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Editors

Televising Restoration Spain

History and Fiction in Twenty-First-Century
Costume Dramas

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

David R. George, Jr. and Wan Sonya Tang

In episode 32 “Tiempo de Verbena” of Televisión Española’s sci-fi history series *El Ministerio del Tiempo* (TVE, 2015–2017), the character Angustias (Francesca Piñon) takes a break from her post as secretary in the Ministry of Time to travel back to 1894 in hopes of landing tickets for the premiere of her favorite *zarzuela*, *La verbena de la Paloma*. Having missed the show because of her mother’s illness, she is profoundly dismayed to discover upon arriving at the defunct Teatro Apolo in Madrid that the performance has been canceled. Angustias returns to the present and persuades the ministry to send her back in the company of special agents Lola (Macarena García) and “Pacino” (Hugo Silva) to ensure that the show goes on to make history. Within the structure of the series, this particular mission serves as a comic digression from the main plotline, but nonetheless falls within the purview of the government ministry charged with safeguarding the course of Spanish history against the meddling of rival secret societies. The agents initially question the importance of saving a *zarzuela*

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CHAPTER 2

Fortunata's Long Shadow: The Restoration as Televisual Heritage in *Acacias 38* and *El Secreto de Puente Viejo*

David R. George, Jr.

In the summer of 2017, actor-singer Ana Belén addressed a group of scholars during the inaugural session of the XI Congreso Galdosiano, a conference dedicated to the study of the literature of Realist novelist Benito Pérez Galdós in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria. The iconic celebrity of the Transition recalled the experience of playing Fortunata in the 1980 Televisión Española (TVE) adaptation of Galdós's *Fortunata y Jacinta*, insisting on the continued relevance of the author and his novels as a rich source of material for twenty-first-century dramas (Hernández 2017).¹ The actor's comments were tinged with nostalgia for the period between 1978 and 1982 when miniseries based on works of Spanish literature figured prominently in the public broadcaster's program schedule and played a part in the consolidation of democracy. Her words also rang pessimistic when she contrasted the "quality" programing of the past with that of the present, echoing the disdain for Spanish television

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Profane Unions: Constructing Heritage from Anarchist-Bourgeois Romances in *Ull per ull* and *Barcelona, ciutat neutral*

Elena Cueto Asín

In conjunction with the publication of his book *L'anarquisme, fet diferencial català. Influència i llegat de l'anarquisme en la història i la societat catalana contemporània*, Xavier Díez declared “the Catalan anarchist movement to be a consciously silenced history” (Esteban 2013). The explanation for this silencing, according to the author, resides in the generally negative image of anarchism held by elites of every political color, including progressive liberals, and with the insistent identification of Catalans with the decidedly bourgeois values of a strong work ethic, law and order, and thrift. These traits overshadow the tradition of resistance and revolution that truly differentiate the region from other parts of Spain. Xavier Theros, 2017 winner of the prestigious Josep Pla Prize for prose, reiterates the idea when he observes that Barcelona has typically been explained through the lens of the bourgeoisie, such that nineteenth-century Catalonia, apart from the final decades

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CHAPTER 4

New Technologies and Transmedia Storytelling in *Víctor Ros*: Captivating Audiences at the Turn of the Century

Mónica Barrientos Bueno and Ángeles Martínez García

Víctor Ros, the eponymous hero of the 2015 Televisión Española (TVE) series,¹ is adventurous and intuitive, but also guided by logical, deductive reasoning. His character undeniably echoes the archetypal detective par excellence, Sherlock Holmes. Rescued from a life of juvenile delinquency by a policeman, Ros becomes the most brilliant officer in the fictional Metropolitan Brigade in Madrid, where he does not hesitate to apply techniques akin to those used in Scotland Yard. Premiering on January 12, 2015 on channel one of Spain's public broadcasting network,² the series achieved in its first season an audience of 2,342,000 viewers and a share of 11.7% of the market, 2.2 points above TVE's average quota during the period in which the show was broadcast. The second season was produced a year later without the participation of its original creator

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From Photography to Forensics: Technology, Modernity, and the Internationalization of Spanish History in *Gran Hotel*

Wan Sonya Tang

In June of 2016, the popular Egyptian channel Capital Broadcast Center (CBC) premiered a new television series titled *Grand Hotel* (Beelink Productions, Eagle Films, 2016). Following the trials and tribulations faced by the owners and employees of a lavish hotel in 1950s Egypt, the series aired during “super-prime time” Ramadan, when Arabic channels typically broadcast their best programming to capitalize on the particularly large viewership (VideoAge 2016). With high production values, an acclaimed cast, and an action-packed plot, the show quickly became an “obvious winner” of the 2016 Ramadan season (El Goarany 2016). Yet the Arabic series, which “rings truly Egyptian” in the words of film and television critic Soha Hesham, is not an original Egyptian concept, but rather a remake of the Spanish hit *Gran Hotel*, which originally aired on privately

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CHAPTER 6

Dresses, Cassocks, and Coats: Costuming Restoration Gender Fantasies in *La Señora*

Nicholas Wolters

The award-winning Spanish television series *La Señora* aired between March 2008 and January 2010 on channel 1 of the state-owned broadcaster Televisión Española (TVE).¹ Created and written by Virginia Yagüe, the show predates the globally successful British period drama *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015) by a few years and paved the way for other hit televisual dramas in Spain like *Gran Hotel* (2011–2013), just as broadcast funding for Spain's national television network was experiencing a transformative restructuring due in large part to the 2008 global financial crisis. *La Señora*'s airing also coincided with the collapse of Spain's housing market, sharp spikes in the national debt and unemployment rates, and the establishment of lasting and popular social activist movements like 15-M.² Whether or not *La Señora* resonated with its fans for its direct engagement with socioeconomic issues still relevant to them,

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“Las normas son para romperlas”: Emilia Pardo Bazán, Carmen de Burgos, and the Unruly Women of *Seis Hermanas*

Linda M. Willem

Seis hermanas (Six Sisters) is an afternoon series consisting of 490 episodes televised on TVE1 from April 22, 2015 through April 21, 2017.¹ The story takes place in Madrid from 1913 to 1917. The six protagonists are young upper-class women whose lives are dramatically changed when their father unexpectedly dies of a heart attack, leaving them without either parent alive. The initial premise of the series is founded on their fear that, as women without a male sibling, they will lose control of the family business. Consequently, they hide the truth from the public and secretly embark on career paths that develop their individual talents. The creators of *Seis hermanas*, Gema R. Neira and Ramón Campos, have stated that the series is “una historia de superación” (a story of overcoming) in which “el tema de la discriminación de la mujer” (the theme of discrimination against women) is explored as the sisters “desafian las convenciones sociales” (defy the social conventions) of their era (RTVE, n.d.).

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Bandolera: Limits and Possibilities of Period *Telenovelas*

Francisca López

Bandolera is a Diagonal TV production for Antena 3 that was on the air for two years, from October 1, 2011 to November 1, 2013. Except for its premiere, broadcast in prime time, it occupied the afternoon slot (horario de sobremesa), the most common for *telenovelas* in Spain. In this slot, the program earned an average share of 10.5% (Vertele) while competing on the national level with another period serial, *Amar en tiempos revueltos* (TVE), and a gossip show, *Sálvame* (Telecinco).

Set in Arazana, a fictitious Andalusian town in 1882–1887,¹ the series is a somewhat innovative hybrid product that draws from several genres. Mixing characteristics from period dramas, *telenovelas* and action shows, *Bandolera* tells the story of Sara Reeves, an English woman enamored of all things Andalusian who leaves her home and family in London to travel to Southern Spain hoping to bring some excitement into her life. Although perfectly integrated in her new home soon after her arrival (first as a reporter and, only a few months later, as a landowner and business woman), Sara does find excitement. She takes advantage of being

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Creating Locally for a Global Audience: *Seis hermanas* and the Costume Serial Drama as Quality Television

Concepción Cascajosa Virino

Seis hermanas (Bambú Producciones 2015–2017) may be considered one of the most innovative television fictions produced in Spain in recent years. It is an extremely ambitious daytime serial, both in narrative terms and as a representation of the Restoration period. Created by Ramón Campos and Gema R. Neira and developed by Verónica Fernández as script coordinator, *Seis hermanas* premiered on April 22, 2015 with a prime-time special that introduced the viewers to the Silva sisters, six young women living in Madrid in 1913, a time when women had little legal autonomy. After the sudden death of their father Fernando (Emilio Gutiérrez Caba), they decide to pretend that he is still alive in order to maintain control of the family textile factory, Tejidos Silva. In its regular afternoon slot on TVE1, state-owned Televisión Española's (TVE) main channel, the program followed the adventures of the six young women facing both personal and professional challenges. The two oldest sisters

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Commercializing Nostalgia and Constructing Memory in *As leis de Celavella*

Maria Gil Poisa

Between 2004 and 2006, Televisión de Galicia (TVG) broadcast three seasons of the fiction series *As leis de Celavella* (*Celavella's Laws*), co-produced with Voz Audiovisual, the second most important television production company in Galicia after the public network. Set in the 1920s, the plot of the series develops around a young lawyer, Don Pablo Veiga, who returns to his hometown after finishing his law studies and, due to unexpected circumstances, starts working as a private detective solving mysteries in the village. Created by Cheché Carmona and Pepe Coira, and co-directed by Gerard Gormezano, Jorge Coira and Carlos Sedes, the show received 19 Mestre Mateo Awards for its direction, production, screenplay, and acting.¹ The program, which continues to be rerun, was broadcast on Monday evenings in the coveted 10:30 p.m. prime time slot and received a 22% audience share on the first night (La Voz de Galicia 2005). According to the broadcaster's website,

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“Felices años veinte?”: *Las chicas del cable* and the Iconicity of 1920s Madrid

Leslie J. Harkema

The pilot of the Netflix original series *Las chicas del cable* (*Cable Girls*) is set against the backdrop of an historic event: the first international telephone communication between Spain and the USA.¹ On October 13, 1928, US President Calvin Coolidge spoke with King Alfonso XIII in a brief conversation that reinforced diplomatic ties and paid tribute to Spain’s imperial legacy in the Americas. Evoking the achievements of the Spanish explorers of the New World, Coolidge heralded the expanding reaches of the new technology of transnational telecommunication.² The Spanish monarch responded warmly to the President’s words, while seated in a large room on the third floor of Madrid’s Telefónica building, located on Calle Pi y Maragall (now Gran Vía). Still under construction at the time, the Telefónica building would soon become an emblem of Madrilenian modernity.

The reenactment of this momentous phone call in the last minutes of the first episode of *Las chicas del cable* carries its own symbolic charge, as the series represents another first for US–Spain collaborations

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The End of the Restoration: A Vision from the Early Second Republic in *14 de abril. La República*

Iván Gómez García

On April 14, 1931, the Second Republic was proclaimed in Spain. Republican candidates had won in 41 provincial capitals in the municipal elections two days before, although the rural areas of the country continued to be conservative and reluctant to change. The proclamation brought to a close the long period known as the Restoration, which was plagued by various institutional crises in the first decades of the twentieth century. Many of the problems that beset the economic and social structures of the country had gone unresolved, and the advent of what promised to be a true democracy signaled a fresh hope for many. This moment of change and transformation serves as the backdrop for the 2011 Televisión Española (TVE) series *14 de abril. La República* (Diagonal TV, 2011). The first season is set in the months following the April 14 proclamation, and the story line by and large focuses on the tensions wrought by the imperfect and incomplete agrarian reforms pursued by the nascent

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