

ISSUE TEN

# EXPLOITS

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**La CASA de PAPEL**

*by* **William Dowell**

***The IMPORTANCE of PRESERVATION •  
MITSKI • VIDEOGAME MENUS •  
ESSAYISM • The LORD of the RINGS***

# TELEVISION



**La CASA de PAPEL** – I remember my first online language exchange session earlier this fall. I decided I wanted to learn how to speak Spanish and wanted to practice by doing. So in my dedication, I reached out to a man in Madrid and proceeded to talk with him over Skype. I then realized I was quite over my head, as my two years of high school Spanish classes were useless in basic conversation. Luckily, my language partner was extremely patient and, near the end, recommended me a Netflix show called *La Casa De Papel*, saying I could use it as a listening exercise.

Listening to *La Casa De Papel*, it was clear that media, especially works that are produced in different countries, can have unintended purposes. Listening exercises are relatively common in learning a new language, but *La Casa De Papel* created context and incentivized actively trying to understand what was spoken. With the actors actually speaking Spanish, it was easier to both see and hear the accents and pronunciations for each word.

The show itself is a dramatic heist, as criminals try to use the Royal Mint of Spain to print out billions of euros. This drama is intensified as an inexperienced Spanish speaker, as one

struggles to make out exactly what is being said, since subtitles don't always show every conversation. That unfamiliarity created tension that made *La Casa De Papel* even more engaging.

This ability for media to teach and inspire learning is not solely delegated to languages. Films such as *The Imitation Game* and *The King's Speech* encouraged me to learn more about history while pop music helped me understand practical applications of chord progressions. Even more importantly, media can show new cultural viewpoints and how they are represented in art. *La Casa De Papel* not only gave me plenty of opportunities to try and understand Spanish, but also commented on the power dynamics of masculinity through the male characters' interactions with each other. It used over-the-top characters to show the casual potential of masculine violence and highlighted it though high stakes situations.

Admittedly, my Spanish is still terrible, but I am slowly learning. Media gives plentiful opportunities to learn and grow; you just have to be open to new experiences.

– WILLIAM DOWELL