Netflix and Crime: Identification with the Characters of
La Casa de Papel Spanish Series

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Abstract

This study examines the Netflix Spanish series *La Casa de Papel* as a pragmatic example of a series that addresses questions of criminal justification. In this qualitative study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 Saudi participants. The findings suggest that the Saudi viewers justified the characters' crimes influenced by fundamental attribution error. Viewers' identification with the characters could be seen in their empathy with the robbery team and their desire for threatening characters to die. Viewers also stated that they did not want the criminals to be caught. In fact, viewers felt sad and emotional when the characters were shot or caught. Participants ranked the Professor, Tokyo, Berlin, and Nairobi as the most liked characters. Conversely, the least liked characters were Arturo Román and Sierra because they threatened the success of the robbery. Finally, participants accepted the banker joining the team, while they opposed detective Lisbon joining it.

Keywords: identification, La Casa de Papel, money heist, Netflix, Saudi Arabia, Spanish series

La Casa de Papel is a Spanish series originally produced by Netflix. The police series, also known as *The Professor* and *Money Heist*, has been highly rated at 8.8 out of 10 by 34,438 viewers (González Rosero, 2019). It has attracted viewers internationally and become very popular. The series, which has been released in four seasons, is about highly planned robberies committed by the main character, "the Professor," and his carefully chosen team members known as: Tokyo, Berlin, Nairobi, Oslo, Rio, Denver, Moscow, and Helsinki. Later, two more women decide to join the team: the detective investigating the heist and a bank clerk who is pregnant after having had an affair with a married man.

Throughout the seasons, the team members commit robberies wearing Salvador Dali masks and red jumpsuits and singing "Bella Ciao," a song used as an anthem by the Italian anti-fascist resistance during World War II. The song is used in the series as a way to motivate and cheer up the team members. Like the mask and the jumpsuit, this song about resistance has become a global symbol. In Saudi Arabia, these symbols have gained popularity at football stadiums, private parties, coffee shops, and vibe and cigar stores. Stores and cafés wanting to gain the attention of young buyers dress the staff and decorate the store in a style that references the series. A store in Jeddah that sells electronic vibes and cigars is named "The Professor" and has become so famous that young individuals have been waiting in lines to buy products even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, costumes are being sold on Instagram stores for those wanting to personalize their party or store.

In July 2019, fans of the Saudi football team known as "Al-Etihad," meaning "The Union," raised a banner referencing *La Casa de Papel* in a stadium. The banner depicted team manager José Luis Sierra and team members. The colors of their clothes were yellow and black to match the football team's colors (Alriyadh, 2019, n.p.). The second season of the series made reference to how the masks have inspired people on an international level, including football fans in Saudi. In one episode, the Professor gives a speech to his team and shows examples of how the mask has become a global symbol. He shows pictures of protests and a football match, saying: "This is a peaceful march against corruption in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, feminist protests, Colombia, Rome, Paris, the 20th conference in Hamburg." Then a sign appears that says "freedom, resistance, equality." Then the professor proceeds: "We have inspired a lot of people…even in a stadium in Paris…in Saudi…and they have now become in our team."

Figure 1
Saudi Football Fans of "Etihad" Making Reference to the Series

Popular YouTubers have posted videos imitating and commenting on the series. For instance, in a YouTube video titled "The Professor, The Saudi branch" (Mashahir tuyub, 2019), a Saudi character imitates the Professor's style and lectures two men and a lady in Spanish about a future robbery. This video was viewed 508,798 times and was liked by about 8,500 viewers. Another YouTube video was posted on April 2018 showing a professor in Saudi traditional clothing lecturing a number of people, including a woman in the veil and niqab, a religious man, and three other men. Similar to the series, this professor explains the rules of a robbery on the board while individuals sit at school desks. This video was viewed by 53,459 viewers (‹ المنفوحة دي لاكاسا La casa de papel, 2018). Another droll video imitating the series was titled "La Casa de Al-Shamal," meaning "La Casa of the North" and was viewed 63,568 times. In this YouTube video, the team members are named after Saudi regions, such as Tabuk, Al-Qassim, and Arar, and a local song is played instead of "Bella Ciao" (Qanat sundaqa, 2021). The number of views, likes, and comments for these videos indicates that Saudi viewers are highly engaged with and attached to the series.

A Saudi social media celebrity known as Darin Albayed, who has 4.2 million followers on her Instagram account, posted a video titled "The Professor: Jeddah. The Most Important and Most Dangerous Fan." The video was viewed 396,741 times on YouTube, and 1,114 people commented on the video. Darin suggests that she would like to act in the series under the name Jeddah, which is the second-largest city in Saudi, and claims that she has memorized all the episodes after watching them 30 times (Netflix MENA, 2019). In the video, she is wearing the costume and pretends to be acting in the series; she also plays the song "Bella Ciao" on a piano. She says, "When Berlin died, I felt that I lost one of my brothers." Then she enters a room with papers all over the walls, saying, "I've been working for a year to prove that Berlin did not die and he will appear again." This was a promotional video by Netflix to attract Saudi viewers days before launching the third season.

Previous literature has examined aspects of this particular series. González Rosero (2019) conducted a discourse analysis and found that the series presents crime as business and thus signals to viewers that robbery is a legitimate way to make money. Furthermore, her study showed how the robbers are presented as revolutionaries acting against an oppressive system, which makes their actions socially understandable. Another recent quantitative study conducted on a sample of 400 Saudi viewers of *La Casa de Papel* confirmed that 85% of the respondents perceived the Professor, who is the main character planning the heists, as a mastermind and guardian angel (Qutub, 2020, n.p.). Moreover, 62% of the participants in the study found the crimes to be acceptable and justifiable. This qualitative study intends to investigate whether viewers identify with the characters in the series and how. It also attempts to convey viewers' opinions of the characters, scenes, and scenario. Furthermore, the study discusses viewers' emotional responses to scenes from *La Casa de Papel*.

Identification with "Morally Complex" Characters

Previous studies have suggested that viewers are attracted to "bad boy" characters and morally complex characters (Keen, McCoy, and Powell, 2012; Raney and Janicke, 2012). Some of the trending examples of such characters in Netflix productions include Walter White, the chemist in *Breaking Bad*, the drug dealer in *Narcos,* the title character in *Joker*, the title character in *Dexter*, and the Professor in *La Casa de Papel*. Although these characters appear to be psychopaths according to the producers and the scenario, audiences like their unpredictable roles and empathize with their motives and actions, which include robbery, kidnapping, killing, drug dealing, and deception.

From a psychological perspective, people are able to empathize with villains or bad boys when they are provided with lots of information about the social and environmental forces that affect them. This information allows viewers to avoid the fundamental attribution error; because they are aware of the social and environmental situation, they attribute the criminal acts to external factors in the environment rather than misattributing them to internal factors (Keen, McCoy, and Powell 2012). This attribution results from viewers' identification with characters and repetitive exposure that leads to a familiarity with these characters and the series. According to Raney and Janicke (2012), viewers have a tendency to empathize with "morally complex characters" who have both good and bad traits. This type of character with complex ethics is increasingly popular in contemporary series.

In the case of *La Casa de Papel*, the majority of the participants in the study admired the characters of the Professor and Berlin, the Professor's brother who died in the first season. Referring to Berlin's role and character, the series director said that "The audience expects something big…so there's nothing better than a villain who also provokes feelings of empathy…he's contemptible. He's a misogynist, a narcissist, and a psychopath in many ways" (Lejarreta and Alfaro, 2020). There are scenes where Berlin is suffering from a health issue that has no cure, so viewers identify with the character regardless of his harassing and violent actions. As for the Professor, the director described him as:

> A very smart and brilliant character…the head of a criminal organization at the same time he is a loser…we shaped him almost like a nerd who wants to stay away from society…he has problem with dealing with women…he is a sociopath in many ways. Such an ordinary person was able to create something so big. (Lejarreta and Alfaro, 2020)

In the first season, the viewers learn that the Professor planned the whole thing to fulfill his father's dream. Information about the Professor's motive and Berlin's health condition allows viewers to identify with the characters and justify their actions. Thus, two of the most morally complex characters have become the two most liked, based on the series review and a previous study (Qutub, 2020, n.p.).

Methods

In-depth interviews were conducted in this qualitative study. In-depth interviews provide rich descriptive information about the phenomenon being researched, allowing participants to describe their worlds and to construct their own narratives (Tracy, 2013). The current study seeks to understand individuals' opinions and perceptions of the series. For this reason, we selected qualitative interviewing to allow participants to express their experiences using their own words rather than numeric data. The interviews were conducted with 17 Saudi viewers of the series ranging from 19 to 22 years old. The face-to-face interviews consisted of 15 women and 2 men. All participants had seen at least seen two seasons of *La Casa de Papel*. The interviews were conducted after the third season was released on Netflix and before the fourth season launched. Participants were Saudi university students from various majors, including computer engineering, media, management, business, and art. There were two freshmen who did not have a major yet. Participants were asked 30 open-ended questions and the interviews lasted 35–55 minutes.

Results

The study explored Saudi viewers' opinions and perceptions regarding the characters and scenes of *La Casa de Papel*. First, we will address the results regarding participants' perceptions of the characters, followed by an analysis of the five most influential scenes.

The Most Liked Characters

According to the participants, the Professor was the most liked character, followed by Tokyo, Berlin, and Nairobi. Although this study included only 17 participants, Qutub's recent (2020) study with 400 Saudi viewers confirms this finding; in this study, the Professor was ranked as the most liked character (chosen by 36.3% of participants), followed by Berlin (27.5%), Tokyo (about 18%), and Nairobi (about 11%). The current study placed Tokyo in the second position rather than Berlin.

To understand what attracted the audience to these characters, we asked participants about the roles and personalities of the characters. Seven participants indicated that they liked the Professor due to his intelligence, creativity, and patience. For instance, Manal said, "I liked the Professor because of how he planned everything ahead and things are going just as he wants." Viewers thought of him as a mastermind; when asked about her reason for liking this character the most, Sara said, "because it was all his plan and idea."

The Professor's ability to come up with alternative plans, as in the first season when he had to burn a car and dress up as a homeless man to conceal his identity, was another trait that attracted the viewers to this character. This feeling was expressed by Raghad: "I love the Professor because of his intelligence and his ability to find alternative plans in a short period of time." His ability to solve problems is crucial for the success of the operation and therefore greatly appreciated by viewers who want the team to prevail. His patience was another trait pointed out by viewers. Rotana explained, "I really like his character because of his intelligence and delegation skills. I also admire his patience for years to implement his plan and how he carefully selected his team and reached them before the police."

Tokyo was chosen as a favorite character by five participants, making her the second most liked character. For instance, Raghad, who is a 20-year-old design student, said, "I really liked the personality of Tokyo because her personality is similar to my personality. Also, we are both the same."

In third place was the character of Berlin, who was the Professor's brother. Three participants said Berlin was the most liked character in the series. Roba, who is 19 years old, said, "I like Berlin because he was able to deal with all these incidents." Another participant said, "I liked Berlin because of a number of situations." Nairobi was chosen as a favorite character by two participants for her charisma and ability to lead. Sarah, a 19-year-old media student, said, "I like how she has a strong personality and leadership skills." Abdullah, a 19-year-old freshman, said that he liked Denver mostly "because he lives in the moment." Three participants said they did not have a favorite character.

The Most Hated Characters

We asked participants if there were any characters who they wished to eliminate or hoped would die in the series. Participants mentioned that they disliked three characters: Arturo Román and the two female detectives. Three participants mentioned that they wished Arturo Román had been killed. As Rotana explained: "Arturo was useless to the team. In fact, he

always distracted them from their main mission." Raghad added: "I didn't like his character at all nor his appearance…I hated his character." Two participants disliked detective Lisbon, who was perceived "as an obstacle for the Professor," as participant Sara described. On the other hand, participants felt irritated at the other female detective named Sierra "because she was very smart."

Characters and Role Playing

To understand viewers' identification with the characters, we asked them, "Which character would you choose if you were to be invited by the producer to play a role in the series and why this character?" Participants' answers included the following characters: Tokyo, Nairobi, Berlin, Rio, the Professor, detective Lisbon, and Denver.

Table 1

The Character Participants wish to Role-Play and their Reason

The number of participants	Gender	The character chosen for role-playing	Described as
8	7 Female, 1 Male	Tokyo	Strong, cute, similar to my personality, nice but has flaws
4	Female	Nairobi	Rational, logical, strong, leader, non-judgmental
2	1 male, 1 female	Berlin	Great, important, responsible
1	Female	Rio	Hacker
1	Female	The Professor	Highly Intelligent, incredible planner
1	Female	Detective Lisbon	Unexpected
1	Male	Denver	Lives the moment
1	Female	None	•

Surprisingly, 8 of the 17 participants said that they would choose to play the role of Tokyo. These participants were all female, except for one. Reasons for this selection revolved around liking the character and thinking she had a strong personality. A couple of participants mentioned, "I would have played Tokyo's role because she has such a strong personality." Khloud, who is 23 years old, said, "Tokyo's personality is the total opposite of who I am, so I would like to play her role to experience life from her point of view."

Four participants mentioned that they would have chosen to play the role of Nairobi. Viewers appreciated her rationality and leadership skills the most. For instance, Sara described her in this way:

> I feel that she is different from the rest…she is not impulsive…she thinks. Also, you feel that Nairobi is the opposite from the rest of the members because she does not attack others and she tries to fix things instead of creating problems…she is peaceful and her thinking is stable.

Ghada, who is 20 years old, explained: "I am fond of Nairobi because she thinks…I feel she is a leader and accurate and has discipline, so I like her personality a lot."

Participants' responses showed that they often compared Nairobi's character to Tokyo's character. Participants liked that these women have a strong personality, yet they critiqued the impulsiveness of Tokyo; they complained that when she is motivated by her emotions, she messes up the plan. On the other hand, Nairobi's rationality was what attracted female viewers to her character. Placing both Nairobi and Tokyo among the most liked characters indicates that viewers crave roles of female leaders and heroes who play major roles.

Two participants mentioned that they would like to play the role of Berlin. Ammar, who is a 22-year-old male participant, explained, "I would like to play Berlin's role because he is a responsible person whom you could count on." Similarly, Shahad, who is a 20-year-old media student, justified her selection with a smile: "honestly, Berlin is a GREAT personality in the series." When asked whether she formed this opinion before or after Berlin's death, Shahad said, "Berlin was such an important character before he sacrificed his life in the first season." It is interesting to know that participants of both genders were this influenced by Berlin's psychopathic personality and would like to play his role.

Surprisingly, Samerah, who is a 20-year-old student majoring in computer engineering, mentioned that she would like to play the role of Rio. According to Samerah, "Rio is a hacker and I wish to become a hacker myself." This shows how viewers identified with both the personalities and actions of the characters. Of all the robbers, Samerah liked the person whose background was related to her specialty and wished to follow in his footsteps, regardless of the ethical issues involved with becoming a hacker.

Comparing Detective Lisbon and Mónica Joining the Robbery Team
In the series, there are two female characters who were not originally part of the team but join it later: Mónica the banker and detective Lisbon. Lisbon joined the team because she fell in love with the Professor (the leader). On the other hand, Mónica, who is later known as Stockholm, joined because she was feeling frustrated with her situation; she had told Arturo (the married man whom she was in love with) about her pregnancy, and he had abandoned his responsibilities. As illustrated in the Table below, participants had opposing opinions on these women joining the team.

Table 2
Participants' Opinions on the Banker and Detective Joining the Team

Participant	Opinion on detective Lisbon joining the team	Opinion on Mónica joining the team
Raghad	"I did not like that Lisbon suddenly joined the team because I felt she couldn't be trusted after she changed her principles. Her ambition was to fight for what is right before meeting The Professor."	"I liked Mónica joining the team because she wanted to help and support the team after being an ordinary citizen."
Khloud	"Lisbon's union with the team doesn't make sense at all…it is an unacceptable thing to do as a policewoman…also the love feelings seemed exaggerated."	"I liked Mónica joined the team because she wanted to help and support the team after being an ordinary citizen."

Manal	"I thought Lisbon's transference to the team was stupid because it was a sudden move. I mean she was a strong woman and she tried very hard to find them and suddenly when she fell in love, she changed sides!! I also felt that the team underestimated her value after she joined the team."	"I liked how Mónica joined the team because she saw an opportunity and took it and was able to change her life 180 degrees."
Rotana	"I totally oppose Lisbon's transference to the robbery team because it is her duty to accomplish her mission and to capture the robbers not to identify with the robbers and I couldn't accept that her love for the professor as a reason to change her goal."	"I was empathetic with Mónica being a victim and helpless. And I understand that she wasn't able to ignore her love feelings for one of the gang members."
Abdullah	"Lisbon is a personality that cannot be trusted…but she was useful to the team in the third season…I mean I didn't really like her but she was smart."	"I guess it was ok in her case."
Ghada	"It was Dangerous for Lisbon to do so. However, the team later gained benefits from her, Lisbon."	"It was ok for Mónica to join the team."
Ammar	"I support Lisbon's move to the team's side. It was the right action. I believe that love is superior to being a cop or being professional."	"Mónica's shift is very ordinary"
Shahad	"I could not stand Lisbon's shift to the team; you don't just give away your career for love and become a robber especially since she was in charge of this case."	"As for Mónica, she had an ordinary career so it was ok for her to change sides unlike Lisbon."
Samerah	"The detective joining with the team was wrong and provocative because she changed her loyalty from the police."	"Mónica's situation was not that important so it wasn't a big deal."
Mashael	"It was stupid of the detective to join the robbers…a policewoman taking the side of the criminals!"	"I think it was wrong of Mónica to join the team as well."
Norah	"Lisbon's action is unacceptable because she betrayed her country and this may signal to viewers that it is somehow acceptable to betray your country."	"Mónica's action is wrong but it is less harmful because she did not harm anyone."
Razan	"I believe it is wrong to quit one's job and life for a person."	"Mónica's case was ok because she loved someone and got pregnant and he abandoned her and she was alone."
Ranem	"I think women may do anything for love and the series was loaded with romantic relationships which led to their failure sometimes. But Lisbon was totally wrong when joining the team because she was in charge and she knew the consequences but still she chose to join them instead of capturing them."	"She was wrong but not as wrong as Lisbon."

Afaf	"It was wrong of both of them to join the team. I mean they were on the right track and then took a wrong turn. The leader succeeded in attracting them to join the team."
Taif	"I felt happy when both Lisbon and Mónica joined the team and I wished that there were more members because they would bring enthusiasm to the series."

As shown, most participants found it to be acceptable for Mónica to join the robbers, while they were against Lisbon joining the robbery team. The majority of participants highlighted two reasons for their objection to detective Lisbon's shift to the team. First, Lisbon represents law and safety, so her shift to the criminal side created discomfort. Second, viewers thought that love was not an adequate motive for her to throw away her career and everything she believed in to become a member of the criminal team. During the interviews, participants indicated that they liked Tokyo and Nairobi for their strong personalities and ability to lead. With that in mind, Lisbon's shift from being a policewoman to becoming a criminal was perceived as motivated by weakness and influenced by emotions. On the other hand, participants were empathetic with Mónica's situation and involvement with the team. Mónica was perceived to be in a weak position, and her job as a banker did not raise concerns or result in a dilemma for the viewers.

Although both Lisbon and Mónica are motivated by their feelings towards a member of the robbery team, participants justified Mónica's case and criticized the detective for changing sides. Participants' rationale and judgment of both women reveal a double standard; this was particularly obvious in Rotana's explanation when she couldn't accept that love guided the detective's decision, but at the same time she was empathetic with Mónica's feelings towards Denver, who is a member of the robbery team. This position was heavily influenced by the type of profession each woman had. As the table outlines, viewers opposed Lisbon's decision to abandon the obligations of being in the police sector in order to become a criminal and described her action as "stupid, unacceptable, dangerous, totally wrong, and provocative." In their view, the detective should have fought to uncover the truth.

There were a few participants, including Afaf, Norah, and Mashael, who criticized both women for joining the robbery team. Ammar, a male participant, had a unique point of view. He was the only participant who supported Lisbon's move because, in his opinion, love is superior to anything else, including job duties and acting logically. Taif also did not condemn either Lisbon or Mónica because, in her view, their engagement with the team added suspense and enthusiasm to the series.

From a critical point of view, the plot of *La Casa de Papel* includes some gender stereotypes, as in the case of Lisbon and Mónica. Both women had to give away their life and career to join their male lovers, even though the lovers were criminals. However, the series did not include a man who had to make sacrifices or take an extreme action, such as joining a robbery team, for the sake of his loved one.

Scenes

Participants were asked to describe the scene(s) that most influenced them. Participants mentioned four scenes: Berlin's death, Nairobi being shot, the sky raining money from the blimp, and Berlin pushing Tokyo out of the building. Out of the 17 participants, 10 participants said that Berlin's death was the scene which influenced them the most. Berlin was the most

hostile character as he sexually harassed some of the kidnapped students and was mean to the team members. At first, he was a mysterious villain, but then he decided to sacrifice his life so that the rest of the team could escape after the police found their location. Figure 2 illustrates the scene in which Berlin was targeted and about to be shot. Seconds earlier Berlin had said to the hostage he was holding: "I've spent my life being a bit of an asshole but today I feel like dying with dignity." When asked to comment on this scene, a number of participants said they felt very sad and cried when watching this scene.

Figure 2
Berlin's Death in the Tunnel in Season 1

Note. Hannah Shaw-Williams. (2020, June 03). Money Heist season 5 theory: How Berlin could still be alive. Screenrant. Retrieved from https://screenrant.com/money-heist-season-5-berlin-death-still-alive/

Manal said, "I was so touched when Berlin sacrificed his life for others." Another participant said, "I felt so emotional when watching Berlin's death and knowing that he was the Professor's brother." It was surprising how a character with such a provocative style and negative energy was so loved by the viewers.

Berlin was portrayed as a misogynist and psychopath who was guilty of killing, bullying, and sexual harassment. However, he is always ranked in the top three most loved characters. It is as if his final sacrifice, which led to the team's successful escape, outweighs his previous actions. In Qutub's (2020) quantitative study, which was conducted with 400 Saudi viewers of the series, Berlin was ranked as the second most liked character (chosen by 112 participants), with the Professor ranked in first place. In fact, Berlin's personality motivated viewers to continue watching the next episodes, as expressed by Ghada:

> Berlin's personality made me want to continue viewing the series…I mean when I saw in the first episode Berlin and knew that they had a personality that has more leadership skills compared to the Professor, I decided that I wanted to continue watching…the Professor has a weak personality in my opinion.

Although Berlin and the Professor represent psychopathic personalities in many ways, as the series and its producer convey, both this study and the previous quantitative study (Qutub,

2020) confirmed that Saudi viewers were attracted to and identified with the characters. Morally complex characters who are neither entirely good nor entirely evil have become increasingly popular in Netflix series (Raney and Janicke, 2012).

The police shooting Nairobi in front of her child was the second most liked scene for participants. According to one female participant:

> I got so emotional when Nairobi was shot and she was feeling happy because she was able to see her child and she wasn't feeling sad or in pain because she was going to die. Instead, she was filled with joy because she saw her child.

Figure 3
Nairobi after being Shot by a Police Shooter from the Window

Note. Castillo, S; Fernandez, C; & Davis, A. (2020, April 03). La Casa De Papel/Money Heist Season 4 Is Streaming Now—and is "The Most Shocking" Yet. Oprah Daily. Retrieved from https://www.oprahdaily.com/entertainment/tv-movies/a28448500/la-casa-de-papel-money-heist-season-4

In addition to the previous four scenes, we asked participants to comment on the following two scenes to understand how they felt about the characters when they faced a challenging situation, as in Figure 4 and Figure 5. In the scene in Figure 4, the situation has escalated and the police force is about to attack the building. Participants stated that their feelings included sadness, fear, shock, and nervousness while watching this particular scene. These negative feelings can be understood in relation to viewers' identification with the characters and their desire for the mission to succeed.

Figure 4
The Police Attack in Season 1 while Tokyo and Rio are Prepared to Shoot

Note. Netflix (July 19, 2019). Money Heist Series. Part 3, Episode 8 "Astray" (54:46).

Figure 5 shows the Professor right after the sound of the gunshot targeting his lover Lisbon. Although this gunshot was faked by the police agent, the Professor thought that Lisbon had been killed and had a breakdown. Raghad said, "I was so pissed off at Lisbon's stupidity as she didn't follow the plan and I thought the timing of the Professor's breakdown was totally wrong." Another participant commented on this scene: "I felt happy when watching this scene because I didn't like Lisbon from the beginning and I hoped that she would die because she was an obstacle to the team's progress." The majority of participants showed concern about the Professor's feelings and the progress of the robbery.

Figure 5
The Professor after Hearing the Sound of Lisbon Being Shot

Note. Weber, R. (2021, April 05). Image: Netflix changes its view of La Casa de Papel and may disappoint fans. Sprout Wired. Retrieved from https://www.sproutwired.com/netflix-changes-its-view-of-la-casa-de-papel-and-may-disappoint-fans/

In addition to the four scenes discussed, participants also referred to the scene in which money was falling from a blimp; they mentioned the joy of the people in this scene and how they became attached to the characters. This particular scene illustrated a good deed as the robbers were giving money to the public. However, this action was initially planned to distract the

police and buy the team more time. Regardless, both the people who received the money in the series and the viewers were touched by this action. Qutub's (2020) study reported that this particular scene followed a Robin Hood robbery pattern in which money was stolen from the rich and given to the poor.

Conclusion

This study revealed that Saudi viewers identified with the group of robbers in *La Casa de Papel* in a number of ways. First, viewers justified characters' actions through the fundamental attribution error. Second, viewers were extremely empathetic with psychopaths like the Professor and Berlin. Third, viewers wished that threatening characters like detective Sierra and Arturo did not exist. Fourth, viewers expressed that they did not want the criminals to be caught, as in the Rio scene. In fact, viewers felt sad and emotional when characters like Berlin, Nairobi, and Rio got shot or caught. Participants reported that The Professor, Tokyo, Berlin, and Nairobi were the most liked characters. Conversely, the least liked characters were Arturo Román and Sierra because they threatened the success of the robbery. Finally, participants accepted the banker joining the team while they opposed detective Lisbon joining it. Future studies may examine the influence of contemporary police series on a younger audience.

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