one recurring Latina/o character at the time of writing. Beginning in 2008, ABC Family's dramas have generally dominated this category. Therefore, I honed in on ABC Family network programming, beginning in 2008 with *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and followed by *Pretty Little Liars*, *Switched at Birth*, and *The Fosters*.

In analyzing these series, I was guided by the following questions: What connotations are associated with Latina/o characters and with Latina/o culture and community? What is the racial and or ethnic representation of the ensemble cast? Is the Latina/o character's ethnicity ever divulged? Are these racial/ethnic differences significant to the character(s) storyline? If not in the ensemble cast, are there any recurring Latina/o characters? How well developed are they? Is there use of Spanish and English language? And if so, how is Spanish language and accent treated?

All four series were watched from pilot episode to the most current episode to date in order to document any Latina/o representation and its context. The character's ethnicity was noted as well as the known ethnicity of the actor. Next, I documented character traits, including social status, whether the character was presented as a hero or villain, whether the character is incidental or critical to the story arc, and whether the character has a notable character arc. Finally, I engaged in in-depth textual analysis of scenes and episodes in which Latina/o characters appear.

In my exploration of these texts, my thesis is broken down into three chapters. This chapter, chapter one, opens with a brief illustration of the Latina/o representation one of the series up for analysis–*The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, along with a literature review and my study method for this project. In my literature review, I cite the most current census data documenting the growth of the Latina/o population as well as cultural anthropologist Arlene Dávila's work on marketing to Latina/os. To review the histories of both Latina/o television representation and the struggle for better representation, I turn to the works of Latina/o media scholars, specifically Charles Ramírez Berg's work on common Latina/o stereotypes in film. Clara E. Rodriguez, in her anthology *Latin Looks*, provides the most thorough studies in Latina/o representation on television up through the 1980s. From there, I look to Chon Noriega and Alison Hoffman's work documenting Latino regulars on prime time television between 2002 and 2004. Finally, I provide an overview of teen-oriented television, offering the qualities that define the term "Teen TV" as well as arguments for why teen-oriented television is increasingly important to marketers. Following my literature review, I introduce my method for evaluating the selected television series: *The Secret Life of the American Teenager, Pretty Little Liars, Switched at Birth,* and *The Fosters.*

Chapter two is dedicated to what I consider to be ABC Family's first step towards increased representations of Latinidad through its flagship series *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *Pretty Little Liars*. I conduct industrial, textual, and discourse

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analysis in my review of these series and explore the ways in which both series exhibit improvements in terms of the number of Latina/o characters on screen, while succumbing to stereotypes, particularly as the series lack Latina/o producers, writers, and directors.

Chapter three focuses on ABC Family's more recent shift toward increased Latina/o representation through the use of some Latina/o writers and directors and even Latina executive producer Jennifer Lopez, along with an increased Latina/o presence on screen through the casting of Latina/o actors. Here, I analyze *Switched at Birth* and *The Fosters*, specifically noting improvements brought about with the inclusion of Latina/o creative voices. In a conclusion, which is found at the end of chapter three, I discuss my findings, specifically addressing the increase in Latina/o characters found most recently on ABC Family and the parallels between increased Latina/ creative input and increased Latina/o representation on screen.

Chapter 2: Disney/ABC Television and ABC Family–
A New Kind of Family

A central hypothesis that I am exploring in this study is that the demographic power of Latina/o millennial consumers is so great that it eventually will drive a significant change in entertainment content, particularly ethnic representation. Marketers are aware that millennials have the most lifetime buying power [10]in the market today and data shows us that Latina/os make up a large percentage of these young adults in the United States.

Phillip Rodriguez's documentary film *Brown is the New Green* (2007) discusses Latina/o marketing and includes the varying opinions from Latina/o marketers on how to best appeal to the "Hispanic" market. Where the stakes are the highest for advertisers is with the young Latina/o consumer who spends in larger amounts than the general consumer. The most current data estimates that Hispanics have a buying power of $1.2 trillion, with Latinas as the driving force ("Latinas are a Driving Force Behind Hispanic Purchasing Power in the U.S."). According to *Brown is the New Green*, studies show that young Latina/os are more likely to embrace their ethnic heritage by identifying with a country of origin or ancestry. They are also less likely than previous generations to look for themselves represented on television. Instead, the documentary suggests that young Latina/os pick and choose aspects from different cultures that best fit their personal

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[10] Lifetime buying power is the amount of consumer purchases a person makes over the course of their lifetime. The younger a brand obtains loyalty, the greater the total revenue.

tastes. Therefore, millennials, Latina/o or not, embrace diversity. Unlike their parents or grandparents, Latina/o millennials watch mainstream, English-language television. For this reason, it makes sense that U.S. networks, realizing that they can now reach this large lucrative demographic, would begin to include more images of Latina/os on their series.

If the hypothesis is correct, we expect to see this new pattern of representation reluctantly emerge in a hesitant rollout, as the hegemonic powers slowly yield to market pressure and gain familiarity with the ethnicity and culture of their audience. Over time, these patterns of representation will become more visible as money primes the pump and opens the way for new Latina/o creative voices.

As this thesis focuses on ABC Family through Disney/ABC Television Group, a brief overview of the network is needed, beginning with ABC's acquisition by Disney. Since its start in 2001, ABC Family has evolved into one of Disney's biggest success stories. Under Michael Eisner's leadership, Disney acquired Capital Cities/ABC, owner of ABC Television network and ESPN sports channel for $19 billion in 1995. Later in 2001, Eisner made the then-unpopular decision to acquire Fox Family Worldwide Inc., including Fox Family Channel for over $5 billion. At the time, Fox Family Channel was best known for its low-budget family-centric series as well as Pat Robertson's *700 Club* ("ABC Family Finds Huge Success").

Originally, Disney intended for ABC Family to be a channel for repurposed ABC fare, but the plan was tossed out when the company realized only a portion of ABC's

series would be given "secondary windows" on the channel. Later, Disney considered changing the channel's name to the "youthful sounding" XYZ, only to realize that this would invalidate distribution deals. By the time Paul Lee arrived in his position as ABC Family president in 2004, he says he found "a channel adrift" ("ABC Family Finds Huge Success"). Under Paul Lee's leadership, ABC Family was revitalized through the creation of original teen-oriented programming (*Kyle XY* and *Greek*), as well as popular off-net fare like *Gilmore Girls.* By 2007, ABC Family ended 2007 with its most-watched month ever.

Of the success, Media Senior VP Kris Magel told *Variety* that ABC Family seems to have found an identity in the marketplace (primarily with millennial women) and was now seeing the fruits of its labor. The article goes on to state that Disney sees millennials as the perfect bridge between the Disney Channel's kid audience and ABC's more mature 18-49 crowd. "It's an age bracket that Disney hadn't really targeted until recently—too old for Disney's more saccharine youth fare (*Hannah Montana*) but too young for the company of more adult programming like *Grey's Anatomy*" (ABC Family Finds Huge Success").

The success of *Gilmore Girls* and *Smallville* re- runs, as well as its early original programming allowed ABC Family to better fund its original programming pipeline. With its first round of new programming, ABC Family created the critically acclaimed series *Lincoln Heights* (2007-2010), which revolved around African American police

officer Eddie Sutton and his family after their move back to his old neighborhood. During this same period, ABC Family announced its plans to premiere *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, which brought the network its largest audience up to that point.

As far as teen-oriented television goes, it appears as though no network has been as successful as Disney/ABC Television Group in terms of ratings among millennials through its ABC Family series. Despite being a cable network, ABC Family has out-performed its similarly-positioned broadcast network competitor, the CW, by large margins. In fact, none of the CW series had high enough ratings to be considered for this project. To better illustrate, the CW's highest-ranked series, *Vampire Diaries*, had 2.6 million viewers for its season premiere, while *Pretty Little Liars* had 3.3 million for its August finale ("Telekinesis! Vamp-wolves! Psychic Mary Queen of Scots! Just Another Fall on the CW").

In addition to high ratings, ABC Family through its parent company Disney/ABC is also producing the most ethnically diverse teen-oriented television. It appears that ABC Family follows in the footsteps of its parent company Disney/ABC in terms of being a diversity frontrunner. In the National Latino Media Council's (NLMC) 2012 Network Diversity Narrative, ABC is noted as being the model network in terms of providing opportunities for Latinos. In 2012, the NLMC gave ABC an overall grade of "B," with the main complaint being that ABC continues to have no Latino Creative Executives on their creative teams. Despite this complaint, ABC leads other networks in the number of

Latina/o actors employed as regulars on its scripted series (scoring the only "A"), and, therefore, has a good track record of turning Latina/o actors into stars (e.g., Sofia Vergara and Eva Longoria). The NLMC report also acknowledges ABC's commitment to improve their weaker categories, including the Director's category. In doing so, the NMLC points out two of the ABC Family series to be discussed later, *Pretty Little Liars* and *Switched at Birth*, that have had episodes directed by Latina director Zetna Fuentes.

The commitment the NLMC report refers to is evidenced through Disney/ABC Television Group's Talent Development and Diversity Division. According to its web site, www.abctalentdevelopment.com, Disney/ABC Television Group "strives to entertain and inform viewers in a way that reflects the vast diversity of our world, with compelling creative content that is authentic, rich and textured." Through Talent Development & Diversity, Disney/ABC Television Group sponsors training and employment programs for writers, directors, actors, and production specifically targeting diverse talent. In addition, Disney/ABC Television Group is a sponsor of the annual National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC) Latino Television Writers Program, an intensive five-week program which gives participants the opportunity to develop at least one television spec script under the guidance of an entertainment industry professional.

Disney/ABC's increased diversity is no accident. In fact, it is an explicit corporate strategy to win the attention of the millennial consumer. In January of 2012, during the Television Critics Association press tour, ABC Family president Michael Riley

responded to GLAAD's praise of the network as the leader in portrayals of gay characters. Although this question was about gay and lesbian representation, Riley's answer spoke to the changing demographics of the country, particularly among millennials:

> For us, it's very much about how we ground everything we do in great story-lines and characters. Millennials are a diverse group of people. We want to make sure our storytelling really reflects that diversity, and that's something we keep doing not only in that space but in other multi-dimensional spaces. ("ABC Family President Michael Riley Says Diversity Key to Millennial Audiences")

The changing demographics of the millennial generation make ethnic diversity a key to the business strategy of storytelling. Not surprisingly, millennials are tuning into these new, more diverse stories in large numbers as characters better reflect the diversity of young adult life in America, turning these series into huge hits with massive followings. With regard to the specific 12-34 demographic, the network's popularity is evidenced by the fact that its biggest hit *Pretty Little Liars* edged out ABC's popular series *Scandal* and *Grey's Anatomy* season finales to draw the largest 12-34 audience since the season finale of AMC's most popular series *The Walking Dead*, which is the only scripted television drama to pull in more 12-34 viewers than *Pretty Little Liars* ("Pretty Little Liars' Returns Strong for ABC Family, Sets TV Series Record for Tweets"). When considering exclusively female viewers 12-34, *Pretty Little Liars* dominates, beating out all other

series on broadcast and cable networks with a 4.1 rating or 1.85 million viewers in the demo.

What we can take away from both the NLMC report and Riley's response is that Disney/ABC and ABC Family are working to increase diversity both on their series and behind the camera. The increase in gay and lesbian representation on ABC Family's teen-oriented series has been well-noted and applauded. But while the NLMC gives us ABC's rating for Latina/o representation on the main network's series, they do not rate the series on ABC Family. Through this project, I hope to lay some groundwork for rating ABC Family on the number of Latina/o characters found in their programming and how those characters are depicted. As discussed in chapter 1, millennials are television's most significant consumer in many respects, and ABC Family's target demographic is the millennial. As the Latina/o population continues to grow, particularly among young millennials, it is increasingly important for networks to take notice and make sure their audience is well represented on their series. If we are to believe ABC's commitment to diversity and Riley's acknowledgment that millennials are a diverse group of people, then ABC Family's series should reflect ethnically diverse millennials.

In this chapter, I survey some of ABC Family's work through examining Latina/o representation in two teen-oriented series: *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *Pretty Little Liars*. What we see with these series is ABC Family recognizing the need to incorporate diversity. In the former, we see how the network portrays a Latina lead

character, while the latter offers a look at Latino characters in secondary roles, as Latina/os are an uncommon minority in the upper class town where the series takes place.

While each series presents new modes of Latina/o representation, each is ultimately problematic in its handling of stereotypes. Though they attempt to give Latina/o characters more complexity, the writers still begin by using common stereotypes to introduce the characters. That said, ABC Family's great success with the millennial market creates a significant opportunity for the network to grow its strategy to include more nuanced portrayals of diversity, and specifically Latina/o diversity.

In terms of successful scripted television series targeting millennials, ABC Family ratings catapulted with the introduction of *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* to their original series lineup. Series creator Brenda Hampton, who is responsible for the longest running family drama in television history, the WB/CW's *7th Heaven*, found a way to resonate with teens and their parents by creating a teen soap opera that addresses very real problems. Hampton, who refers to *Secret Life* as "7th Heaven with sex," initially shopped the series around all of the major networks and the CW only to be rejected. But after reading about ABC Family series *Greek* and how ABC Family was "growing up," Hampton asked her agent for a meeting with the network. Subsequently, *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* brought ABC Family into the limelight.

The 2008 mid-season finale of *Secret Life* beat millennial market competitor the CW's *90210* from both an overall numbers perspective and by double and triple digit

percentages among the key women 18-34 years old, women 12-34 years old and all people aged 12-34 demographics ("ABC Family's Secret Life Smacksdown CW and 90210"). In these demographics, ABC Family, a cable network, outperformed every show aired by ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, and the CW. The press release by ABC Family boasted this triumph, announcing that *Secret Life* wrapped as TV's Number 1 scripted series during its 11-week run in viewers 12-34, and females 12-34, and cable's top-rated scripted series in adults 18-34, and women 18-34. In addition, during at least one week in August 2008, *Secret Life* took the 10th spot on the Full Top 20 Cable results with over 4 million viewers. In January 2009, ABC Family released a press statement announcing that 2008 was its most-watched year in the network's history, propelled by *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and several high-performing movies ("Disney Investor Relations - Annual Report 2008"). These ratings, along with the fact that one of the primary characters is Latina, are what make *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* significant as a jumping off point for analyzing how Latina/o characters are represented in teen-oriented television. Beginning with *Secret Life*, teen-oriented television has continued to dominate the number one spot in scripted television series for the 12-34 millennial demographic.

  The Secret Life of the American Teenager premiered on ABC Family July 1, 2008, and ran through June 3, 2013. The value of the series to the network should not be understated. The huge success of *Secret Life* among key demographics helped ABC

Family set network records, making 2008 ABC Family's most watched year on record, up to that point, in prime and total viewers.[11] These were huge wins in attracting and retaining millennial viewers. As mentioned in the introduction, *Secret Life*, which takes place in an unnamed town in southern California, initially revolves around 15 year-old high schooler Amy Jeurgens, who becomes pregnant after her first sexual encounter at band camp, but eventually delves into the melodramatic lives of a group of peers and to a lesser extent, their parents. The series includes one Latina character (Adrian Lee) in its main ensemble cast and includes her Latina/o parents in her storyline, as well as two more recurring Latina/o characters throughout the series. For five seasons, drama unfolds for this group of Grant High students as each character deals with issues about sex, relationships, abuse, pregnancy, and marriage. *Secret Life* challenges many stereotypes of Latina/o representation and gives significant screen time to its Latina/o characters.

Secret Life's success brought ABC Family a devoted audience that the network needed to keep satisfied. Less than two years after *Secret Life's* premiere, ABC Family premiered its next hit series, *Pretty Little Liars*, which would become the network's flagship show. At the time of this project, *Pretty Little Liars* is in its 4th season and remains a teen-oriented television sensation. In fact, *Pretty Little Liars* is so successful that as of September 4, 2013, the series accounts for ABC Family's top 6 telecasts on

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[11] Prime time is generally defined as the evening hours (7pm-10pm CT), when most viewers are watching television. I am specifically discussing prime when the number of simultaneous television viewers is at its peak, or prime. Total viewers includes all viewers, even those watching outside of the prime time hours.

record with adults 18-34 ("Based on Live +3 Ratings, the Summer Finale of 'Pretty Little Liars' is ABC Family's Number 1 Telecast of all Time in Adults 18-34 and Women 18-49"). In addition to its high ratings, *Pretty Little Liars* also holds the title for having the most social media activity of any television series, generating nearly 11 million tweets in the first half of 2013, beating out both *American Idol* and *The Walking Dead* ("Pretty Little Liars, American Idol, were most tweeted about TV shows for the first half of 2013").

In addition to his stance on diversity, in an interview with *USA Today*, ABC Family President Michael Riley also acknowledges how millennials engage with social media, calling social media the water cooler for millennials. The same article states that *Pretty Little Liar's* mystery plot line encourages social interaction, which the audience demographic embraces. In fact, when the pilot was filmed, the studio had a no-tweeting policy, which was quickly changed to allow the series creator and writers to engage with the fans, often live during broadcasts, creating on-going dialogue ("The True Sign of Liar Success is in Social Media"). *Pretty Little Liars* has no Latina/o characters in the main ensemble cast, but does have two Latino characters who play love interests for two of the girls. The way in which these actors are represented on the series will be discussed below. Their representation speaks well to changing attitudes in spheres where Latina/os remain marginalized minorities. Despite its lack of primary Latina/o characters, *Pretty*

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Little Liars is critical to discuss because of the way it uses social media to engage with its millennial viewers.

Recent studies have found that Latina/os engage in more social media activity than the general public. According to the Pew Research Center, 68% of Latino internet users say they use Facebook, Twitter or other social networking sites, compared to 58% of all U.S. Internet users. In particular, 84% of Latinos ages 18-29 (millennials) are likely to say they use social media sites. ("Closing the Digital Divide: Latinos and Technology Adoption"). This means that a large number of *Pretty Little Liars* fans that engage via social media arguably may be Latina/o.

Based on the popular young adult book series of the same name by Sara Shepard, *Pretty Little Liars* first premiered on June 8, 2010, on ABC Family, and became ABC Family's highest-rated series debut on record across the network's target demographics. The noir-inspired murder mystery centers on a group of four girls in the small, wealthy town of Rosewood, Pennsylvania the year after their best friend Alison DiLaurentis has gone missing. The girls–Aria Montgomery, Spencer Hastings, Emily Fields, and Hanna Marin, who lost touch following Alison's disappearance–reunite one year later when they begin receiving mysterious messages from someone who goes simply by "A." Initially, the girls believe "A" is Alison because the messages contain secrets about them that only Alison knew. However, it becomes clear "A" is not Alison when her body is discovered and the girls continue receiving messages. From this point on, the girls are constantly

being watched, harassed, and framed by "A" for Alison's death, among other things. As the series progresses, "A's" threats become more intense, and the girls must try to find out who "A" is to protect not only their lives, but also the lives of those they love.

THE SECRET LIFE OF THE AMERICAN TEENAGER

In my analysis of ABC Family's most successful series, several points become clear. First, the Latina/o stereotypes named by Charles Ramírez Berg in his book *Latino Images in Film* are still in use on television today, particularly the harlot stereotype. Second, writers are exerting some effort to challenge those stereotypes by adding complexity and nuance to Latina/o characters. This impulse is prerequisite to winning over an audience that studies[12] show to deeply value diversity and is made up of a large number who are or who associate daily with Latina/os. However, our third insight is that this combination can pave a path to a new generation of problematic representation. With no Latina/o writers on staff, the ignorance of white writers to ethnic nuances create stereotypical Latina/o representations. In the end, what we still have, at least in the first series we examine, is an imperialist structure, where white writers and directors wield Latina/os as a tool to depict the "other" for the benefit of white protagonists. In this iteration, the commodification of Latinidad is tempered by the writers' desire to include diversity without understanding it first-hand. And in the absence of Latina/o voices

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[12] Frank N. Magid Associates was commissioned by ABC Family to research millennials. The findings were published in *Advertising Age* on July 9, 2007.

among the writing staff, Latina/o representations remain hollow and oftentimes demeaning.

Throughout the pilot episode, we are introduced to the various characters that compose the larger ensemble cast: Shailene Woodley as young and naive Amy Jeurgens, Ken Baumann as idealistic good boy Ben Boykewich, Daren Kagasoff as bad boy Ricky, Francia Raisa as the school "slut" Adrian Lee, Greg Finley as preacher's kid/jock Jack Pappas, and Megan Park as the Christian cheerleader Grace Bowman. While the story initially begins with Amy, her fellow cast members, particularly Ben, Ricky, and Adrian receive equally significant story arcs that delve into "real" teenaged issues, albeit in an over-the-top didactic manner. The heavy-handedness of the series is reinforced by the PSAs on teen pregnancy starring the series' actors which urge teens and their parents to talk about sex. This adds to the "after school special" feel of the series, but also shows the network's intent to appeal to both teens and their parents, thus broadening their audience. While research has shown the tremendous influence millennials have on their parents' buying/consumption habits, ABC Family goes a step further by directly inviting parents to watch their series as well.

The producers of the series also aim to attract a more diverse audience through its very large cast, which encompasses not only various archetypes, but several races/ethnicities as well. The inclusion of various personality types is highlighted in the initial promotional trailer for the series that welcomes audiences to Grant High School,

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"where everyone is part of the story." Because the characters within the series fall into such recognizable high school archetypes, it seems especially fitting that 1980s Generation X sweetheart Molly Ringwald plays Amy's mother, Anne. In fact, the promotional trailer for the series highlights not the new young actors, but the actors who would play their parents, including Ringwald as well as Josie Bissett (Grace's mother) of the popular 1990s series *Melrose Place*, and John Schneider (Grace's father) of *The Dukes of Hazard*. Incidentally, those Generation X actors also hint at the lack of racial and ethnic diversity among actors of that generation. The network's decision to promote these actors further illustrates their desire to appeal to the parents of millennials, while the casting of Latina actress Francia Raisa in the primary role of Adrian Lee appeals to the more ethnically diverse millennial generation.

In addition to the series leads and their parents, *Secret Life* also has a number of secondary characters and notable incidental characters that add racial/ethnic diversity to the series landscape. Secondary characters include Amy's best friends Madison Cooperstein (Renee Olstead) and Lauren Treacy (Camille Winbush) and Ben's best friends Henry Miller (Allen Evangelista) and Alice Valko (Amy Rider). Of these characters, Madison is white, Lauren is black, Henry is Filipino-American, and Alice is Japanese-American; the latter two are specifically identified by their Asian ethnicities, despite their seemingly white surnames. In addition to Ringwald, Bissett, and Schneider, the series also features Mark Derwin as Amy's father George Jeurgens, Jewish Italian

actor Steve Schirripa as Ben's father Leo Boykewich, Afro-Puerto Rican actor Philip Anthony-Rodriguez as Adrian's father Ruben Enriquez, and Colombian-American actress Paola Turbay as Adrian's mother Cindy Lee. Anthony-Rodriguez and Paola Turbay are significant to this project as they portray Latina/o characters on the series.

The prime character of interest in this discussion is Adrian Lee, portrayed by Mexican/Honduran American actress Francia Raisa. Adrian is introduced in the pilot episode and stars in each of the 119 episodes from 2008-2013 along with Woodley, Baumann, and Kagasoff. Positioned as the "bad girl" from the start, Adrian has her eyes set on sex-crazed Ricky and uses her own sexual prowess to try and win him over. Just a few episodes in, we learn that Adrian's desire for male companionship stems from the loneliness she feels at home. With her flight attendant mother gone for days at a time and an absent father, Adrian wants someone to keep her company. She is more than willing to sleep with Ricky if it gets him to stay the night. Adrian's continued obsession with Ricky–or at least the idea of Ricky–is the bulk of her character's story arc for most of the series.

Adrian is immediately identifiable as Charles Ramírez Berg's harlot stereotype, as described in *Latino Images in Film*. While she is a primary character rather than secondary, she otherwise fits the stereotype perfectly. The harlot is lusty and hot-tempered and needs a man to obtain happiness. As Clara E. Rodriguez documents in her book *Latin Looks: Images of Latinas and Latinos in U.S. Media*, Latinas have historically

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been portrayed as "frilly señoritas or volcanic temptresses, more recently with thick accents and aggressive sexual appetites–they are sexual beings who generally seem unable to resolve any issue or reach their goals without somehow having sex with a man" (2-3). True to Rodriguez's claims, Adrian's sexual appetite is verified from the start. When we are introduced to Adrian, she is teasing Ricky, telling him she doesn't have sex on the first or second date; later in the episode she hits on the school's new counselor Mr. Molina, making it clear that she doesn't follow a strict moral code on sexuality. Physically, Adrian is markedly more developed than her peers; her physical appearance very much fits the sexy Latina stereotype. Raisa, often called the "Latina Kim Kardashian," has an especially curvaceous physique, especially for playing a 16-year-old high school student, which is further accentuated by her wardrobe. Adrian often wears low-cut tops that emphasize her cleavage and bare-midriff tops with low-rider jeans to highlight her tiny waist and large hips and backside. Adrian also plays up her face by wearing large amounts of makeup, particularly lip gloss, which she abundantly reapplies whenever she plans on seducing a boy. The curvy physique and overdone makeup work together to create a caricature effect at times, which works, given the stereotype. It is, however, unflattering to the Latina image.

Adrian gets her Mexican heritage from her father Ruben, who has been absent from her life for 16 years. Adrian is also half-Colombian, from her mother's side. At the start, knowing nothing else of him, Ruben's absence makes him conform firmly with

stereotypes of Latino families in film as described by Ramírez Berg in *Latino Images in Film*. Even though Ruben doesn't qualify as one of Ramírez Berg's character stereotypes–the bandido, the male buffoon, or the Latin Lover-- he isn't exempt from being stereotyped in other ways. In fact, Ruben is stereotyped before we ever meet his character because he is an absent father to Adrian. In *Latino Images in Film*, Ramírez Berg discusses the Chicano Social Problem Film, in which the Latino (specifically Mexican American) father is generally absent with no explanation. It is this absence of paternal sensibility which, according to Ramírez Berg, makes for an abnormal, structurally unstable family unit. This absent father perpetuates the idea that Anglo families are complete and ideal while ethnic families are fragmented and dysfunctional (121).

When we are introduced to Cindy, played by Colombian actress of Lebanese descent, Paola Turbay, she comes across as much more a friend than mother to Adrian. Having been a teenage mother, she is still relatively young. Far from being tied down to family obligations, Cindy is frequently far away on business, free from many of the mundane cares of parenthood. When she is present, we see her entertaining a male companion, George Jeurgens, who at the time is still married with children. These facts also set Cindy up as a conventional Latina harlot.

Adrian's Latina identity is also marked by her occasional use of Spanish, which she speaks very well. But despite her fluency, Adrian does not have any Spanish accent

to mark her as "other' from her peers. She is one of the most well-spoken characters on the series. In addition to the lack of accent, Adrian's surname (Lee) does not signify a Latina/o identity. Instead, Adrian's Latinidad is confirmed when she self-identifies as Latina in dialog, and specifically as being half Colombian and half Mexican, with her mother Cindy identifying as Colombian. The reason behind having Lee as a surname is never explored, but because other non-white recurring characters on the series also have non-ethnic surnames, it is possible that the scripted roles did not call for any specific race/ethnicity, but did not change character names when non-white actors were cast. We also see this happen with Ben's best friend Henry Miller, who is portrayed by Filipino-American actor Allen Evangelista. These are the first of a series of attributes that distance Adrian from the harlot stereotypes.

Based on Adrian's development over the arc of the series, her being established as a harlot may have been purposeful. It appears that the series writers set up Adrian's conventionally harlot type in order to challenge it. Shortly after introducing her, the series writers attempted to include positive character traits to Adrian's character. Apart from her sexuality, which is overt, Adrian does have more to offer. The most notable of these traits is her intelligence. Adrian is very smart and excels at school. She even plans on attending law school. Frequently, Adrian's out-of-school scenes take place with her at home doing homework or reading rather than out partying with boys. Where this positive trait goes awry is in Adrian's decision to hide her intelligence. Adrian explicitly states that she

doesn't want anyone to know that she is smart. As mentioned previously, Adrian knowingly takes on the harlot stereotype, not wanting to be known for anything more than her sexuality, most likely so she can manipulate the boys and men around her. Because it is uncommon to find Latina/o characters depicted as intelligent, it is even more troublesome that the series depicts an intelligent Latina character who uses her intellect in a devious manner.

In terms of her sexuality, whereas her peers are constantly obsessing about whether or not to have sex and with whom, Adrian is the only female character who feels no shame for enjoying sex and embracing her sexuality. Hers is the most mature and balanced attitude towards the act of sex on the series, but when we remember that she is only a 16-year-old girl at the start, her sexual confidence (or the way she chooses to handle her loneliness) is perhaps inappropriate. In addition, Adrian's intimacy issues hint at deeper problems that she masks with her sexuality.

By bringing together Adrian and Ruben and ultimately Ruben and Cindy in marriage, the series disrupts the white heteronormative family unit by pulling the Latina/o family together, while every white family around them is breaking apart. In true soap-opera fashion, Anne and George Jeurgens divorce and Anne eventually comes out as a lesbian; Kathleen Bowman loses her long-time second husband and remarries her first husband George Jeurgens, and widower Leo Boykewich marries an ex-hooker for a short while before divorcing her and marrying his assistant. Amid this fracturing of the

traditional White American family, it is only the Latina/o family that reunites in the series' first season, and after going through the motions of getting married and buying a house together, remain together to the end. Only the Latina/os realize the conventional successful family structure.

Under normal circumstances, the way in which Ruben and Cindy reunite may be considered less than upright, in large part because Ruben and Cindy start an affair before Ruben leaves his wife. However, placed amid the other (white) families where adultery is a common theme, Ruben and Cindy are not singled out for this reason. They are in this world quite normal. That being said, Cindy, having been "the other woman" George was found cheating with, is redeemed from her harlot stereotype when she and Ruben reconnect.

Adrian's family also deviates some from the norm in that her family does not easily fit into Latina/o family stereotypes. Latina/o families are generally represented as being very large, often with extended family living under the same roof. According to Arlene Dávila in *Latinos, Inc.*, common myths of Latinidad include having strong traditional family values, with religion underpinning those values, and having high aspirational values common to recently arrived immigrants in this country (65). In *Secret Life*, the Lee/Enriquez family both confirms and contradicts these myths. It is presented as though Adrian's deviance stems from the lack of structure Ruben's (and Cindy's) absence has created. Cindy also raised Adrian away from church, and particularly the

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strong patriarchal influence of the Catholic church. Therefore, breaking away from the myths by having an untraditional family becomes an excuse for Adrian's misbehavior, implying that there are consequences for the Latina/o family moving away from their strong traditional family values. Even though Adrian's parents eventually create a heteronormative nuclear family, it is too late for Adrian. She moves along through the rest of the series trying to (literally) create the family she always wanted growing up.

The way in which Ruben becomes involved in Adrian's life is important in that it allows for redemption, thereby creating a strong [traditional] father figure. Ruben regrets his absence in Adrian's life and tries to make up for it, and not through superficial material gifts or money. Instead, Ruben is generally a voice of reason for Adrian and at times for her friends. Much like (white) strict father figures do, Ruben enters Adrian's life and attempts to lay down some ground rules, implying that it is his absence that has led Adrian astray. With Cindy away much of the time, Ruben takes on the role of father and mother, something which differs from the more traditionally macho Latino figure. In *Secret Life*, Ruben's character assumes the role of the white strict father figure and at times the traditional mother's rational voice of reason.

Cindy, Adrian's mother, does have some redeeming characteristics as well. Despite her frequent absence in which she leaves her underaged daughter unsupervised, she works hard to provide for her daughter. And while she initially planned to trap Ruben with her pregnancy all those years ago, she ultimately decided against it. She took

responsibility for her actions and did not rely on a man to take care of her. But of course it is this decision to not include Ruben in Adrian's life that may have led Adrian down the wrong path. At the very least, it created an excuse for Adrian to act out. Some might also argue that Cindy's promiscuity throughout Adrian's life, which is hinted at, influenced Adrian's own behavior. Despite this, that Cindy, a single mother, was able to provide well for her daughter and encouraged Adrian's educational and professional goals, even making sure they always lived within the district boundaries so that Adrian could attend the best high school. Adrian's positive qualities–particularly her intelligence and her desire to pursue a college education–are reflective of the way in which she is brought up by her mother.

In addition to diffusing character stereotypes, *Secret Life's* writers also make a point to make a statement about Latinidad through use of non-subtitled Spanish dialog. The most significant Spanish-language scene occurs in the first season between Adrian and her mother Cindy. The two have a heated argument about Adrian's newly discovered biological father in front of Adrian's school counselor (Mr. Molina). The two continue arguing in Spanish until Mr. Molina reminds them that he too speaks Spanish, and, therefore, can understand their argument. This implies that (outside of the home) Spanish is used as a way to keep a conversation private. What non-Spanish speakers were not privy to is the content of the argument: Adrian calling her mother a "cualquiera," which in context translates to slut; Cindy, denying the accusation, telling Adrian that she is the

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"cualquiera" and that she doesn't buy Adrian birth control so that she can sleep with the first guy who comes around. This scene tells us several things. First, Spanish may be Cindy and Adrian's first or preferred language at home, as the two speak rapid and fluent Spanish. It also provides additional context about how the two view each other, particularly that Adrian views her mother as a slut for not marrying her father. It also depicts Cindy as a progressive and resourceful mother, making sure her sexually active teenaged daughter has contraceptives. Cindy does not want anything to get in the way of Adrian's future, including a teen pregnancy. Overall, the use of un-translated Spanish gives us mixed messages 1) being bilingual gives audiences access to additional information about characters, 2) because the Spanish is not translated, it must not be important.

Un-translated Spanish dialogue occurs at various times throughout the series, and each time it is meant to keep a conversation private from non-Spanish speakers, in most cases because they are being talked about. For instance, when Ruben drops in on Adrian to find her and Ricky home alone and half-naked, he purposefully speaks to Adrian in Spanish. When Ricky casually states that he doesn't speak Spanish, Ruben tells him they are trying to have a private conversation. In other instances, Spanish language is also used as a point of identification. When Adrian and Mr. Molina are having an English-language conversation, she ends the conversation by saying "gracias" and Mr. Molina with "de nada." In this particular instance, their use of Spanish is marking a moment of

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understanding between the two. It was as if the use of Spanish granted them an additional bond.

The most interesting dimension of the use of Spanish *in Secret Life* is that although the white characters are overtly left out of conversations, not one makes any negative comment about the use of Spanish. The one instance in which Spanish language is unwelcome actually comes from Ruben and is directed at Adrian. After an incident that leaves Adrian furious at her father, Adrian storms into the school where her father awaits her repeating "te odio," or "I hate you" more and more loudly as she approaches Ruben. When she reaches him, Ruben tells her, "you're at school now. Try speaking English." Though Ruben has used Spanish himself at various times, this scene shows that, to Ruben, there is a specific time and place where it is acceptable to speak Spanish. In this exchange, Ruben affirms that school qualifies as an English-only "place of business," which is still a commonly enforced rule in several U.S. cities. And finally, this scene highlights Adrian's status as a Latina spitfire. As Jillian M. Báez notes in her chapter "Mexican (American) Women Talk Back: Audience Responses to Latinidad in U.S. Advertising," advertisers have recently re-visited the image of the Latina spitfire, who is hypersexual, loud, aggressive, and usually young (260). Isabel Molina-Guzmán, in her book *Dangerous Curves: Latina Bodies in the Media*, describes the modern version of the Latina spitfire (as exemplified by Salma Hayek's "bikini girl" roles) as a sexually attractive, emotionally temperamental Latina who speaks Spanish at the drop of a hat"

(93). Therefore, in *Secret Life*, Adrian, in addition to being a harlot, is very much a modern Latina spitfire.

For all the work to diffuse stereotypes, it seems they can't help but leak through the cracks of Latina/o representation. Later in the series when Adrian becomes pregnant with Ben's child and the two marry, she loses the baby (stillborn) and eventually she loses Ben too. In Adrian's case, she is unable to successfully birth a biracial child and is unable to stay in a marriage with a white male. Thus she returns to the harlot stereotype, receiving all the punishments and marginalization as Ramírez Berg observed. Her "othering" is compounded by a post-partum psychosis that sees her punching through walls and stalking Ricky. In the end, the only lasting relationship Adrian has is with Omar, who is African American. This reinforces to the audience that biracial, but specifically white/non-white coupling, does not work. In Adrian's case, biracial procreation ends in death, which is an especially disturbing message. In any case, she ends highly "othered."

In addition to Adrian's troubling character arc, other problematic representations arise from treating Latina/os as interchangeable. In terms of ethnicity and race, the decision to cast Ruben, a Mexican American character, with Afro Puerto Rican actor Phillip Anthony Rodriguez is also rife with meaning. As discussed in chapter 1, this casting choice takes us back to the existing Latina/o social interethnic hierarchy in which Mexicans sit at the bottom. Ruben is a successful Assistant District Attorney and despite

his absence, which we will return to later in this section, he becomes very much a part of Adrian's life. The casting decision implies various things, the first being that to the casting director and producers of the series, Latina/os are all the same and interchangeable, regardless of their ethnic background and even race in this instance. Secondly, it could imply that casting a Puerto Rican as an attorney is much more believable than casting a Mexican, which plays into the Latina/o hierarchy. The struggle to get Mexican Americans cast in roles is discussed by Mary C. Beltrán, in her book *Latina/o Stars in U.S. Eyes*. Beltrán uses Edward James Olmos' extraordinary career to emphasize the lack of Latina/o, and particularly Mexican American actors being cast in mainstream roles today. Beltrán cites several reasons why Mexican American actors are often overlooked, the first being "the internal colonization of Mexican Americans that continues to deny their presence or frames it in relation to minority status" (128). In addition, Beltrán notes that Mexican American actors are not typically seen as embodying the "preferred" Latin look, which favors a "generic, hard-to-identify Latin appearance and European features over more indigenous, Mexicana features." Finally, Beltrán finds that Mexican American actors, who often do not have access to the acting training and theatrical experience of foreign-born and East Coast Latina/os, cannot equally compete for roles (129). All of these factors may have been at work in creating the blatant mismatching of Ruben's phenotype and accent to his Mexican American

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origin, which the Latina/o segment of the audience immediately detect as false, lazy representations.

Given that the series takes place in southern California where Latina/os are predominantly of Mexican descent, it makes sense that Ruben is Mexican. However, race aside, when Ruben has Spanish dialogue, he has a distinctly Puerto Rican accent. In fact, Ruben's Spanish is markedly different from that of Adrian and Cindy. To any in the audience fluent in Spanish, which demographics indicate are likely more than a few, this ethnic inconsistency is obvious and likely off-putting. A lapse in dialectical diction would be an unacceptable violation of production value in English. This mistake broadcasts a lack of respect that, unintentional as it may be, leaves the Latina/o audience with the impression that Puerto Ricans speak a more proper and acceptable dialect than Mexicans, further propagating the Latina/o social hierarchy.

The mixed accents also play into ethnic prejudices of the Latina/o social hierarchy in an interesting way. Francia Raisa (Adrian) is in real life half Mexican and Paola Turbay is Colombian like Cindy. Adrian and Cindy's true Mexican and Colombian accents, respectively, arguably reinforce the harlot type because Mexicans and Colombians are both lower on the hierarchy of Latino groups in the U.S., which makes them being harlots more in line with expectations. Ruben, though Mexican, is heard with Phillip Anthony Rodriguez's Puerto Rican accent. In contrast, Ruben doesn't fall into any specific Latino stereotypes and is generally a positive depiction of Latinidad. For the

series producers, casting a Mexican actor with a Mexican accent wouldn't do. Perhaps the unconscious white perception of the Latina/o interethnic hierarchy dictated the choice of a Puerto Rican--a more integrated, less threatening Latino more digestible for a white audience.

Also, for Ruben, Spanish is to be used at home and not at school. While this could be a protective gesture in that he doesn't want Adrian to experience prejudice, it may also imply that Ruben is pro-assimilation. Because Ruben is a successful professional, this also links assimilation, as well as non-Spanish use, with socioeconomic success. Cindy, who speaks Spanish fluently and on occasion outside of the home, is less financially successful. Though Cindy provides well for Adrian, she cannot afford a house, which to Adrian means the world. When we meet Kathy in season five, she has one brief line in Spanish, but her parents, who are wealthy, do not have any scenes in Spanish. Instead, Kathy's parents have a Latina maid, breed horses, and travel around Europe; in other words, they are heavily white-washed. Therefore, according to the series, removing oneself from Latinidad, and particularly Spanish-language usage, will better allow you to live the American dream.

We get one more chance at positive Latina/o representation in the series' fifth season. Perhaps realizing Adrian's character was not the best Latina depiction, the writers introduce Kathy in *Secret Life's* last season. Kathy, portrayed by Mexican/Colombian-American actress Cierra Ramirez, first appears in the series' 100th episode and remains a

recurring character through the end of the series. Initially, Kathy's character does not look promising in terms of Latina representation as she enters Grant High School a pregnant freshman. In fact, she seems to be yet another variation of Adrian and Amy. But very early on we learn that Kathy is nothing like the series' other characters. Kathy seems to be the ultimate hero of the morality play–an Everyman (or "Everygirl," who happens to be Latina, in this case), who displays all the right choices the other characters failed to make. She is a last-ditch effort to redeem flawed representations. Her Latina/o family is wealthy, successful, intact, and even multigenerational. She is endowed with wisdom beyond her years and navigates every decision with ease.

By the time we meet Kathy, she has already decided to give her baby up for adoption and has already chosen the adoptive parents. Because Amy decided to keep her baby and Adrian lost her baby, it makes sense that the series about teen pregnancy has one character who puts her baby up for adoption. On the one hand, it is unfortunate that 2 of the 3 teen pregnancies on the series happen to Latina characters. But doing so also allows the writers to end the series with an alternative to Adrian. This being said, Kathy's Latina ethnicity is never as explicitly stated and though her character is recurring, she is never given a surname. But like other Latina/o characters on the series, Kathy does have brief (one-line) bit of Spanish-language dialogue. It should also be noted, however, that Kathy is obviously not fluent in Spanish like the other characters; actress Cierra Ramirez has gone on record saying she does not speak Spanish, so to give her character too much

Spanish dialog would sound particularly ingenuine. But to have Kathy not speak fluent Spanish also goes along with the insinuation that Spanish-language usage outside the home (or lack of assimilation) hinders success. In addition, Kathy–the golden Latina on the series–lacks the many negative Latina signifiers found with Adrian. What this says to viewers is that there are special privileges given to assimilants like Ruben and Kathy.

Kathy is smart and unlike Adrian she does not hide her intelligence. We learn that in Texas she was a spelling bee competitor, and she is all around a good student and very much looking to attend college. She admits that she made the mistake of trusting her boyfriend's birth control method, and now faced with a teen pregnancy, she is making adult decisions for herself with the support of her family. And unlike her predecessors, she has broken up with her boyfriend and does not dwell on the past.

When Kathy meets Ethan, who is attracted to her despite her pregnancy, it becomes obvious that the writers are trying to mirror Amy's relationship with Ben. Ethan is a good guy, but makes dumb choices often and has a hard time filtering himself. This becomes a problem, and Kathy is forced to break up with Ethan. She eventually gives him another chance, but their relationship soon ends quickly when Ethan, eager for sex, learns that Kathy has decided not to have sex again, while in high school. Unlike every other girl on the series, white or not, Kathy keeps her word. While Kathy is generally a positive representation of Latinidad, particularly as she fills the "Everyman" role, her

assimilated status gives viewers the impression that the further removed one is from Latinidad, the better off they are.

PRETTY LITTLE LIARS

Whereas *Secret Life* includes a primary Latina character, *Pretty Little Liars* uses minor Latino characters as character foils. For this reason, it is important to look at the significance of the Latino characters in the series and how their written character traits contrast with other characters. With the Latino characters' limited time on screen, it is important to judge the quality of their depictions over the quantity of screen-time they get.

In terms of general diversity, it is significant that of the four lead characters, one is non-white; the character of Emily Fields is Asian. Shay Mitchell, who plays Emily, is of Filipino, Irish, and Scottish descent. In the book series, Emily is white and described as being a pale and freckled redhead who comes from a very conservative family. Both in the book and on the series, Emily comes out as a lesbian early on when she falls in love with Maya, a new girl to Rosewood who is black. In the book, Maya's race becomes an issue for Emily's racist parents. But on the series, race is a non-issue. After all, the Fields family is also a minority in the predominantly white town of Rosewood. In addition to being a minority, the Fields family is also less financially successful than the other families we meet in Rosewood. Emily's father is a colonel in the military, and Emily is

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the only of her friends who is concerned about money and has a job throughout the series. This links financial wealth with whiteness in the world of Rosewood.

Missing from the Fields family is any hint of an Asian surname. This is most likely because the series writers wanted to keep the liars' names used in the original book series. Emily's parents Wayne and Pam are portrayed by Eric Steinberg of Korean and mixed European descent and Nia Peeples of mixed descent, including Filipino. Unlike *Secret Life*, where we are told Adrian's ethnicity early on, it isn't until the series' fourth season that we learn Emily's exact ethnicity. When Emily is asked her ethnicity, she responds that she is Filipino, Korean, Irish, and Scottish, which is in fact a good mix of the actress herself as well as the actors that portray her parents. In this sense, it seems that the writers for these ABC Family series are adamant about having a precise answer to a primary character's race/ethnicity. This also shows that the writers of *Pretty Little Liars* value congruity between actor and character ethnicity, a source of greater authenticity.

What is most significant about Emily's character on *Pretty Little Liars* is that she just as easily could have been Latina. According to racebending.com, the casting call character breakdown for the role of Emily Fields called for "Asian, Hispanic, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern or Native American" girls. This indicates that the production was looking to be more diverse from the beginning, even willing to stray from the physical description of Emily given in the books. But one must wonder why, of the four girls, Emily is singled out to be portrayed by a non-white actress. After all, Emily

already adds diversity by being gay. One guess is that it has to do with the Fields' financial situation. Based on stereotypes alone, the less-wealthy character is the obvious choice for injecting diversity.

Though her character is white, diversity can also be found with actress Troian Bellisario, who plays Spencer Hastings. Bellisario is of African American, Italian, French, and English descent. Her mother–actress, writer, and television producer Deborah Pratt–is of African American descent. On the series, Spencer's family, which is the most wealthy and powerful of the group, is white. The racial politics of this casting choice, or perhaps the choice not to make the Hastings family more ethnically diverse, is interesting, given Bellisario's ethnic background. But it should be noted that Bellisario "passes" as white and the few fans who learn of her racial background are generally surprised.

Outside of the primary cast, there is some diversity found in Rosewood through the series' secondary and recurring characters, including half-Chinese actress Janel Parrish as Mona Vanderwaal and Tyler Blackburn of mixed European and Native American (Cherokee) descent as Caleb Rivers, African American actress of mixed descent Bianca Lawson as Maya St. Germain, and most recently Jake (half Mexican American actor Ryan Guzman). As of yet, the races and ethnicities of these characters have not been brought up on the series. Ryan Guzman's character Jake has been a

recurring character in season 4, but the series has yet to delve into the character's back story. Thus far, Jake has not been given a surname that might confirm his Latinidad.

To date, there is only one instance in *Pretty Little Liars* when a character has been written as distinctly Latina/o, though his ethnicity is never explicitly discussed. We meet Alex Santiago, played by Mexican singer/actor Diego Boneta, in season one as he becomes a brief love interest of primary character, Spencer Hastings. Like every male character on *Pretty Little Liars*, Alex is attractive. Though he is Mexican, Boneta is relatively light-skinned, so faced with just an image, he is not immediately legible as Latino. We only know Alex is Latino because his last name implies it, as does his thick Spanish accent.

Alex is a standup guy; he's a high school student who works part-time at the country club to earn money for college. His work at the country club is how he meets Spencer, as her family are members. Alex's socioeconomic status as the "help" doesn't deter Spencer; she is immediately attracted to him and makes the first move, asking him out. But for several reasons, their relationship doesn't last long. It is unclear where exactly Alex lives because we never see him outside of Spencer's sphere. We simply know that he lives on the "other side" of town and attends a different school. Because Alex doesn't attend Rosewood High, he is immediately placed outside the scope of the series. The other girls all date boys and girls that who either attend Rosewood High (or

teach there, in Aria's case). Alex, therefore, is literally an outsider. From the onset, he does not fit within the series.

So then what is the point? Because Alex is poor (and not white), his character serves as a foil to reveal the prejudices of various characters, including Spencer's own family. The writers used Latina/o stereotypes to quickly create a character that was the complete opposite of Spencer's family (mainly her father and sister). As a character fhoil, there is great economy in utilizing the loaded stereotypes of Latina/os. Those are further enhanced by some key reversals of racist expectations. The writers equate Alex with goodness and moral uprightness to contrast with the Rosewood elite. Alex serves a very important purpose in Spencer's character arc, as she begins to perceive evil within her own family and develops a healthy suspicion of her father and sister. Mr. Hastings' treatment towards Alex, whom he views as a dispensable tennis ball boy, is especially disturbing to Spencer. When Spencer is concerned that her father has put Alex's job in jeopardy, he tells her that the boy can pick up balls anywhere. It is at this point that Spencer realizes her father will do whatever it takes to win, even if it means hurting someone in the process. From here on out, Spencer's relationship with her father is distant, as she has lost the respect for him she once had. Alex is the reason behind Spencer's enlightenment. At school, Spencer also deals with prejudice against Alex. Mona teases Spencer for taking her club's towel boy/ "cinderfellow" to homecoming. Spencer stands up to Mona, whom she already dislikes. But as with her father, this scene

further establishes Mona as a bad person, which is fitting since we later learn that Mona is the original "A" who has been tormenting the girls.

"A" quickly toys with Alex and Spencer's relationship by making Alex think Spencer wants to change him so that he more easily fits into her world. What's different about this scenario is that Alex is completely okay with who he is, while understanding that Spencer may want something different. And rather than trying to change for Spencer, he walks away from the relationship. Having observed that the Rosewood elite like to play games off the court, Alex removes himself completely from their world. For this reason, in the crazy world of *Pretty Little Liars*, Alex is the most reasonable character.

Three years after the *Pretty Little Liars* audience says goodbye to Alex, we are introduced to Jake, played by Mexican American actor Ryan Guzman, in the series' fourth season. Whereas in Alex, the writers leverage stereotypes to efficiently create contrast and movement in primary character arcs, in Jake writers seemingly abandon stereotypes altogether. Unlike Alex's guest (5 episode) role, Jake is a recurring character as Aria's new love interest after she decides to leave her long-time boyfriend Ezra Fitz (Ian Harding). Despite appearing in eight episodes to date, Jake has not been given a last name. Instead, his Latinidad is more readily identifiable through his darker features, as he lacks a Spanish accent. Also unlike Alex, Jake is not immediately classed as poor. Aria first meets Jake when she walks into the martial art studio where he teaches, looking to learn self-defense. Whereas Alex performs low-wage work, Jake seemingly has more

control over his career. Though it is not stated, he may even own the studio. In sum, the things that marked Alex as Latino–surname, accent, and lower socioeconomic status– are removed from Jake. To be fair, Alex is just 16 or 17 years old when we are introduced to his character, and we do know he is working to save for college. But the subservient nature of his work at the country club highlights his otherness.

Initially, it looks as though Jake and Ezra are a similar type. Like Ezra, Jake is Aria's teacher, and, therefore, an authority figure. But it quickly becomes clear that the two are nothing alike. Whereas Ezra is meant to be Aria's soul mate–the sensitive poetry writing, film noir-watching English teacher–Jake is a tough but all-around good guy who would much rather go to dinner and a movie than a poetry reading. We first get a glimpse of Jake's moral compass when Aria tells him about her love affair with Ezra–who was her high school English teacher for much of their time together. When Aria then tries to kiss Jake, he stops her and asks if she really wants to be with someone who would kiss her after hearing a story like that. This tells us that Jake has dignity and respects women, while also refusing to be a rebound. This distances him from the lusty Latin lover type. In fact, 8 episodes in and Aria and Jake have not yet had sex.

Later, when the two begin dating, Jake stands up to Ezra when it seems like he is stalking Aria. Fans of Aria and Ezra, dubbed "Ezria" on social media sites, were upset by this confrontation, but soon after, it is revealed (to the audience, not the characters) that Ezra is the new "A," equipped with high-tech surveillance to monitor the girls' every

move. This time the character foils are in the Latino's favor as Ezra–the white, educated and cultured teacher–is established as the ultimate villain.

To be fair, Jake is still a mysterious character because his backstory has yet to be explored. The series' writers have stated that we will get to know Jake a bit better in the season's second half, but it is unlikely that he has a secret darker than Ezra's. The new details provided about Jake will be significant to his depiction of Latinidad. Up to now, it seems that in their effort (though minimal) to include Latina/os on *Pretty Little Liars,* the writers have been relatively successful in providing positive Latina/o images.

ABC Family, through its hit series *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *Pretty Little Liars,* does much in terms of increasing diversity for the teen-oriented television audience by including some ethnically diverse Latina/o characters on-screen. Although the Latina/o representations are imperfect, they are slightly improved from the more commonly depicted Latina/o stereotyped characters which lack complexity.

The ratings success of these two series indicates that young millennial viewers embrace the representations of diversity, including Latina/o diversity in the network's flagship series. And the subsequent monetary success encourages further investment in improving Latina/o representation, especially given the statistic that 45% of millennials consider themselves non-white, and most likely a large portion of that percentage identifies as Hispanic or Latina/o. When considering these two series as preliminary steps towards increased Latina/o representation, one can feel optimistic about the future.

Whereas Latina/o representation was at 4% in Hoffman and Noriega's 2004 study, in *Secret Life* alone, there is much better representation in terms of numbers. In addition, ratings on the network continue to increase. We can assume that the network will invest the returns from its commercial success and continue to improve.

In the next chapter, I will discuss *Switched at Birth* and *The Fosters*. With these two series, we see a departure from ABC Family's previous formulae through the introduction of Latina/o creative staff, writing, directing, and producing content featuring Latina/o themes, as well as characters. Whereas *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *Pretty Little Liars* included non-white characters, the writing staffs lacked Latina/o writers and did not know how to depict those characters without relying on stereotypes. Even with conscious effort, unconscious biases and cultural ignorances bubbled up, leaving characters non-resonant and problematic.

Admittedly, the next two series to be discussed in chapter three are not completely without problems as Latina/o creative staff does not necessarily equal positive Latina/o representation. There does, however, seem to be a definitive move to gather feedback from Latina/o writers and even actors in an attempt to more adequately depict Latinidad.

Chapter 3: You Can't Download Latinidad, You Have to Live It

ABC Family is keen on making nods to diversity through multicultural casts and non-heteronormative couplings to appeal to its target millennial audience. Before Michael Riley became President of ABC Family in August of 2010, Paul Lee was responsible for bringing the network into the limelight and was successful in doing so with *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *Pretty Little Liars*. Like Riley, Lee acknowledged the importance of diversity to millennials, but even more so, Lee understood that millennials love their families. For this reason, the network decided to focus its programming around the family issues of the new millennium. We can presume from its programming, the millennial family that ABC Family wishes to depict is diverse both in terms of race and ethnicity as well as sexual orientation. The focus on the family unit provides the network ample opportunity to depict Latina/os, as Latina/os have always been associated with *familia*. As Arlene Dávila documents, "the Latin family could well be considered the maximum advertising 'referent system'... more than any other trope, the Latin family is implicated in and associated with the process of representation" (93). When Michael Riley took over for Paul Lee in 2010, he blended Lee's focus on family with his own emphasis on diversity and led the way for more multidimensional representations of diverse families, with Latina/os at the forefront.

Under Riley's banner of diversity, we see the second phase of market-driven representation of Latina/os on the network through the programs *Switched at Birth* and

The Fosters. These new shows are staffed by Latina/o voices and artists, lending a previously elusive multidimensionality to Latina/o representation. After previous series proved the market value of diversity and Latina/o representation, ABC Family invested in refining their abilities to draw and hold a diverse millennial and Latina/o audience.

In analyzing *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *Pretty Little Liars*, we see the series writers' attempts to include Latina/o characters. Unfortunately, the white writers violated the Hollywood maxim "write what you know," and characters come across as stereotypical, despite their seemingly conscious efforts to break common stereotypes. Though *Pretty Little Liars* helped increase Latina/o representation behind the camera with two episodes directed by Latina director Zetna Fuentes, this did little to improve Latina/o representation on-screen.

In the two series analyzed in this chapter, *Switched at Birth* and *The Fosters*, ABC Family drastically improved in terms of Latina/o representations, seemingly determined to add complexity to its diverse characters. With *Switched at Birth*, we see the addition of Latina/o voices both writing and directing, which arguably helps increase positive representations of Latinidad. With *The Fosters*, about a diverse biracial lesbian multiethnic mixed family, we get an even bigger push for diverse representation with Jennifer Lopez signing on to executive produce the series along with her production company Nuyorican Productions. This new depiction of family expounds on ABC Family's tagline: *A new kind of family.*

ABC Family officially premiered its new look and tagline: *A New Kind of Family* in August 2006, after commissioning researcher Frank N. Magid Associates to conduct a four-year study about young viewers and how to appeal to them. In her article on millennial fandom, Louisa Ellen Stein notes that ABC Family was so motivated by the study's findings on millennials that they placed in ad in *Advertising Age*, educating advertisers on the birth range, core values, and behaviors of millennials, showcasing why advertisers would want to be affiliated with ABC Family (130). As the tagline implies, the most significant finding about millennials is their love of family, albeit with revised, less traditional family values ("Getting to Know the Millennials").

Additionally, according to John Rood, senior VP-Marketing for ABC Family, millennials seek "storytelling that's genuine and real, and embraces families with all their dysfunction, heart, and humor" (Getting to Know the Millennials"). Through their research, ABC Family discovered that young adults did not have a problem with family, rather, they had a problem with family television–specifically the stereotypical conservative, boring and insincere aspects of family television ("Getting to Know the Millennials"). It is for this reason, as noted by Stein, that ABC Family programming "transgresses some traditional norms, allowing frank talk about sex, women in powerful positions, direct discussion of sexuality, gay teen characters, and viewer interpretations of nominally straight characters as gay" (133). What Stein does not mention is the increased racial and ethnic diversity that ABC Family is trying to incorporate in its newer series.

Significantly, the research ABC Family commissioned on millennials reported that while 80% of baby boomers are white, 45% of millennials describe their race as something other than white (or non-white), implying that only 55% of millennials consider themselves white, which is down significantly. This statistic is listed in the *Advertising Age* fact sheet mentioned earlier, and is, therefore, deemed important to ABC Family; ABC Family is telling advertisers that they need to appeal to non-white millennials. Perhaps not surprisingly then, non-white characters abound in the series surveyed in this chapter.

As the title indicates, *Switched at Birth* follows the lives of two families living in Kansas City, Missouri, who after fifteen years discover that their daughters were accidentally switched at birth. One daughter, Bay Kennish, grew up in a wealthy family and attended the best private schools but always felt like the black sheep of her red-headed and freckled family. The other daughter, Daphne Vasquez, who is deaf, was raised by a single mother in a poor working-class neighborhood, but has a loving relationship with her mother and grandmother. As the families get to know one another they deal with issues of race and ethnicity, as well as how to communicate with Daphne and other members of the deaf community.

With its series premiere on June 6, 2011, *Switched at Birth* shattered records as ABC Family's No. 1 original series launch ever (beating out even *Pretty Little Liars)* in total viewers and target 18-34 and 18-49 demographics, and towering over young adult-

oriented MTV's debut of *Teen Wolf* by double-digit percentages. According to Nielsen, 4.9 million viewers tuned it to watch the premiere and its encore airing, making it cable's number 1 program in the hour among women 18-34, women 18-49, viewers 12-34, and females 12-34. It was also cable's number one scripted telecast in total viewers, adults 18-34, and adults 18-49.

Following *Switched at Birth, The Fosters* has become ABC Family's newest and successful addition. *The Fosters* is about a biracial lesbian couple in San Diego, California and their mixed multiethnic family composed of one biological son and four foster and adoptive children, two of whom are Latina/o twins, Mariana and Jesus. The series follows the lives of the family members as they deal with issues of sexuality, including sexual orientation and teen sex, race and ethnicity, and the various circumstances surrounding foster care and adoption, including drug abuse and child abuse.

Given the subject matter—a lesbian couple adopting children—as well as the later 9/8PM time slot, *The Fosters* premiered on June 4, 2013 to relatively high ratings. The pilot episode ranked as cable TV's #2 scripted telecast in the hour in adults 18-34, women 18-34, women 18-49, viewers 12-34, and females 12-34. It also did notably better than the previous summer's premiere of *Bunheads*, about a ballerina turned Las Vegas showgirl who impulsively marries and moves to California, where she begins teaching ballet alongside her new mother-in-law. The series which received critical acclaim but

lacked racial diversity and was cancelled after 18 episodes. In its second week, *The Fosters* soared by double digits, climbing 20% in ratings. And by the summer finale, the series continued to set series highs, marking it as the #1 new cable TV series of the summer as well as ABC Family's #2 series in key demographics, behind only *Pretty Little Liars*.

SWITCHED AT BIRTH

Like *Secret Life*, *Switched at Birth* features a primary Latina character with Mexican American actress Constance Marie as Regina Vasquez. In addition, the young series protagonists are Latina, one by blood, and one by culture. These Latina characters are far from stereotypical and the series focuses on a nuanced exploration of ethnic identity. Unlike *Secret Life*, *Switched at Birth* has on its writing staff a Latino writer, Henry Robles, who has written 8 of the 52 episodes to date. A Mexican American lawyer turned writer, Robles participated in CBS's first Writer's Mentoring Program run through the network's Diversity Institute and earned a spot as a staff writer on the network's series *Cold Case* before eventually moving to *Switched at Birth*. In addition to having a Latino writer, the series also includes two Latina directors, including Zetna Fuentes and Joanna Kerns, who together have directed 5 episodes. Similar to Robles, Fuentes' career launched after she participated in the Disney/ABC's Talent Development and Diversity DGA Directing Program, where she was able to shadow various directors working on ABC series before directing episodes on ABC Family series. And despite being blonde-

haired and blue-eyed, Joanna Kerns, who is best known for her long-time role on *Growing Pains*, was born Joanna Crussie DeVarona and is of half-Mexican descent. Unlike the two previous series, *Switched at Birth* includes Latina/os both on screen and behind the camera, creating a space where Latina/os working on the series have some say in how Latinidad is represented.

Switched at Birth has a diverse cast. As previously stated, Mexican American actress Constance Marie plays Regina Vasquez, the half-Puerto Rican single mother to Daphne. Regina's biological daughter Bay Kennish (who would be at least ¼ Puerto Rican) is played by half-Italian American actress Vanessa Marano, while French actor Gilles Marini plays Bay's biological father Angelo Sorrento.

The wealthy Kennish family is portrayed by Lea Thompson as Kathyrn Kennish, D. W. Moffett as John Kennish, and Lucas Grabeel as their son Toby Kennish. Their biological daughter Daphne Vasquez is played by Katie Leclerc. Where additional diversity of white actors comes into play is in the casting of deaf actors Sean Berdy, Marlee Matlin, and Ryan Lane. While this does not increase the Latina/o representation, on which this project is focusing, it is still significant for the deaf community and diversity overall as characters on the series have full scenes using American Sign Language (ASL).

As with the previous series, we find additional racial and ethnic diversity in secondary and recurring characters. Puerto Rican actress Ivonne Coll plays Regina's

mother Adriana, who lives with Regina and Daphne. Tyler "Ty" Mendoza, who plays a love interest to Bay, is played by Blair Redford of Irish, French, German, and Native American descent. Half-Brazilian actress Maiara Walsh plays Toby's brief love interest Simone Sinclair.

From her introduction, Regina Vasquez defies the common stereotypes of a Latina character. Regina is middle-aged and attractive with a slender physique; her brown skin and features mark her as Latina, but she has no accent. She has a modest wardrobe, which consists primarily of jeans and blouses that are age-appropriate. She is not immediately sexualized as we saw with Adrian's character on *Secret Life*. In fact, Regina does not fit into any of Charles Ramírez Berg's Latina/o stereotypes. Instead, stereotypes or negative representations that occur on the series are generally related to circumstances rather than character traits.

Despite her lack of a college education, Regina is smart, often educating the Kennishes on political correctness, especially pertaining to deaf culture. She is also a very talented artist and is able to bond with biological daughter Bay over this. Compared to her counterpart Kathryn Kennish, Regina is much more brusque, especially when she feels that her parenting is in question. Because of this, she comes across as defensive and sometimes rude. But unlike *Secret Life's* Adrian and other Latina spitfires, Regina does not lapse to Spanish-language to express her frustrations. Though Regina might be considered hot-tempered, her frustrations are generally warranted. In fact, Regina often

becomes frustrated when people display ignorance towards deaf culture and her Latina identity, and she makes sure to firmly correct people's false or demeaning assumptions. This differs from the often-depicted image of the demure Latina character, particularly when confronting wealthy white (and often highly educated) individuals.

Additionally, Regina as the Latina single mother invokes the absent father Ramírez Berg identifies as a common pattern in Latina/o representation. What is noteworthy here is that the absent father is not himself Latino. In addition, Regina's profession as a hair stylist, despite not paying well, is not a stereotypical maid or servant. Before meeting the Kennishes, she lives with Daphne and her mother Adriana in a humble but comfortable home where she works as a hair stylist. Not even Regina's mother Adriana performs stereotypical work. Instead, Adriana is a vet's assistant. Ivonne Coll, the Puerto Rican actress who plays Adriana speaks of the way Latina/o characters are depicted on the series. She notes the way in which the writers are careful to authenticate her Puerto Rican ethnicity, mentioning how Latino writer Henry Robles writes any Spanish dialog on the series and makes sure to translate it to Puerto Rican Spanish, avoiding Robles' own Mexican American dialect. Here, we see how the actor and writer, both Latina/o, are able to work together to add legitimacy to depictions of Latinidad. Coll also points to Adriana's job as a vet's assistant in describing their series' "authenticity," stating that because Puerto Ricans are American citizens, they don't come to the U.S. to do manual labor ("Ivonne Coll: Glamorous Renaissance Actress"). Despite

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the social hierarchy her statement implies, it validates the writers' attempts to depict Latinidad, and specific cultures, as accurately as possible. In fact, addressing the status hierarchy that exists among Latina/os is in itself a legitimate aspect of Latinidad. In the pilot episode after learning that Regina and her family live in East Riverside, Kathryn bluntly asks if Regina is Mexican. Regina's response is quick and firm; she is not a Mexican. She is Puerto Rican, on her mother's side. The scene tells us two things: 1) Kathryn associates East Riverside with a Mexican population and 2) Regina is insulted when Kathryn assumes she is Mexican. While Regina's frustrated response may have less to do with being labeled a Mexican and more to do with Kathyrn's ignorance, the point is clear—being Puerto Rican is better than being Mexican.

Despite the way her character deviates from one-dimensional character stereotypes, Regina bears perhaps an inordinate burden of troubles. Regina is a recovering alcoholic with 2 DUIs, and despite being sober for 12 years (since Daphne went deaf) the Kennishes still judge her. Regina's ethics are also called into question when it is discovered that she knew about the switch for many years. Regina justifies her silence to the outraged Kennishes, as well as devastated Bay and Daphne, by saying that she did not want to pull the girls away from the only parents they had ever known. This shows that Regina makes her decisions based on what she thinks is in the best interest of the girls, not what is in the best interest of the parents. This directly contrasts the way in which the Kennishes parent. The Kennishes push Bay and Toby (and later Daphne) to do

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and act the way they feel a Kennish should, despite what the kids actually want. In many instances, Regina is the go-to parent when the pressure applied by the Kennishes (particularly John) becomes too hard to bear.

Later, when Regina breaks her sobriety, she spirals out of control, losing her job and entering rehab. Although Regina faces a heavy load–her child's absent father, alcoholism, financial turmoil–her poise in the face of challenge denies these obstacles any of the potential stereotype power. She has overcome. She made hard decisions and made them right. In fact, this is precisely why Constance Marie loves to play Regina. In an interview with Latina.com, Constance Marie discusses her role, saying

> At first I was like, 'Why does the Latin mom have to be the recovering alcoholic and single mom?' But when I read the script and looked further, I realized this is the mom who had the odds stacked against her. She raised her daughter right. She dealt with her daughter being deaf, and made sure her daughter never felt bad for herself. She raised this great student without certain advantages, made a name for herself and a career, even though she didn't have a chance to go to college. I loved that about Regina. I had never played a single mom, and I'm the daughter of one, so for me this was great. This is my homage to hardworking badass single moms. ("'Switched at Birth' Actress Constance Marie: 'This is my Homage to Badass Single Moms'")

Also true to Latina/o life, while living in the Kennish's guest house in Mission Hills, the Vasquez's—or specifically Regina and Adriana as Daphne looks white—must deal with the prejudices associated with Latinidad. The neighbors are full of invented explanations based on their stereotyped prejudices. In fact, we see the Kennishes' friends and neighbors rush to the conclusion that Regina is a new live-in maid, solely based on her Latinidad. When news breaks about the switch, even Kathryn's close friends think it's a lie. Instead they believe that John and Regina had an affair and that Bay is their love-child. The racism of the upscale white neighborhood shows through in their insinuations that Latinas are servants, mistresses, criminals, etc. This becomes most powerful as the Kennishes must confront these judgments with full knowledge that they are false.

Even as the Kennishes are slowly realizing their own prejudices, Regina makes sure to speed the process along by calling them out on their prejudiced behavior. When Regina tries moving her home salon business into the guest house, Kathryn silently objects to Regina's non-white, low-income East Riverside customers on her property by introducing Regina to the owner of her preferred hair salon, who offers Regina a job. When Kathryn expects Regina to be grateful, Regina, aware of the real reason behind Kathryn's kindness, frankly tells Kathryn that she knows the only reason she got her that job was because she didn't want "riffraff" like her trouncing through her yard on their

way to the guest house. This confrontation showcases Regina's racial/ethnic awareness and her audacity to call John or Kathryn out on their own racial prejudices. Regina, speaking out against the Kennish's prejudices not only defies stereotypes of Latinas–Regina is intelligent enough to recognize the masked racism and calls attention to it–but also forces audience introspection, inasmuch as they identify with the Kennish's problematic views of race and class.

In stark contrast to the Kennish's lavish Mission Hills community, the Vasquez's East Riverside neighborhood is identified as the "bad" and euphemistically "diverse" part of town by the white elite who surround the Kennish family. However, to the Vasquez family and others from the neighborhood, including Ty Mendoza (Blair Redford), East Riverside is not a place to fear, despite its high crime rate often referenced by the wealthy residents of Mission Hills. In fact, in the pilot episode when we first meet Ty, a dark-featured part-Cherokee Latino from East Riverside, he sees Bay parked on the street in her BMW and tells her to leave, assuming she is a rich white girl trying to buy drugs. East Riverside residents like Ty work to keep the crime out of the neighborhood, even when that crime comes to their neighborhood from the rich white suburbs. This scene reminds the audience that there are criminals in all neighborhoods and poverty alone does not a criminal make.

In a female-centered series (and network), Ty's character is a significant depiction of an underprivileged Latino male. When he and Bay start their relationship, he must

suffer the scrutiny of John, who does not think a poor Latino boy with a GED and no plans for college is a suitable choice for his daughter. But as quickly as they begin their relationship, Ty reveals that he is about to be deployed, which is a concept Bay and Kathryn have difficulty understanding. Regina must explain to Kathryn that the military is the only option for many boys from East Riverside. When Ty does return more than a year later, he suffers from severe bouts of anger and depression following his time in Afghanistan and his good friend's subsequent suicide. This instability disrupts his rekindled relationship with Bay as he becomes aggressive and jealous, scaring her at times. Even though Ty's issues are explicitly tied to his military experience, it still brings to mind issues of Latino male stereotypes, particularly that Latino males are violent and aggressive. Potential stereotypes aside, Ty represents a very real type in the lives of numerous Latina/o millennials: the Latino war veteran. His representation reflects a powerful contemporary icon, yet unproved to be positive or negative, but certainly nuanced and topical.

The Latina/o "ghetto" stereotype is further dissolved when Daphne returns to East Riverside after living in Mission Hills for a while. While Daphne looks around her old neighborhood, the audience hears sirens blaring in the night, as she tells her grandmother that the neighborhood might be getting worse. Her grandmother responds to Daphne's comment, telling her that she only feels this way because she is seeing things through Mission Hills eyes. This further reinforces the point that poor or Latina/o neighborhoods

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are not necessarily bad. Adriana is pointing out that outsiders (those from Mission Hills) only see what they want to see, or perhaps are only looking to find what they expect.

Daphne's subsequent returns to East Riverside are also significant for another reason. Knowing that she now lives in posh Mission Hills, the neighborhood she grew up loving no longer accepts her, not because her status as a Latina has been biologically disproven, but because she is rich in comparison. Her old friends resent her because they feel she is "slummin' it" by being there—that she somehow feels sorry for them. At the same time, Daphne feels alienated in Mission Hills because she is deaf and does not have an expensive cochlear implant that would help her live a more "normal" life, but also because she is culturally Latina with a Vasquez surname. With this, Daphne becomes spiritually homeless, straddling two worlds, belonging to both but not fully accepted by either. Before learning of the switch, Daphne was accepted fully in East Riverside as a deaf Latina; she had many friends–both hearing and deaf–and her family learned ASL to communicate with her. In Mission Hills, Daphne is surrounded by those who view both Latinidad and deafness as "other." Not even the Kennishes think to learn ASL to better communicate with Daphne until Regina clues them in. Daphne's life after leaving East Riverside represents the ethos of Latinidad in America, even more so than Bay who is biologically Latina. Because she has moved up economically, she is no longer welcome in her old neighborhood. But because she is culturally Latina and deaf, she isn't fully welcome in her new (very white) community either.

Despite its difficulty, Daphne is still able to physically move back and forth between the two worlds. Bay, on the other hand, must experience her new-found Latinidad from Mission Hills as her wealthy status denies her access to East Riverside and the culture found within it. Daphne, having been brought up living and understanding Latina/o culture can navigate both as a Latina and as a white female. Bay is alone in learning that Latinidad is not innate and that she must somehow learn the culture from the outside. With dark hair and eyes and very fair skin, Bay is unlike the red-headed Kennishes, but not legibly Latina either. Instead, Bay's Latinidad is inscribed from the start through her admiration of Frida Kahlo–even having a quote by Kahlo stenciled above her bed. As Isabel Molina-Guzmán explains, Kahlo is often "invoked as a strategic essentializing symbol of difference" (90). Like Kahlo, Bay struggles with her identity, even more so as she realizes she is of a different race/ethnicity than she grew up believing. Because Bay attributes many of her interests and artistic talent to heritable traits from Regina (and Latina genes generally), she assumes that being Latina is something she should automatically be and understand. When Bay meets a group of ethnically diverse urban street artists, she feels she has to lie about who she is in order to fit in. She introduces herself as Bay Vasquez, not Kennish, and even tags her dad's car wash in an attempt to impress the group. When the group does find out who Bay really is–the daughter of a former major league baseball player and owner of a successful carwash– they view her as a wannabe rich kid and use her for her money. For Bay (and

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the audience), the lesson is that you cannot learn a culture overnight. Doing so makes you an imposter. In essence, this scenario also parallels the process by which white writers attempt to write Latina/o characters and culture.

This theme of "authentic" Latina/o experience is best exemplified in the series' 16th episode titled "Las Dos Fridas," written by Latino series staff writer Henry Robles. Note the title's reference again to Frida Kahlo, particularly the famous painting depicting Kahlo's indigenous side along with her European/Victorian side. In this episode, Bay experiences prejudice against her Latinidad for the first time, making her contemplate her identity and what it means. In this episode, Kathryn's mother Bonnie comes to visit and immediately makes bigoted comments against Puerto Ricans. Bonnie not only admits that she cannot see Bay the same way knowing that she is not her own "blood," but also believes Bay's Puerto Rican heritage explains her doing poorly in school. She literally tells Kathryn that "biology tells us what we are," therefore, buying into and propagating the idea that Latina/os are biologically less intelligent. As Bay's mother, Kathryn is devastated and begins to question her own behaviors, recalling a time when she locked up the silver because there were Latino men working in their home, while doing nothing when a white man performed work in the home. For the first time, Kathryn realizes that she has a Latina daughter who will suffer the same prejudices she and her family are themselves guilty of harboring. As the characters introspect, the audience also introspects. By combining the robust, complex Latina characters with an on-screen fact-

checking exercise, the show's ethnic representation engenders empathy, introspection, understanding, and for the Latina/o audience, validation. In his writing, Robles addresses various scenarios in which Latina/os are pre-judged and makes sure to disprove each assumption, or at least question the validity.

Having never experienced racism and feeling like an inadequate Latina, Bay turns to Regina who explains that being Latina is not a program you can download into your brain; It's a culture–you live it and learn about it. With this, Robles writes dialogue that is informative rather than didactic. He informs the audience that Latinidad is more than just ethnic and racial–it is a culture that must be experienced to be learned.

Interestingly, despite being Latino, Robles stated in an interview that while he wanted to write outside his (Latino/lawyer) box, he's glad that he got to write this particular episode, which he says could have been a very sensitive issue. He goes on to say that he would have been both envious and nervous if someone else wrote it. Presumably, Robles would have been nervous if anyone else wrote the episode, because he is the only Latino on the writing staff and felt that an episode about Latina/o identity should be written by a Latina/o.

It is somewhat remarkable that *Switched at Birth* is so comfortable in exploring Latina/o representation that it explicitly asks the question "what is Latinidad?" as its two protagonists explore the meaning of their blood and their culture and their place in the world. This theme undoubtedly resonates deeply with their Latina/o audience. The series

moves beyond superficial diversity, deep into the defining issues of identity in a diverse world, an issue that assuredly weighs upon the millennial audience in their formative years.

THE FOSTERS

The Fosters stands apart from the previous series because it was heavily marketed on ABC Family by placing its ethnic and queer diversity at the forefront. Each promo leading up to the series premiere announced that the series was executive produced by Jennifer Lopez. Also, like *Switched at Birth*, *The Fosters* includes a Latina/o writer to add nuance and depth to its Latina/o characters with first-time television writer Marissa Jo Cerar, on the writing staff for 8 of 10 episodes, and writing one full episode on her own. In addition, Joanna Kerns has also directed one episode thus far. But what has been highly promoted in the media and on every promo leading up to the series premiere is that Jennifer Lopez is executive producing the series. For the first time, an ABC Family series is being produced by a Latina/o, and one who is a high profile celebrity at that. This gives the series an extra push at reaching out to Latina/o millennials, especially as Jennifer Lopez has taken it upon herself to promote the series in interviews, as well as on her social media sites, even live chatting on Twitter during the series premiere and summer finale.

In the primary cast, the series includes biracial lesbian couple Stef Foster and Lena Adams, played by Teri Polo and half African American, half Caucasian actress

Sherri Saum, respectively. Their family consists of Stef's biological son from a previous marriage, Brandon, played by half-Puerto Rican actor David Lambert. Together, the couple has two adopted Latina/o twins Mariana and Jesus, played by Jake T. Austin of Puerto Rican, Argentinian, Spanish, and mixed European descent, and Cierra Ramirez of Mexican and Colombian descent. The latest additions to the Foster family are Callie and Jude, played by Australian actress Maia Mitchell and Hayden Byerly.

Secondary characters include Stef's ex-husband and police partner Mike Foster, played by Italian American actor Danny Nucci, and schoolmates/significant others to the teenaged primary cast including Madison Beaty as Talya, Alex Saxon as Wyatt, and Bianca A. Santos of Cuban and Brazilian ethnicity as Lexi Rivera. In addition, Alexandra Barreto of Puerto Rican and Italian descent plays Mariana and Jesus' biological mother Ana, while Puerto Rican actress Justina Machado and Chilean American actor Carlos Sanz play Lexi's parents Sonia and Ernie Rivera.

Looking at physical appearance, Mariana and Jesus look like average American teenagers. They have no accents marking them as distinctly Latina/o, and neither are hypersexualized. Mariana struggles to get boys to notice her, while Jesus attracts the attention of Mariana's girlfriends who think he's cute. Despite the attention from girls, Jesus treats women with respect, defending his moms against bigoted remarks and protecting Lexi when her boyfriend becomes aggressive. Though he and Lexi begin a

relationship that turns sexual, he is not the Latin lover stereotype. As his name suggests, Jesus is associated with goodness: he looks out for his family and is selfless.

Just ten episodes into the series, it is difficult to gauge how the various character story lines will play out. That being said, character traits have been revealed, introducing complex Latina/o characters. Despite being twins, Mariana and Jesus are polar opposites. Mariana is smart enough to make straight As without studying, but she is selfish, even making decisions that put others in jeopardy. Mariana's selfishness is not in any way tied to her Latinidad. Instead, she is a self-conscious teenaged girl, jealous of the attention her brother receives from members of the opposite sex and looking for validation wherever she can find it. In other words, Mariana is a typical teenaged girl. Jesus, on the other hand, struggles with severe ADHD and is dependent on medication to get through his school days. Despite this, he is compassionate and stands up for those he cares about. The ordinariness of Mariana and Jesus is juxtaposed with incoming foster kids Callie and her little brother Jude. Whereas stereotypically the Latina/o characters would be the ones with a juvenile past, here it is Callie–a white girl–who has the criminal record. Even though we find out that Callie is not completely at fault for the actions that landed her in trouble, she is initially introduced to the family as a possible threat. When it is Latina/os and other minority characters that are usually cast in these threatening roles, this comes as a surprise.

Though they were adopted ten years ago, Mariana and Jesus speak Spanish on occasion to one another, implying that their Latina/o culture is important to them. That being said, when we see the two conversing in Spanish, they are gossiping, and get called out on it when Stef walks in. As with *Secret Life*, the Spanish on *The Fosters* is not subtitled. However, Mariana and Jesus only speak a few insignificant lines before being interrupted. Despite the fact that Mariana and Jesus presumably know Spanish well enough to speak it casually with one another, it is obvious that neither actor speaks Spanish fluently. Both Cierra Ramirez and Jake T. Austin have been open in interviews about their inability to speak Spanish fluently. What is significant here is that because Stef embraces Mariana and Jesus' ethnic heritage, she is learning Spanish to be able to bond with them. Unlike what we see with *Secret Life*, Stef, despite being white, believes Spanish is important enough for her to learn and understand.

In addition to language, Stef and Lena believe that Mariana should have a quinceañera to honor her heritage. An entire episode titled "Quinceañera" is dedicated to this event. Similar to the nature vs nurture theme brought out in *Switched at Birth*, in this episode Lena's mother disagrees with throwing Mariana a quinceañera and expresses her belief that just because Mariana is physically Latina does not mean she is culturally Latina. Lena's mother ignores the fact that Mariana and Jesus lived with their biological Latina mother for their first six years and were immersed enough in Latina/o culture to have learned Spanish and embraced it enough to want to retain it. Returning to *Switched*

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at Birth, Bay is biologically Latina, but is not culturally Latina, whereas Daphne is. These dynamics raise interesting questions about ethnic and racial identity, as well as assimilation. At what point should Latina/os forget or ignore their Latina/o heritage? It will be interesting to see whether Mariana and Jesus will continue to express their Latinidad with their moms learning their culture along the way or if they will instead adopt the cultural traditions of their moms.

Despite Mariana and Jesus' status as typical American teenagers, the way in which they became foster children does call to mind common patterns of negative Latina/o representation. Their mother Ana (Alexandra Barreto) is a junkie, and we know nothing of their father, therefore, creating yet another absent father scenario. When Mariana becomes curious and finds Ana, she pressures her for money, leading Mariana down a dark path wherein she begins selling Jesus' medication to get the cash. Incidentally, Mariana learns the hard way that family is not determined by DNA, as she clings to her moms and ignores repeated requests for money from Ana. Much like *Switched at Birth*, *The Fosters* emphasizes the fact that blood or DNA does not have to determine one's character.

Where we begin to see specific Latina/o story arcs is with Lexi and her parents, whose characters allow the writers to segue into topics such as religion–specifically Catholicism–and immigration. Devout Catholics, the Riveras explain that they support Lena and Stef and their family, explaining that Catholics pick and choose which doctrines

they want to adhere to. The complexity of this pick-and-choose Catholicism is exemplified when later that evening the Riveras learn that Lexi and Jesus are having sex and that Stef provided Lexi with birth control. The Catholic doctrine to which the Riveras still adhere regarding sexual activity brings to mind the old virgin/whore dichotomy, wherein if Lexi is not a virgin, then she is a whore. The shamed way in which the Riveras behave after learning of Lexi's sexual activity implies that they are either opposed to pre-marital sex or contraceptives, both of which are commonly opposed by traditional Catholics. In having the Riveras cling to at least some traditional Latina/o Catholic values, we get a more complex (and believable) picture of contemporary Latina/o parents.

The hot topic of immigration also becomes important for the Rivera family when Lexi runs away. Not knowing what to do, the Riveras go to Stef, a police officer, for help, admitting that they can't call the police because they are undocumented Honduran immigrants and so is Lexi, though she is unaware of her status. This revelation comes as a shock to the Fosters and the audience as the Riveras are not depicted as the stereotypical immigrants. For one, they speak English well and are able to comfortably provide for their family. The purpose of the Rivera's story is to show a realistic depiction of undocumented immigrants in America. The Riveras are as American as everyone else on the show until they aren't. But that is the writers' intent. The Riveras are likable characters who share the values of those watching the series (they are ok with gay couples raising families), but they have a secret that forces them to live in the shadows,

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completely unprotected.   Because of Lexi's relationship with Mariana and Jesus, the series also highlights how immigration affects not just families, but friends as well.

Like *Switched at Birth*, *The Fosters* depicts Latinidad as an important aspect of its series, mingling issues with other forms of otherness to build complex and conflicted family landscapes. In *Switched at Birth*, deafness is presented as the cultural obstacle much more so than being Latina/o. In *The Fosters*, Stef and Lena's sexual orientation and the unattractive aspects of foster care overshadow Mariana and Jesus' Latinidad. In both series, the characters are much more complex than their ethnic identities. This is a victory in terms of Latina/o representation.

Conclusion

As shown in my analysis of *Switched at Birth* and *The Fosters*, ABC Family has made strides in the last two years when it comes to Latina/o representation. In particular, picking up a series like *The Fosters*, with Latina superstar Jennifer Lopez signed on as executive producer, solidifies their attempt to include Latina/os as part of the new kind of (diverse) family that they tout in their branding.

In the chronology of series investigated above, a progressive pattern of improvement emerges. In all of the key metrics, ABC Family's flagship series grow in quantity and quality of Latina/o representation: number of lead characters, number of Latina/os on the behind-the-camera creative team, number of plotlines dealing directly with Latina/o issues, quality of representation with increased complexity of character and motivation, and finally a discarding of Latina/o stereotypes in favor of characters who present as persons who struggle and contemplate their Latina/o identity.

The question posed at the start of this project was whether Latina/o representation is improving, and if so, is it because of the market value of the new demographic face of young America—where 1 in every 5 is Latina/o. The survey and analysis conducted in the project clearly shows improvement. And that this improvement correlates with demographic change is rather obvious. But is there a causal relationship?

If market realities drove the changes, we would expect demographic research to precede the content policy of increased diversity and Latina/o representation. In addition,

we would expect the haste of content implementation to create stories by non-Latina/o creators and writers, without feedback from Latina/o writers and directors, create conflicted stereotypical characters who strive to reject obvious stereotypes, while retaining others. Because the market demand draws the content, we expect such programs to perform very well with their target audiences, even if not delivering advances in representation. *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *Pretty Little Liars* evince this stage. With time and additional resources due to incremental market success, Latina/o producers and writers take representation to the next level. *Switched at Birth* and *The Fosters* achieve this.

If, on the other hand, a creative strategy led the way prior to market forces, we would expect ABC Family to amass creative personnel in advance of producing and airing programs featuring increased representation of Latina/os. Under such a scenario, we would expect to see the sequence begin with programs written and/or directed by Latina/os and featuring significantly less stereotypical characters. The pivotal moment appears to be the millennials study commissioned by ABC Family. With that key knowledge of the realities of the audience, ABC Family under Paul Lee deployed a progressive strategy designed in part to better appeal to and capture the young English-speaking Latina/o market.

In addition to the network's series, ABC Family has taken yet another step forward in terms of increasing Latina/o representation. With the popularity of *Pretty*

Little Liars, the network began running interstitials primarily taking place in the "ABC Family Lounge," during segments of the series. The network hired Puerto Rican actress Valery Ortiz—known for her work on the N network series *South of Nowhere*—to host the interstitials, which promote the network's series through short interviews with the actors. Most recently, the interstitials have also been used to promote blockbuster films, thus illustrating the value of millennial buying power. The fact that the network hired Ortiz to host the segments adds to the network's increasing Latina/o diversity.

ABC Family's strategy of Latina/o representation and greater participation and employment as creative personnel is not a short-term project. Rather, it is a long-term strategy for the brand. ABC Family announced in April 2013 that it is picking up a pilot, *Terminales*—now *Chasing Life*—an adaptation of the successful Televisa Spanish-language Mexican television series. While the story does not seem to revolve around Latina/o characters, it is significant that it is an adaptation of a Mexican telenovela. This is reminiscent of ABC's decision to pick up the adaptation of Colombian telenovela *Yo soy betty la fea* to *Ugly Betty* in 2006.

ABC Family is not alone in incorporating this strategy to capture the attention of millennial Latina/os. In October 2013, ABC and Univision together launched a new cable network, Fusion, which targets young Hispanics in a news/entertainment format. Fusion's targeted demographic includes millennial Hispanics. In an interview with *Here & Now*,

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Fusion CEO Isaac Lee is asked if the new network is trying to reach all millennials or just Hispanic millennials who speak English. Lee states:

> We are trying to reach millennials. But what we are not going to do is ignore that 20 percent of millennials are of Hispanic descent, that they have a huge influence in culture, in society, in politics, in the economy, and the best way for us to reach Hispanic millennials as a core audience is to give them great content. They do not want to get content that is specifically targeted at them; they just do not want to be disregarded or appear to be invisible. ("Univision and ABC News Launch New TV Channel 'Fusion'")

Lee's statements are in line with the new trend Arlene Dávila has found of marketers trying to include Latina/os in mainstream marketing, bypassing Hispanic marketing all together. At the same time, Lee's statements are contradictory given that the network has been highly promoted as a network for Hispanic millennials, specifically targeting them.

 In December 2013, Mexican-American filmmaker Robert Rodriguez also teams with Univision to launch his cable network El Rey, targeted specifically at male millennial Latinos. And though not constrained specifically to millennials, Jennifer Lopez's cable network NuvoTV also focuses on representing Latina/os to an English-speaking female audience. Of additional significance is that both El Rey and NuvoTV

offer opportunities to young Latina/o creatives to pitch their ideas to the networks, which will include original programming by Latina/os for Latina/os. This is the big push, to get more millennial Latina/os behind the camera and in positions to depict Latinidad as they see and live it.

Univision's change in strategy is also very notable. As mentioned in chapter one, Univision touted its dominant authority in the Hispanic market by manipulating the Spanish-language metrics of Nielsen ratings. At the time, the network invested only in Spanish-language programming and discouraged English-language marketing to Hispanic audiences. Their two new investments–Fusion and El Rey–demonstrate a change of heart. After the clear success of ABC Family's diverse programming proved the power of the English-speaking Latina/o millennial audience, along with Univision's purchase by Haim Saban's Saban Capital Group, Univision was compelled by market changes to diversify its offerings.

These new networks will create an interesting moment in Latina/o representation on television. Future scholars will be able to look at the emergence of these new networks aimed at millennial Latina/os to answer the following questions: Will these networks resonate with their more niche audiences as well as ABC Family's programs for broader millennial audiences? Will the presence of dedicated Latina/o programming create a renaissance of representation or will it backfire and ghettoize television as they release pressure from more mainstream networks to represent Latina/os frequently and with

quality? Will new verve for Latina/o creators offer well-funded opportunities to explore the unique issues of Latinidad, or will a market-driven gold-rush lead to a burst of "Mexploitation?"

It will be interesting to observe how these developments unfold. But based on the last few years, I believe there is great reason for hope that Latina/o representation on television is not only improving, but is poised for a watershed cultural moment.

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