

LIFE IN SERIES

ELISA HERNÁNDEZ-PÉREZ

Much has been written about television series in recent years. The number of academic articles, blogs and news stories on recent TV fiction has grown exponentially to reach surprising levels. This boom in literature and analysis has of course occurred in parallel with developments in television production itself, which has seen an increase in the number, quality and ambition of series offered to eager spectators. It would undoubtedly be fair to speak of television series as the most significant cultural products of the contemporary era. But would this not actually be a cliché, an empty statement that affords us the luxury of avoiding certain questions that may be uncomfortable, disquieting, or complex? After all, what role do TV series really have in our collective imagination? How and from what perspective should we understand them? Are they pure entertainment, works of art, social devices, or merely industrial products? What, in short, is a television series?

In this monograph we have sought to compile all these doubts to offer the reader a range of propositions that will enable us to conceive of the television series in a different way. Leaving aside the stories they tell or the worlds or characters they construct, series are examined in the articles comprising the Notebook section as cultural artefacts in the broadest sense of the term. Jason Mittell opens the monograph, making use of *The Wire* (HBO: 2002-2008) as a model for arguing that comparisons with other media may not be the best way of studying series, thus asserting the need to make sense of them in and through their own medium: television. In what rather resembles an involuntary answer to this first paper, Manuel Garin posits the need to recover and incorporate the notion of seriality into the different methodologies for analysing television series, because it is the serial structure itself that should be the determining factor for understanding and

studying television fiction. From a totally different perspective, Francesco Parisi and Olimpia Calì reflect on the cognitive impact that serialised messages extended over time have on our abilities to create and transform memories and mental images. Meanwhile, José Rodríguez-Terceño, Juan Enrique González Vallés and David Caldevilla Domínguez explore how a strategy like the ongoing use of violence in series can serve to build a story and the emotional relationship between the characters and the spectator in *Daredevil* (Netflix, 2015-). Focusing on production and distribution, Enrique Canovaca's study analyses various examples of adaptations of American series in Spain with the aim of shedding light on a complex process of intercultural translation that does not always result in what its creators had in mind. Finally, the Notebook section closes with Aarón Rodríguez Serrano's contribution, an analysis of the construction of the gaze in Paolo Sorrentino's *The Young Pope* (HBO: 2016-), confirming the fact that seriality can also help us to reflect on questions that go much further than television production.

Complimenting the Notebook section is an interview with Javier Olivares, co-creator (together with his late brother Pablo) of *The Ministry of Time* (El Ministerio del Tiempo, TVE: 2015-), a series that could be considered the first uniquely Spanish TV phenomenon. In the interview, Olivares talks about the many joys and woes of his long and productive career as a television screenwriter, while also offering a privileged view of the inner workings of the Spanish film and television industry. Continuing with this idea and further underlining the point that television series are no more than the visible result of an economic and industrial apparatus, the (Dis)Agreements section presents a discussion between experts in television from different parts of the world (Spain, France, the United States, Colombia and New Zealand), in an exchange of ideas, observations and interpretations that form part of the vast and wide-rang-

ing debate over the almost ineffable phenomenon that is cultural globalisation.

As always, this issue of *L'Atalante* closes with the various contributions of the Vanishing Points section, which this time take us from the representation of desire as an absence in the films of Marguerite Duras to the presence of pop art in *Zabriskie Point* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1970), to the poetics of montage in Val del Omar's film *Aguaespejo granadino* (1960) and the use of music in the films of Pere Portabella. Although these studies may at first glance seem far removed from the central theme of this issue #24 of *L'Atalante* (the analysis of the role and function of television seriality in our contemporary cultural context), in reality they are all built on the same foundation, of that sense of curiosity and fascination that prompts us to wonder what lies behind all those images which, whether serialised or not, seduce us time and time again. Why? How? Although we may not be able to offer a definitive answer, we are grateful for the opportunity to go on asking these questions and sharing them with others who have pondered them. ■

LIFE IN SERIES

Abstract

Presentation of the contents of issue 24 of *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos*, which reflects upon television series and their consideration as central cultural products at current times. The text goes over the articles present in the Notebook section, which address the topic of television fiction from different perspectives. Moreover, it refers to the interview with Javier Olivares, creator of (2015-), in the Dialogue section, as well as the discussion held by various international experts about series from an industrial point of view in (Dis)agreements. Both sections complement the theoretical point of view on the topic offered in the Notebook section. Finally, a reference is made to the articles included in the Vanishing Points section, highlighting the links existing between the cinematographic analysis made in those articles and the analysis of television series carried out in the rest of the issue.

Key words

Seriality; Television fiction; Cultural artifacts; Contemporary age.

Author

Elisa Hernández-Pérez received her Bachelor's Degree in Art History from Universidad de Salamanca in 2010. She has a Master's Degree in Art History and Visual Culture (2012) and another in Interculturality and Communication (2013), both from Universitat de València. She is currently working on her PhD dissertation, which is a textual analysis of the representation of contemporary capitalist discourse in the television series *The Wire* (David Simon, HBO: 2002-2008), as a pre-doctoral research fellow in Communication Studies at Universitat de València, through the FPU PhD scholarship program (Ministry of Education of Spain).

Article reference

Hernández-Pérez, Elisa (2017). Life in series. *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos*, 24, 7-9.

LA VIDA EN SERIE

Resumen

Presentación de los contenidos del número 24 de *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos*, que reflexiona en torno a las series de televisión y su consideración como productos culturales centrales en el momento actual. El texto repasa los artículos presentes en el Cuaderno, que abordan el tema de la ficción televisiva desde distintas perspectivas. Además, hace referencia a la entrevista a Javier Olivares, creador de *El Ministerio del Tiempo* (2015-), que compone el Diálogo, así como a la discusión mantenida por diversos expertos internacionales en torno a las series desde un punto de vista industrial en (Des)encuentros. Ambas secciones complementan la visión teórica del tema ofrecida en el Cuaderno. Por último, se alude a los artículos incluidos en la sección de Puntos de fuga y los vínculos que unen el análisis cinematográfico realizado en dichos artículos con el análisis de las series realizado en el resto del número.

Palabras clave

Serialidad; ficción televisiva; artefactos culturales; época contemporánea.

Autora

Elisa Hernández-Pérez (Tenerife, 1988) es licenciada en Historia del Arte por la Universidad de Salamanca. Tras cursar el Máster en Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual (2012) y el Máster en Interculturalidad y Políticas Comunicativas de la Sociedad de la Información (2013), ambos por la Universitat de València, actualmente se encuentra realizando su tesis doctoral, un análisis de la representación del discurso capitalista contemporáneo en la serie de televisión *The Wire* (David Simon, HBO: 2002-2008), como becaria FPU (Ministerio de Educación).

Referencia de este artículo

Hernández-Pérez, Elisa (2017). La vida en serie. *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos*, 24, 7-9.

Edita / Published by



Licencia / License



ISSN 1885-3730 (print) / 2340-6992 (digital) DL V-5340-2003 WEB www.revistaatalante.com MAIL info@revistaatalante.com
