



Seriously Different: Divergent Representations of the Latina Detective in *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*

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Abstract. This study situates two Latina characters from the television series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* within multiple contexts including Latinas on screen(s), the female detective, and transgressive representation within the sitcom genre itself. This study proposes that the use of comedy facilitates divergent representations of the female detective and Latina detective specifically.

The underrepresentation of Latinx generally and Latinas specifically in television programming has been well documented.¹ This means that the rare appearance of a recurring Latina character carries heavy weight. As Brett Mills points out, “the ways in which individuals and groups are presented to mass audiences are seen to presume something—whether causal or merely correlative—about the ways such individuals and groups are understood outside the media” (7). Furthermore, within the broader category of television programming, the sitcom (situation comedy) stands out as “a major forum for reflecting and shaping cultural ideals” (Landay 91). With all this in mind, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* is exceptional in its inclusion of two Latina characters, Detectives Rosa Diaz (Stephanie Beatriz) and Amy Santiago (Melissa Fumero). This study situates both characters within a multiplicity of contexts including Latinas on screen(s), the female detective, and transgressive representation within the genre of the sitcom itself. Moreover, this study proposes that although it may be counter-intuitive, it is the series’ use of comedy that opens up a space for “seriously different” or divergent representations of the female detective more broadly and Latina detective specifically.

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