

PhD DISSERTATION

THE TRANSFORMATION OF TV DRAMA UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF STREAMING SERVICES

– SUMMARY –

The evolution of TV series has followed a remarkable trajectory, beginning in the 1940s in the United States when television was still in an experimental stage. Initially, broadcasts were amateurish and rudimentary due to technological and creative limitations. Yet, these early productions marked the birth of a form of entertainment that would revolutionize how audiences connect with stories and fictional characters, leaving a significant cultural and social imprint.

This paper aims to deeply explore the structural changes in narrative format brought by the streaming era, analyzing how these developments influence production, distribution, and the consumption of serialized content. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the research offers an in-depth view of how streaming reshapes not only the narrative structure but also the cultural and social experience of contemporary series—a universal product evolving from ancient theatrical traditions.

Chapter I: *From the First Dramatic Art to Television* This chapter traces the origins and evolution of dramatic art, from ancient Greek theater to modern television. It emphasizes the strong influence of Greek tragedies and comedies on contemporary narrative, focusing on Aristotelian concepts from *Poetica* such as catharsis, hamartia, peripeteia, and anagnorisis. These classical narrative structures were adopted and adapted through Roman, Renaissance, and modern dramaturgy, influencing literature and cinema alike. The work shows how modern TV series have inherited these archetypal narrative forms. Series such as *Breaking Bad*, *Mad Men*, *The Sopranos*, and *Game of Thrones* are analyzed as examples where the tragic hero, moral conflict, and character transformation mirror the structure and essence of ancient drama. Formal elements like the Greek chorus

are compared with narrative devices in modern series, where character groups serve to indirectly comment on the action.

The chapter argues that modern television is not just a technological offshoot but a narrative platform that continues the legacy of classical drama. With act structures, symbolic storytelling, omniscient narration, and deep character development, TV dramas reflect and perpetuate classical narrative techniques.

Chapter II: TV Drama in the 21st Century This chapter explores how television has been transformed by the internet and streaming platforms like Netflix, HBO Max, Disney+, and Amazon Prime. It shows how TV evolved from a rigid, scheduled medium into a flexible, on-demand environment tailored to individual consumption. Streaming created a global market for television fiction and led to massive investment in original content, raising competitive standards and improving overall quality.

It also explores the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns dramatically increased video consumption, leading to a boom in streaming subscriptions and accelerating the decline of traditional broadcast TV. Audiences grew accustomed to binge-watching, and serials began to be crafted to maintain long-term viewer attention. The chapter also examines the economic and cultural consequences of this transformation. Streaming has become a profitable model using algorithms and data analytics to guide production and distribution. The success of global series like *La Casa de Papel* and *Squid Game* illustrates the globalization of TV fiction and highlights storytelling as a powerful tool for worldwide cultural influence.

Chapter III: Interviews and Case Studies This chapter provides a practical and subjective view of TV drama transformation through interviews with Romanian film critics, directors, and screenwriters. It features voices such as critic Mihai Chirilov and director Iulia Rugină, who discuss changing viewer habits, the need for meaningful content, and the tension between art and commerce. They emphasize the difficulty of preserving narrative quality amid commercial pressures from streaming platforms.

The chapter also includes case studies based on the author's professional experience as a TV director and screenwriter, highlighting the challenges and innovations in modern TV

production. It discusses the influence of instant feedback from social media, the role of algorithms in determining a show's success, and the need to adapt to a globalized content market.

Ultimately, the chapter concludes that streaming has transformed TV drama into a sophisticated cultural product that blends cinematic aesthetics, digital technology, and interactive social engagement. This is not merely a format change, but a revolution in how stories are created, distributed, and experienced by audiences today.