

Introduzione

Why Do We Love These Damn TV Series? An Introduction to the Contemporary TV Series' Narratives: A Sociological and Mediological Perspective

Mario Tirino

Università degli Studi di Salerno

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1. The Evolution of Television Narratives in the Context of Serialization of Modern Culture

TV series have become a central medium in the representation of social transformations, cultural processes, and the multiple and heterogeneous identities of contemporary society. This crucial function of TV series can only be fully understood if we analyze the evolution of the TV medium within the broader scenario of digital cultures and the mediatization of everyday life. This requires first of all the recognition of serialization as one of the essential properties of integrated systems of production, distribution and consumption of cultural products since the nineteenth century (Brancato *et al.*, 2024; Boccia Artieri & Fiorentino, 2024), although antecedents can also be traced back to ancient times: Ragone & Tarzia, 2023). Although it is important to trace a history of television seriality specifically (see Teti, 2020; Hudelet & Crémieux, 2021; Fumagalli *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b), it is equally necessary to situate this history within the genealogy of the practices of serialization of storytelling experienced, between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries (such as feuilleton, pulp magazines, radio dramas, film serials, comics), which configured the social, cultural and economic assumptions of the advent of television seriality (Scolari *et al.*, 2014; Tirino, 2019).

Television has evolved from its early days of episodic content aimed at mass audiences to a medium that now embraces complex, serialized storytelling. During the First Golden Age of television seriality (1950s and 1960s), self-contained episodic series and anthology series prevailed, in a scenario determined by the constraints of scheduling and broadcasting. As John Ellis (2000) states, we are in the era of resource scarcity, which is articulated in two different ways: in Europe, the model of public broadcasting, more or less controlled by governments and government agencies, is established, while in the United States the commercial model – already experimented with radio – is based on the pre-eminence of three national broadcasters (NBC, ABC, CBS) and a wide range of local broadcasters, in some cases brought together in syndication. TV in the age of broadcasting is a domestic medium, whose low definition is an essential feature to nurture viewers' participation. Marshall McLuhan (1964, p. 31) argues, in fact, that television is a “cool” medium, which is “high in participation or completion by audience”. Moreover, TV acts as a continuous communicative backdrop to everyday interactions and family routines. Moving from a different perspective, Raymond Williams (1975, p. 80) comes to a similar conclusion when he identifies flow as “the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and a cultural form”. Flow, in fact, creates an artificial connection between

discrete and different units of content (newscasts, quiz shows, movies, etc.), interspersed with commercials. Already from this summary reconstruction, the close interconnection between the aesthetic, technological and sociocultural dimensions that preside, in every era, over the production of TV series is evident. So, it is in this scenario that the first great experiences of serial storytelling on TV should be placed: some of these, such as *Star Trek* (1966-1969), represent examples of serialized storytelling capable of influencing the developments of subsequent fiction; other anthology series, such as *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964) and *Alfred Hitchcock presents* (1955-1962), experiment with territories of the hitherto untouched imagination; still other series impose characters capable of affecting recognizable genres, such as sitcom (*I Love Lucy*, 1951-1957), western (*Lawman*, 1958-1962), police procedural (*Dragnet*, 1951-1959), medical drama (*Dr. Kildare*, 1961-1966), and legal drama (*Perry Mason*, 1957-1966). The evolution of television seriality between the late 1960s and the 1970s is the result of the interaction of multiple factors: the openness to new cultural sensibilities that emerged in those years (with particular reference to the civil rights movements of minorities and the demands for sexual freedom and self-determination, especially of young people), technological innovation (leading to a gradual improvement of television images and telecommunication circuits), the unstable balances between the television and film industries. Although the changes may appear slow and imperceptible, there are shows in this decade that are experimenting with more sophisticated storylines; dealing with taboo or scabrous topics; reflecting the transformation of orientations, customs, and habits; and representing ongoing cultural and intergenerational conflicts. Although this is a very terse list, we can mention titles such as *Marcus Welby, M.D.* (1969-1976), *Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970-1977), *The Rookies* (1972-1976), *M*A*S*H* (1972-1983), *Petrocelli* (1974-1976), *Happy Days* (1974-1984).

In some ways, these series elaborate the aesthetic, cultural and media terrain for the advent of the so-called Second Golden Age of television seriality (Thompson, 1996). The fundamental elements that characterize this era of American and international TV (between about 1980 and 2010) can be summarized as follows: 1) narrative and formal experimentation: more original, sophisticated and complex programs; 2) audience segmentation and targeting; and 3) multiplication and diversification of serial productions. These phenomena are strongly interrelated and result, once again, from the intersection of cultural and social processes, technological transformations and the evolution of aesthetic forms. On the one hand, audiences demand more serial stories capable of rendering the increasing complexification of Western societies. On the other, major technological innovations, are the advent of cable and satellite technologies and the availability of devices such as the VHS video recorder and later the DVD. New cable and satellite pay TV (such as AMC, HBO, The WB, etc.) are flanking the traditional ones, bringing about a shift in the supply of TV series: they, in fact, distribute products to niche audiences, more or less extensive, who demand engaging and quality products in exchange for which they subscribe – as opposed to traditional broadcasters who, relying primarily on advertisements, favored content aimed at a mass audience, since the cost to advertisers is proportional to the share won by the broadcaster in that particular time slot. The ability to record – via VHS recorder – episodes of a series, in addition to allowing viewers to partially disengage from the rigid time scanning of programming, allows them to watch TV seriality in a new way: they can review the most intricate and ambiguous sequences, search for hidden information, and become passionate about a character through re-viewing the episode, season, or entire

series. Subsequently, the collection of a season's episodes in a DVD box set gives TV seriality the dignity of a cultural object, similarly to the book and the movie. In the late 1990s, moreover, the Web will offer viewers involved in the collective exegesis of series a protected space in which to bring together the socialization of interpretive practices (Jenkins, 2006), promoting authentic forms of collective intelligence (Lévy, 1994).

The combination of cultural processes and technological innovations creates an optimal condition for experimentation with new narrative and aesthetic forms (Hammond and Mazdon, 2005). The narrative complexity, no less than that of films and novels (Allrath *et al.*, 2005), the aesthetic quality and, above all, the authorial dimension of many Second Golden Age series contribute to the creation of the category of "quality TV" (Jankovich & Lyons, 2003; McCabe & Akass, 2007) – opening a debate that is still controversial today (Cardini, 2014; Kristensen *et al.*, 2017).

The emotional participation of audiences during this time has become more intense, both through spaces for socializing cultural taste (such as forums, chats, and web groups) and through opportunities to expand the series experience into other practices (the creation of user-generated content, dubbing of foreign series, etc.) and consumption (merchandising and expansions). Beginning in the 2000s, fandom, from a niche phenomenon, became mainstream, both because of the increased opportunities for visibility offered by the Web and because of the contribution made by narrative worlds fully integrated in the logic of transmediality (to which we will return shortly). This transforms a part of serial production into "cult TV", loved, celebrated and continuously reworked by millions of fans nationally and internationally (Gwenllian-Jones & Pearson, 2004; Scaglioni, 2006; Abbott, 2010; Lavery, 2010; Cascajosa Virino, 2017). At the sociological level, the main innovation triggered by the technological, cultural and aesthetic transformations of serial TV in the Second Golden is the mutation of the social quality of the TV experience. From this point of view, the very idea of seriality is stressed (Brancato, 2011), especially because of the more intense relationship of viewers – increasingly fans – with serial narratives.

However, both the concepts of "quality TV" and "cult TV" lack analytical rigor, and it is sometimes arbitrary to ascribe a TV series to either category. Instead, the analytical category that best frames the ongoing change is that of "complex tv" (Mittell, 2015), as it makes it clear that the advent of evolved storytelling strategies is the result of refined serial storytelling choices and the participation of audiences, who have become increasingly competent in decoding, appropriating and reworking the most engaging and complex narratives. Although not all series present the same degree of narrative complexity, there is no doubt that much of (especially American) production has to deal with these processes. Complex TV series, detailed by Jason Mittell (2015), combine anthology plot (the self-contained plot of the single episode) and running plot (the plot that connects one episode to the next) in original and innovative ways, develop believable characters that evolve over the course of the narrative, and continuously interrogate audiences through narrative statements and narrative enigmas (stimulating them to wonder what will happen in the future and what happened in the characters' past). The best series adhere to extrinsic norms (which define their relatability to a genre and narrative format) and establish a pact with viewers based on intrinsic norms (i.e., that set of implicit rules that indicate how to watch the series and how to immerse ourselves in its world)¹. The productions also involve writers,

¹ About the rules governing the semiotic functioning of a single series see also the fascinating contribution of Vidmar Jovanović (2020).

directors and actors from the film industry. As a result of these transformations, TV series gained cultural legitimacy in public opinion, criticism, and academia that they had never gained in the past.

For reasons of space, it is impossible here to recall all the groundbreaking series that came out in this three decades: nevertheless, in addition to openers such as *Hill Street Blues* (1981-1987), *Miami Vice* (1984-1989), *The Simpsons* (1989 – ongoing), and *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), among the most engaging productions capable of making a lasting impact on the social imaginary we can mention *Beverly Hills 90210* (1990-2000), *Law & Order* (1990 – ongoing), *ER* (1994-2009), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), *Dawson's Creek* (1998-2003), *Sex and The City* (1998-2004), *The Sopranos* (1999-2007), *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000-2015), *Six Feet Under* (2001-2005), *24* (2001-2010), *Scrubs* (2001-2010), *The Wire* (2002-2008), *NCIS* (2003 – ongoing), *Veronica Mars* (2004-2007), *House* (2004-2012), *Lost* (2005-2010), *Mad Men* (2007-2015), and *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013).

2. From the Second Golden Age to Platform TV

The Second Golden Age sets the stage for the subsequent development of TV seriality, from the 2000s to the present. This key allows us to highlight the four elements, primarily defined in the Second Golden Age, that will further evolve toward the form of platform TV: complex storytelling and worldbuilding, transmediality, audiences and fandom, and authorship.

2.1 TV series and digitization

Before discussing this legacy, however, it is important to understand the main technological, cultural and social phenomena of digitization, understood here as a specific step in the process of mediatization of society. Although the beginnings of the wave of digitization can be placed in 1982 with the invention of the compact disc (CD), digitization fully deploys its potential for sociocultural transformation through three sub-phases: mobile-mediatization, social-mediatization, and, finally, platformization (Tirino, 2022). Following the principle established by Couldry and Hepp (2016) that mediatization proceeds “in waves”, these three sub-phases are distinguished for analytical convenience, although they are logically and chronologically interrelated. Let us briefly look at how these processes affect the social experience of TV series. The pervasive diffusion of the smartphone, equipped with wi-fi sensors and therefore potentially always connected to the Net, and the launch of very convenient Web browsing offers create the conditions for the definitive establishment of videostreaming services, already successfully launched in areas reached by fiber optics. The availability of fast and efficient connections, in fact, enables the transformation of videostreaming services into Over-the-Top Television (OTT), which allow the enjoyment of content through multiple devices connected to the Net (smart TV, PCs, tablets, smartphones). Social media – in their various configurations, from Facebook to Tik Tok – have further altered top-down and bottom-up forms of communication about TV series. In terms of the institutional dimension, both traditional broadcasters and OTTs (such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV+, Disney +, etc.) have leveraged social channels to strengthen fandom loyalty and engagement, in some cases also experimenting innovative marketing techniques. Social media entertainment becomes an integral part of

the global screen industry's content offering (Cunningham and Craig, 2019). At the same time, social has granted users of different ages spaces in which to elaborate their serial passions, for example by manifesting hypotheses about later plot developments, spreading memes, GIFs, fan videos and fan fiction, creating stable emotional connections not only with the world of the TV series but also with other fans. The mediatized representation of one's passions allows fans to make visible the role of TV series in the processes of self-recognition and self-representation on social media, underscoring the ability of complex narratives to contribute to viewers' identity construction based on the intensity of their emotional adherence.

The broad proliferation of platforms, recognized both as technological tools and as environments that facilitate economic and social interactions (van Dijck *et al.*, 2018), has contributed to the development of a new communicative ecosystem. Platforms function 1) on a technological level, focusing on the implementation and utilization of technologies; 2) on a social level, addressing processes of communication, relationships, and consumption; and 3) on a commercial level, as businesses generate revenue by monetizing user data through advertising (Paulussen *et al.*, 2017). Acting as intermediaries between content creators and consumers, platforms serve a vital role in today's cultural industry (Magaudda and Solaroli, 2021). The notion of a platform society helps explain how this social configuration produces socio-media mechanisms, such as surveillance and value extraction, that transform the processes of production, distribution, and consumption. Platform society highlights the inseparable link between online platforms and social structures. Platforms do not simply mirror society; they actively shape the social frameworks we inhabit (Couldry and Hepp, 2016). Platformization fosters the formation of a new social order. Platforms are underpinned by three processes: datafication, commodification, and selection (van Dijck *et al.*, 2018). Firstly, they enable the conversion of social behaviors into data that can be exploited for market objectives. This is accompanied by the "commodification" of the data recorded on platforms (including circulated content and expressed preferences) and the possibility of implementing a data-driven selection process. The core component of platforms is therefore the data they gather, the management of which bolsters their social, cultural, and economic influence, aided by algorithms. Within the platform society, algorithmization leads to micro-level phenomena, such as filter bubbles. Certain features of online platforms allow the curation of content favored by users based on their previous actions – like watching a video or expressing a preference – thereby accumulating data on the users themselves. With this data, platforms make predictions to filter future content submissions (Parisier, 2011). In these bubbles, users are primarily exposed to content that aligns with their interests, selected through a process of data collection and algorithmization, which is often not fully transparent. The influence of platforms is evident internally and also extends externally, as they establish a technological framework within which others operate. Data generated by others become accessible to platforms and are used in ways that align with their own economic models. Although algorithms are central to these dynamics, the selection process would initially align with users' tendencies to seek content that resonates with their interests, potentially leading to the creation of echo chambers.

So, it is within this techno-socio-cultural framework that the continuities and discontinuities between Second Golden Age television seriality and contemporary platform series should be framed.

2.2 *Complex storytelling and worldbuilding*

One of the most significant developments in contemporary TV series is the trend towards narrative complexity and extensive worldbuilding. Shows like *The Walking Dead* (2010-2022), *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019), and *Westworld* (2016-2022), exemplify this shift, offering intricate plots that span multiple seasons and feature large, interconnected casts of characters. As Boni (2017) and Brembilla (2018) observe, worldbuilding has become a central narrative strategy, allowing for the creation of expansive universes that engage viewers beyond the immediate story. The creation of multi-layered narrative worlds must be complemented with the writing of credible characters. The affective and cognitive relationship with characters is a decisive element of worldbuilding, since the very subsistence of these fictional universes is tested through the credibility of the characters and their actions and interactions with each other. Murray Smith (1995) has fully described the steps through which viewers bond with a character: recognition, alignment, and allegiance. In addition, emotional and cognitive connection with characters over many years of viewing allows them to develop lasting intimate relationships, such that a kind of parasocial relationship is baked with them (Horton and Wohl, 1956). This kind of deep connection is also established with characters who are morally ambiguous (Tian and Hoffner, 2010; Meier and Neubaum, 2019) or even blatantly “bad” (Mittell, 2015). The affective investment in a series can be so intense and long-lasting that it represents for the most involved fans an opportunity for personal growth, as well as knowledge and pleasure: Muñoz-Velázquez and Delmar (2021) go so far as to postulate, in such cases, a form of “eudaimonic” consumption of TV series. In any case, plots, characters, and environments must be carefully crafted and, at the same time, must be original enough to meet the canons of the aesthetics of surprise, on which complex storytelling is based. Indeed, on the one hand, it is necessary for each detail to be consistent with the whole story, as fans and viewers have sufficient resources to challenge any snag in the narrative (García, 2016). On the other hand, the increasing abundance of productions, made by old and new television brands alike, requires considerable effort in experimenting with formats and narrative forms, often crossing traditional genre boundaries, in order to continue to amaze the viewer, disregarding his or her assumptions and expectations about the developments of the series they are watching (Pearson and Smith, 2015).

2.3 *Transmedia*

The goals and spaces of this introduction preclude summarizing, even briefly, the current debate on the forms of transmediality in the humanities and social sciences². For clarity, we limit ourselves here to a broad definition. By transmediality we mean the typical property of communicative projects (both fiction and nonfiction) whose content is distributed across multiple media platforms, by both creators and producers and fans, and within universes of meaning marked by various levels of coherence and consistency. The basic requirement for there to be transmediality is that each piece of the universe is capable of adding knowledge of various kinds. This definition has the merit of embracing in a single framework both the forms of transmediality experimented until the 2000s (Scolari *et al.*, 2014; Tirino, 2019, 2023a), most frequently character-oriented, and the more recent forms, most often traced to the concept of “transmedia storytelling” (Jenkins, 2006), based on the

² For a summary of this debate we refer to Freeman and Rampazzo Gambarato (2018) and Leonzi (2023).

intensive exploitation of a franchise to maximize its ability to generate profits and, consequently, on the control about the canonicity and coherence of the expansions with reference to the entire narrative universe. It also gives an account of the dynamics of expansions of narrative universes in television seriality. They are enriched as much by top-down expansions, coordinated by the rights holders on a franchise (e.g., movies, novels, comic books, video games that expand the narrative of a TV series, official social media channels, merchandising, and so on), as by grassroots expansions, fueled by the flow of fan contributions. Both during the First Golden Age and – more prominently – during the Second Golden Age (Evans, 2011; Mittell, 2015), TV series gave rise to transmedia narrative universes. What is new in the age of platforms is the more creative and participatory role of audiences and fans (to which we will return shortly). Moreover, this very broad definition allows us to understand that transmedia expansions (“institutional” or grassroots) can serve several functions: promotional (such as trailers, teasers, interviews, etc.), orientational (such as wikis, re-caps, official and unofficial blogs, etc.), and narrative (both canonically, in the case of products approved and coordinated by producers, and non-canonically, as in the case of fan fiction, fan art, fan videos, etc. made by audiences). In the digital age, transmediality led by media conglomerates (such as Netflix or Amazon Prime Video) is an essential part of strategies to strengthen audience engagement while simultaneously enabling experimentation with new aesthetic and narrative solutions in other media. Some narrative universes have become particularly rich and substantial, encompassing both transmedia expansions in the narrow sense and various types of adaptations in other media (ascribable to the concept of intermediality) (e.g., series adapting novels or films, such as *The Queen’s Gambit*, 2020, and *My Brilliant Friend*, 2018 – ongoing). A particularly valuable theoretical tool is that of “narrative ecosystem”, formulated by Guglielmo Pescatore (2018): it allows us to analyze the consistency of narrative universes fed by both intermedial adaptations and transmedia expansions, without the need for time-consuming (and often useless) analytical disquisitions on the trans/intermedia nature and classification (sequels, remakes, reboots, prequels, etc.) of the units that compose it.

2.4 *Audiences and fandom*

The intricate configurations of transmedia narrative ecosystems are the result of multiple authors, prompting scholars to question both the role of fandom and audiences and the issue of authorship in TV series. As for the centrality of fans in contemporary TV seriality cultures, John Fiske (1992) had already emphasized the cultural vitality of fandom, identifying three types of productivity: 1) semiotic: the production of meaning, which unites fans and ordinary audiences; 2) enunciational: the production of discourses around media products “consumed” in fan communities; 3) textual: the production of cultural artifacts (stories, songs, other media objects), is the exclusive activity of fans. Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) highlight the active role of audiences in interpreting and engaging with media content, a trend that has only intensified with the rise of digital fandom. Indeed, the relationship between TV series and their audiences has also been transformed in the digital era. The transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 also marked a turning point for fandom. The availability of tools and spaces for the creation of digital content, the possibility of using efficient mobile connections, and the spread of affordable performance smartphones determined the technological framework within which the policies and practices of hyperconnection in the Social Network Society developed (Boccia Artieri, 2012). Fans have

thus enjoyed unprecedented opportunities for the production, dissemination and sharing of bottom-up content (fanfiction, fanvideos, tags, reviews, etc.) – so-called user-generated content (UGC). This socio-techno-cultural transformation has also profoundly altered the arrangements of fandom according to two different trajectories. On the one hand, more and more “ordinary” viewers have become fans of the cultural objects loved, effectively making fandom a mainstream phenomenon with considerable economic potential. This has also increasingly prompted media industries to seek constant negotiation in an effort to engage media users more intensively so as to expand profit opportunities. This has also increasingly prompted media industries to seek constant negotiation in an effort to engage media users more intensively so as to expand profit opportunities. As I mentioned earlier, media conglomerates (such as Disney) pursue such goals by often resorting to the creation of complex transmedia narrative universes (Tirino, 2020), consisting of texts (comics, novels, movies, TV series), media experiences (theme parks, VR and AR experiences, games), and merchandising: the Marvel Cinematic Universe and *Star Wars* franchises are emblematic examples. On the other hand, fans congregate in microgroups, virtually impermeable to the rest of a series’ audience, which are in some cases configured as toxic and conflictual environments (Arouh, 2020). Hills (2002) and Pearson (2010) discuss how fan cultures have become crucial to the success and longevity of TV series, with fans often serving as co-creators of content. Again Hills (2013a) observes that open source software, video sharing platforms (such as YouTube and Dailymotion) and communities of collective interpretation of cultural products (forums, chats, social network pages and groups) have mainly stimulated textual productivity, to the detriment of semiotic and enunciational productivity. Hills places alongside the “classical” textual productivity identified by Fiske a “mimetic” textual productivity, applied to transmedia extensions of the source text (such as action figures of a character, fansubbing, etc.). Finally, he identifies three dichotomies: 1) between content inspired by mainstream aesthetics and content inspired by grassroots cultures; 2) between UGC produced according to cultural industry codes and UGC using alternative cultural codes (in terms of copyright, formats, distribution channels, etc.); and 3) between conscious and unconscious productivity (specific to the co-creation processes in which fans are sometimes involved by industries). Compared to the past, in which they circulated in restricted circuits (associations, conventions, fanzines), fan content in the digital era has public relevance (Costello and Moore, 2007). Fans know that their content, from the moment it lands on social media, is discussed, judged, shared, and in some cases celebrated by online communities. These groups are founded through an affective self-constitution (Maffesoli, 1988), that is, on the basis of sharing a common passion. TV series – thanks to seriality and multi-seasonality – are able to build affective relationships rooted in time and extended in space: this is why for many online communities affective self-constitution is based on sharing the cult of a series. Such communities are essentially of two types: communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), which carry out collective activities according to codified standards and procedures – as in the case of fansubbing (Vellar, 2011; Matielo and Espindola, 2011; Crisp, 2015; Massidda, 2015; Luczaj and Holy-Luczaj, 2017) – and communities of interpretation, mainly engaged in a choral exegesis of a cultural product (Tirino, 2023b). As Jenkins (2006) documents in his famous work on *Lost* fans, this second type of community shows how much TV series – like few other pop culture contents – are able to stimulate *epistemophilia*, that is, or the love of research and dissemination of knowledge, especially thanks to the affective atmospheres of a collective feat. Fandom

referable to a TV series, like any media fandom, has an individual basis and a social development. The basis of media fandom is always a personal, emotional, deep connection with a mediatized object of popular culture (Duffett, 2013). The intensity of this connection can go so far that fans, in some cases, link involvement in a TV series to real-life autonarratives and situations from everyday life. This phenomenon is known as reiteration discourse (Williams, 2011). In order for this passionate root to extend across time and space, the next level is provided by social participation, which reinforces personal involvement. Interaction between fans of TV series in the same community occurs in an “intermedial” dimension, as it is articulated around multiple transitions between television, social networks and other media (Nikunen, 2007). These communities exhibit extreme variability: their cultural substrate varies from group to group, according to specific series content, cultural-historical contexts, technological environments, available devices, and numerous other factors (Duffett, 2013). The advent of OTT produces two macro-transformations in fans’ experience of TV series. First, through the distribution mode of full season release (FSR), OTTs allow access to episodes of an entire season at any time, with any compatible device and from anywhere. Audiences experience the transition from the ritualized appointment (on a specific day of the week and at a specific time), typical of the First Golden Age and, to some extent, the Second Golden Age, to the full freedom of on-demand culture (when, how, and where one prefers) (Tryon, 2013): thus, the transition to “post-network TV” (Lotz, 2009, 2014) is accomplished. Second, the emergence of OTT such as Netflix has led to the binge-watching phenomenon, fundamentally altering the viewer’s relationship with narrative time (Campos Rezende & Boechat Gomide, 2017; Pilipets, 2019). This new mode of consumption emphasizes the continuous, immersive experience of storytelling, challenging traditional episodic formats and encouraging more complex, interwoven plotlines. At the same time, FSR and binge watching cause audience fragmentation and spoiler terror (Buschow *et al.*, 2014). In fact, the potential audience of any series distributed in FSR fragments into as many subgroups as there are possible viewing rhythms of the series. Precisely for this reason, each viewer will try to interact only with other viewers who share a certain viewing rhythm with him or her in order to avoid unintentionally incurring the revelation of elements referable to episodes not yet viewed (losing, thus, the surprise and wonder in front of future narrative developments). As a result, the viewer of contemporary television seriality moves through complex scenarios, maturing so many skills and competencies that one can speak of a new spectatorial (Innocenti and Pescatore, 2014) or, rather, post-spectatorial status (Tirino, 2020). The media user who is a fan of TV series not only develops skills useful in developing tactics and strategies for consumption suited to his or her personal needs (Rodríguez-Ferrándiz *et al.*, 2016; Mishustina, 2019), but also participates in the processes of production (through crowdfunding and public initiatives, for example, for the continuation of a series cancelled by a TV station), distribution (by helping to disseminate subtitles and thus expanding the geographic area in which the TV series can circulate), criticism (by processing ratings, reviews and comments on various platforms) and archiving (by saving and making available niche products). In addition, many fans also acquire high creative skills (writing, filming, audiovisual editing, digital postproduction, etc.), which are useful for producing UGC characterized by more complex narratives and more advanced aesthetic qualities. The very concept of viewer is, therefore, clearly insufficient to describe the richness of this social actor’s interactions.

2.5 Authorship

It was during the Second Golden Age that the issue of television authorship was addressed in depth. The construction of the authorship of a series, conceived as a public process to which producers, audiences, critics, and scholars contribute, in fact, is functional in identifying a creative figure to stand as guarantor of the aesthetic qualities and narrative effectiveness of the work. This helps to identify and distinguish quality TV from the rest of serial production (Steiner, 2015). However, authorship in contemporary television seriality is managerial in nature (Mittell, 2015; Sessegno, 2020): while conventionally the creative and, in many cases, production responsibility for a series is attributed by producers-distributors to an executive producer called the “showrunner”, the making of a TV series involves the coordination among many work streams, which cooperate on the final result (Higueras-Ruiz *et al.*, 2018). Nevertheless, audiences often express the need to identify a physical figure to whom they can attribute responsibility for the series they love. The need to make sure that someone is taking care of the story they have followed for years stems from anxiety in the face of the unknown and the terror that the tale will end inappropriately or disappointingly. For this reason, the role of showrunner is often given to charismatic personalities whose authority serves as a guarantee for the investors, the creatives involved, and the audiences themselves. Ryan Murphy’s example is explanatory enough (Trapero Llobera, 2017; Weber and Greven, 2022). In some cases, a showrunner’s signature is a valuable promotional tool, similar to what the film industry does with the signature of well-known directors (Hadas, 2020). However, the recognition and attribution of authorship of a TV series are not always simple operations. In some cases, several authors (e.g., head writer and executive producer) may vie for authorship of a series, acting in the public space as the “voice” of the series, even if they do not formally hold the role of showrunner: two examples of “disputed” authorship concern Roberto Saviano (for the TV series *Gomorra*, 2014-2021) (Tirino, 2021) and Robert Kirkman (for the TV series *The Walking Dead*) (Beil and Schmidt, 2015). Moreover, since not all authors emerge on the public scene, remaining unknown or underestimated (Hills, 2013b), the history of authorship in TV seriality can be more correctly interpreted as an alternation of recognition and anonymity (Schwaab, 2021). The construction of authorship is thus a controversial phenomenon, which affects both cultural dynamics and the legal dimension of a TV series. Legal authorship contractually establishes the responsibility of one or more physical subjects. However, the boundaries between copyright protection and freedom of expression become problematic, when it comes to recognizing the authorship of fans in the production of content, somehow marked by originality and creativity, although variously referable to elements (scenes, characters, logos, etc.) of a legally protected TV series (Sarikakis *et al.*, 2017; Malgorzata, 2018; Cuntz-Leng, 2021). The relevance of the study of authorship in contemporary TV seriality is determined by the possibility of conceiving this phenomenon as the field in which different instances (from producers, creators and audiences) clash on the basis of processes of symbolic appropriation and reappropriation of serialized narratives. In this sense, even the reduced presence of women (Strehlau, 2021), members of LGBTQIA+ communities (Sinwell, 2023), and ethnic minority subjects (Beltrán, 2016; López Rodríguez and Raya Bravo, 2021) among showrunners represents an index of power relations within the American and, more generally, Western screen industry.

3. An entirely new cultural form: television series between screen industry, celebrity, branded engagement and fandom

In the platform society, television seriality is delineated as a capital medium: although by volume of revenue, the video game industry represents the most imposing sector among media industries (Jo and Lewis, 2024), television seriality is able to intercept and capitalize on resources, talents, and especially narratives, generated by interactions with other media (starting with cinema and literature [Piga Bruni, 2018]). Sociological analysis of TV series requires a holistic approach that considers the chain of processes linking production, distribution, and consumption (Spigel and Olsson, 2004; Bollhöfer, 2007; Lotz, 2009, 2014).

Internet distribution of television has also forced traditional broadcasters to review their content offerings and business models (Lotz, 2017; González-Neira *et al.*, 2022). For serial television, this has meant a massive transformation of industry players: traditional broadcasters have been joined by media conglomerates, OTTs, and tech players (such as Apple and Google). The definitive establishment of on-demand culture has pushed even the most conservative operators to guarantee online access to their content, with or without specific subscriptions. If cable and satellite TV had already revolutionized the scenario of TV series production and distribution, fostering the creation of narratively more complex and aesthetically more ambitious products, Internet TV has completed the process of dismantling traditional broadcasting (Lotz, 2018; Lotz *et al.*, 2018): the increase of platforms has reverberated into an explosion of production, in which narratives of every format, genre, and duration find their place. The growing phenomenon of cord-cutting (the cancellation of cable TV subscriptions, replaced by subscriptions to online services and/or the piracy), especially in the United States, testifies to the propensity of the younger generation to move away from the constraints and limitations of television to embrace entertainment systems that are fluid and adaptable to each user's personalized needs (Strangelove, 2015). Although I have highlighted the forms of continuity between Second Golden Age and platform TV, I think it is also important to point out the more innovative dynamics found in the present scenario. In the transition from broadcasting to the Web, via cable and satellite, television series are increasingly encompassed in transmedia and intermedial narrative ecosystems, which are often highly complex and layered, and above all are nodes in networks of social and cultural relations, emotional marketing practices, immersive experiences and aesthetic experiments, within exchanges in which communication, economy, society shape and influence each other (Brembilla, 2018). Platforms, therefore, fundamentally alter television markets, imposing new distribution policies and practices (Evens and Donders, 2018). The global dimension of the new players entails decisive mutations in the relationship between producers, distributors and viewers. From this perspective, although it has been repeatedly updated and adapted to the contingent needs of the period and specific contexts, the Netflix model constitutes a sufficiently explanatory object of research on how platformization affects the contemporary experience of TV series. First, the global distribution of content produces two main effects. On the one hand, local co-productions, often in agreement with national production companies, have the opportunity to reach a global market thanks to dubbing and subtitles prepared by the platform: this is the case of series from Spain (*La casa de papel*, 2017-2021), South Korea (*Squid Game*, 2021 – ongoing), Brazil (*Três por cento*, 2016-2020), France (*Lupin*, 2021 – ongoing), Italy (*Suburra*, 2017-2020) and so on. On the other hand, this nurtures a

form of cosmopolitan spectatorship that is sensitive to cultural differences and exchanges. Second, as a corollary to all this, there is the rise of mainstream cult TV series internationally, of which *Stranger Things* (2016 – ongoing) and *Wednesday* (2022 – ongoing) are among the latest examples³. The globalization of television content has also had a profound impact on narrative forms. As Lobato (2018) and Lotz (2020) discuss, streaming platforms like Netflix have facilitated the cross-pollination of narrative styles and the emergence of cultural conflicts between local and cosmopolitan identities (Gilardi *et al.*, 2018; Tahralı *et al.*, 2023). This phenomenon has sparked interest in how local cultures adapt and reinterpret global content. Moreover, the global reach of TV series has influenced other cultural domains, such as tourism – shows like *Game of Thrones* have generated significant tourism activity in their filming locations (Contu & Pau, 2022; Reijnders, 2011, 2016). This interplay between television and tourism underscores the broader economic impact of contemporary TV narratives.

However, this new geography of international distribution of TV series (Lobato, 2017, 2018, 2019; Lotz, 2020) is also governed by arbitrary mechanisms such as those of geoblocking: some content, for political reasons or for reasons of expediency, is unavailable in certain territories. In addition, the Netflix model turns the spotlight on the impact of the algorithmization of TV series supply (McDonald and Smith-Rowsey, 2016; Lotz, 2022). Recommendation algorithms, based on the individual user's previous choices, work in a way that limits accessible content, in effect creating bubbles (in a manner similar to that of social networks: see Parisier, 2011). Netflix, like other OTTs, produces a concrete mathematization of taste (Alexander, 2016), moreover by limiting the portion of the library that can be accessed, not only through geoblocking and recommendation algorithms, but also through interface affordances (Tirino and Castellano, 2021). The concept of affordance is particularly effective in interpreting both the distribution policies of OTTs and, more generally, platforms, and the fruition and interaction practices of audiences. Affordance refers to all those properties of an object (and a service), which allow some operations and manipulations and simultaneously inhibit others (Hutchby, 2001). Thus, the affordances of platform interfaces regulate the library experience in specific ways, for example by visually associating Netflix content with the aesthetics of the DVD or, later, with that of the digital content stream of social networks (Tirino, 2020). Similarly, the affordances of the devices and apparatuses, such as the set-top-box (Hesmondhalgh and Lobato, 2019), through which we relate to the TV series available on the platforms, materially condition the framework of our experience.

Platformization also draws new global scenarios about the competition among different players globally (Lobato and Lotz, 2021; Lotz, 2021; Lotz and Lobato, 2023). Streaming wars pit global entertainment giants against each other, forced to modify and adapt their financial and business strategies in a highly unstable competitive environment. Streaming wars involve global media conglomerates and regional television groups (national or continental), which are rapidly changing strategy, vying for a market that – after a few years of consistent enlargement – has settled down: Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney +, Paramount, HBO, Apple TV+, and, in Italy, SKY (NOW TV platform), Rai (Raiplay

³ Among the most significant series for the Netflix model we can mention *House of Cards* (2013-2018), *Orange is the New Black* (2013-2019), *Narcos* (2015-2017), *The OA* (2016-2019), *The Crown* (2016-2023), *GLOW* (2017-2019), *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (2017-2019), *13 Reasons Why* (2017-2020), *Dark* (2017-2020), *Ozark* (2017-2022), *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018), *You* (2018 – ongoing), *Sex Education* (2019-2023), *The Umbrella Academy* (2019-2024), *Russian Doll* (2019 - ongoing), *The Witcher* (2019 – ongoing).

platform), and Mediaset (Infinity platform). Contemporary streaming wars have also revitalized piracy practices, as the overall cost of numerous subscriptions is unaffordable for many consumer groups. Probably the most disruptive phenomenon, however, is the overall reconfiguration of the entertainment system. As traditional TV now seems marginal, at least in the choices of the Millennials and Post-Millennials generations, the business policies of entertainment platforms are regulated on the specific properties and characteristics of streaming distribution. Ultimately, platformization – by offering operators an efficient and global distribution system – seems to complete the journey of ultimate separation between content and delivery infrastructures. Digitized TV series thus become content that can be enjoyed through multiple devices, at any time and from (almost) anywhere. This means that the competitive advantage of traditional broadcasters – the ability to have technological infrastructure and licenses, in a context of scarcity of resources – becomes totally ineffective in the age of digital abundance, in which the Net offers sufficient space to a large number of operators, also from different industries (traditional broadcasting, film, technology, etc.).

Ultimately, contemporary television seriality – when studied in its overall configuration – seems to be a new cultural form, certainly no longer based on rigid schedule programming or stream aesthetics. Although we find ourselves in a fluid technological scenario, the dynamics governing contemporary streaming wars portend a future in which TV series will be increasingly disengaged from their origins in broadcasting and the television industry and increasingly immersed in competition with other spectacular content (sports, reality shows, podcasts, live events, etc.) equally co-present on platforms. But it is not only the distribution and production dimension that identifies TV series as a cultural form sufficiently different from that assumed in the past. What, more than anything else, seems to characterize the individual and social experience of contemporary seriality is the way on-demand culture reshapes the temporal dimension of the relationship with these works (Cleto and Pasquali, 2018). If in the modern era any form of serialization establishes a ritualized connection between the audiences of a single work, based on the scheduled enjoyment of new pieces of work, on-demand culture binds our relationship with TV series more adaptively to individual needs. The ability to view a series in the empty moments of a day or, conversely, to practice binge watching makes our relationship with seriality more intimate, as the viewing experience fits more fully into the rhythms of daily life. In addition, transmedia universes allow the experience of a TV series to be greatly expanded – through practices (enjoyment of narrative expansions, commentary, interpretation, UGC production, cosplay, etc.) that transform individual passion into a shared cult, collectively and, in some cases, publicly: this also results in new configurations of temporality (Evans, 2015), for example by requiring a certain succession in the enjoyment of the pieces of a narrative ecosystem.

Whether it is when we watch an episode of a TV series on the screen of our smartphone, on the way from home to work, sitting in a bus or a subway car, or when we arrange an evening on the couch at home, in the company of a partner or friends, perfectly relaxed, to enjoy on the big screen of a smart TV a binge watching session, the relationship we establish with a series – also as a result of the temporal duration of the bonds established with the characters – is an intimate, sensual, almost tactile one. A series can become a valuable resource for self-narrative and self-representation, whether public (online, on social media, and offline, in places such as cosplayer and fan conventions, and in daily life, for example,

through the display of gadgets and merchandise), or private (for example, through the extraction of “pieces” of its world to display in one’s home or car). Moreover, the love affair can extend from the series to the other media narratives (movies, novels, comics, video games, official social channels of the series, actors and directors, etc.) that make up its narrative ecosystem.

Contemporary TV series are thus serial dramas (or docu-dramas), far from the form historically assumed in the First and Second Golden Age, multi-platform and expanded. Their consumption is integrated into the increasingly frenzied and schizophrenic rhythms (between periods of overwork and periods of unemployment) of contemporary precarized work. Platform society TV series, moreover, are increasingly environments of symbolic co-construction between producers, distributors and consumers. For this reason, they not only contribute to shaping cosmopolitan, fluid, and articulated identities, but also affect the transformations of cultures and imaginaries (as we will better see in the special issue parallel to this one).

The essays collected in this special issue aim to examine some of the processes and phenomena that characterize the contemporary television seriality system at the intersection of production, distribution and fruition processes. The special issue collected articles that are expressions of different disciplinary approaches (the sociology of cultural processes, socio-semiotics, Media Studies) and which, taken together, give a clear idea of the variability of formats, genres, production and distribution types in contemporary television seriality.

Ariela Mortara and Geraldina Roberti investigate the forms of product placement, that is, the legally permitted presence of brands within the serial narrative. Precisely because of their impact on individual lives and collective symbolic processes, TV series exert a special appeal, which can be capitalized by brands through the presence of iconic products worn by the protagonists. Fashion, in particular, is an element that contributes greatly to the signification of TV series (Mascio, 2023). The two scholars show how product placement is a crucial object for understanding the business models and forms of communication, both of the brands involved and of the TV groups themselves. Using the TV series *And Just Like That* (2021 - ongoing), a sequel to *Sex and The City*, as a case study, the paper reflects on the two types of product placement (good and bad), showing that – when convincingly integrated within the narrative dynamics of a successful TV series – brand promotion within a serial narrative fosters brand awareness (Yildirim and Aydin, 2012). Precisely because of the centrality of TV seriality in the public discourse, product placement in TV series reaffirms that, even in a mediascape punctuated by many types of advertising, the combination of storytelling/brand promotion continues to fascinate millions of viewers.

The essays by Antonella Mascio, Mario Tirino and Simona Castellano focus, from different perspectives, on the nexus between television seriality and celebrity. Mascio’s paper explores the first season of Ryan Murphy’s series *Fend* (2017-2024) as a model for analyzing the aging celebrity within contemporary TV seriality (see also Oró-Piqueras, 2014; Oró-Piqueras and Wohlmann, 2016; Jerslev, 2017; Sako and Oró-Piqueras, 2023). This series, in fact, chronicles the complex relationship between the two stars Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. Mascio’s paper investigates, from a socio-cultural perspective, the set of symbolic knots that the series proposes: the ways in which elderly actresses were marginalized by the Hollywood industry of the 1960s, according to models of beauty rigidly linked to age; the evolution of the concept of beauty and old age in contemporary society, demonstrated by the fact that the actresses playing Davis (Susan Sarandon) and Crawford

(Jessica Lange) are older than the characters played; the meta-reflexive potential of television seriality, which is also configured as a space for narrating the dynamics of the screen industries. Tirino's essay analyzes the docu-series *Scugnizzi per sempre* (2023). Starting from the mediatization of sport, the essay explores the connections between the Juve Caserta basketball club's feat (winning the Scudetto in 1991), the role of aged sports heroes, and the collective memory of the city of Caserta. By interrogating the past through the affective and memorial power of the aged bodies of sports celebrities, *Scugnizzi per sempre* reaffirms the potential of a TV series to reactivate the thread of intergenerational communication in search of a shared identity and to stimulate local actors (politicians, entrepreneurs, sportsmen and women) to use the legend of Juve Caserta to invest in sports as a cultural, economic and social resource. Castellano's essay focuses on the study of platformization of TV series celebrity, using *The Mandalorian* as a case study. The presence of both real (such as Pedro Pascal) and fictional (such as Grogu, the Baby Yoda) celebrities testifies to the degree of sophistication of celebrification strategies within narrative ecosystems as vast as that of *Star Wars*. The scholar effectively shows how the series is also the result of Disney's concrete production and distribution strategies. Indeed, the media conglomerate moves on a fine balance between the need to exploit the nostalgic resonances of the franchise (with particular reference to the original trilogy) and the need to engage audiences according to the trajectories and dynamics of the platform society, thus integrating top-down and bottom-up content.

It is precisely the theme of transmediality, capable of attracting numerous others, that unites the next three articles. Lorenzo Di Paola and Manuela Di Franco examine the narrative framework established by the manga *The Rose of Versailles* to assess its effect on the perception of gender identity and the consumption of manga, comics, anime, and cartoons in Italy and France.. This article particularly explores how Riyoko Ikeda's creation crossed media frontiers, transitioning from manga to anime (*Berusaikyū no bara*, globally also known as *Lady Oscar*, 1979-1980) and beyond, and how it resonated within the Italian and French cultural landscapes, leaving a lasting impact on generations of readers and viewers. Di Paola and Di Franco valorize the issue of the regionalization of foreign series (Barra, 2009) as a process that presides over contingent forms of expansion (transmediality) and adaptation (intermediality), also influencing perceptions of gender identities and the emergence of cultural conflicts between the source context (Japan) and the target context (Italy and France). Giorgio Busi Rizzi explores the franchise that originated from Bryan Lee O'Malley's *Scott Pilgrim* comic series (2004-2010), which later expanded with a film adaptation (*Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, 2010, directed by Edgar Wright) and the recent animated Netflix series *Scott Pilgrim Takes Off* (2023). The scholars analyzes *Scott Pilgrim* narrative ecosystem, including several spin-offs, such as a short-lived mobile comic, a beat 'em up video game, and a card game, and the dynamics of its media expansion, including its connections to music and gaming cultures. The author also highlights the role of Netflix's policies in shaping the series' narrative so that it could converse with users with different cultures and consumption habits. Fabio Ciammella and Michele Balducci focus on another cult Netflix series, *BoJack Horseman* (2014-2020). Their analysis concludes with the hypothesis of the existence of a platform seriality worldbuilding, in which Netflix's brand engagement practices, aimed at building user loyalty through intertextual links between its cult series, and users' grassroots practices, which testify to the potential symbolic uses of crucial elements of the *BoJack Horseman* series, especially in an ironic and

nostalgic key, interact in fascinating forms. This reveals how narrative and distribution strategies are employed to support the Netflix-centered platform seriality worldbuilding process. Through the use of transmedia hooks, which are often shaped by users' interpretive abilities, the Netflix Serial Multiverse continues to expand.

Taken as a whole, the articles that make up this special issue give a faithful picture of the multifaceted and articulated configuration of TV seriality, in the context of the rapid and profound mediatization of cultural and social processes in the contemporary world (Lundby, 2009; Hepp, 2020; Kopecka-Piech and Bolin, 2023). By examining the evolution of television narratives, the production and distribution strategies, the role of audience engagement, and the global exchange of cultural forms, this collection of essays offers new insights into the ways in which TV series continue to shape and reflect our world. As the medium evolves, so too will the narratives it produces, challenging us to rethink the possibilities of television as a form of storytelling in the 21st century.

Warning

This special issue was conceived in parallel with a second one: if the present issue focuses primarily on the mediological infrastructures of TV seriality (i.e., the forms of interaction between the production and distribution policies of TV brands and the practices of audiences) – with a particular focus on product placement, the dynamics of celebrification and representation of celebrity, and transmediality – the second issue will focus on the power of TV series to narrate and influence the mutations of imaginaries and cultures, in often complex and conflicting forms. Within each essay the individual episode citation is given according to the formula “season number x episode number” (e.g., *Chapter Five: Dig Dug*, 02x05, for the fifth episode of the second season of *Stranger Things*). In addition, each article is accompanied by an alphabetical list (excluding definite and indefinite articles) of the TV series and films cited so that readers can quickly find the identifying elements of each audiovisual work.

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3% (Netflix, 2016-2020, 4 seasons).

13 Reasons Why (2017-2020, 4 seasons).

24 (Fox, 2001-2010, 8 seasons).

Alfred Hitchcock presents (ABC, 1955-1962, 7 seasons).

And Just Like That... (HBO Max, 2021 – ongoing, 2 seasons).

Berusaiyu no bara (Lady Oscar) (Nippon Television, 1979-1980, 40 episodes).

Beverly Hills 90210 (Fox, 1990-2000, 10 seasons).

BoJack Horseman (Netflix, 2014-2020, 6 seasons).
Breaking Bad (AMC, 2008-2013, 5 seasons).
Buffy the Vampire Slayer (The WB/UPN, 1997-2003, 7 seasons).
La casa de papel (Netflix, 2017-2021, 3 seasons).
The Crown (Netflix, 2016-2023, 6 seasons).
CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (CBS, 2000-2015, 15 seasons).
Dark (Netflix, 2017-2020, 3 seasons).
Dawson's Creek (The WB, 1998-2003, 6 seasons).
Dragnet (NBC, 1951-1959, 8 seasons).
Dr. Kildare (NBC, 1961-1966, 5 seasons).
ER (NBC, 1994-2009, 15 seasons).
Game of Thrones (HBO, 2011-2019, 8 seasons).
GLOW (Netflix, 2017-2019, 3 seasons).
Gomorra (SKY, 2014-2021, 5 seasons).
Happy Days (ABC, 1974-1984, 11 seasons).
The Haunting of Hill House (Netflix, 2018, 1 season).
Hill Street Blues (NBC, 1981-1987, 7 seasons).
House (Fox, 2004-2012, 8 seasons).
House of Cards (Netflix, 2013-2018, 6 seasons).
I Love Lucy (CBS, 1951-1957, 6 seasons).
Lawman (ABC, 1958-1962, 4 seasons).
Law & Order (NBC, 1990 – ongoing, 23 seasons).
Lupin (Netflix, 2021 – ongoing, 3 seasons).
Mad Men (AMC, 2007-2015, 7 seasons).
The Mandalorian (Disney+, 2019 – ongoing, 3 seasons).
Marcus Welby, M.D. (ABC, 1969-1976, 7 seasons).
Mary Tyler Moore Show (CBS, 1970-1977, 7 seasons).
M*A*S*H (CBS, 1972-1983, 11 seasons).
Miami Vice (NBC, 1984-1989, 5 seasons).
My Brilliant Friend (Rai/HBO, 2018 – ongoing, 3 seasons).
Narcos (Netflix, 2015-2017, 3 seasons).
NCIS (CBS, 2003 – ongoing, 21 seasons).
The OA (Netflix, 2016-2019, 2 seasons).
Orange is the New Black (Netflix, 2013-2019, 7 seasons).
Ozark (Netflix, 2017-2022, 4 seasons).
Perry Mason (CBS, 1957-1966, 9 seasons).
Petrocelli (NBC, 1974-1976, 2 seasons).
The Queen's Gambit (Netflix, 2020, 1 season).
The Rookies (ABC, 1972-1976, 4 seasons).
Russian Doll (Netflix, 2019 – ongoing, 2 seasons).
Scott Pilgrim Takes Off (Netflix, 2023 – ongoing, 1 season).
Scrubs (NBC/ABC, 2001-2010, 9 seasons).
Scugnizzi per sempre (Rai, 2023, 1 season).
A Series of Unfortunate Events (Netflix, 2017-2019, 3 seasons).
Sex and The City (HBO, 1998-2004, 6 seasons).
Sex Education (Netflix, 2019-2023, 4 seasons).

Six Feet Under (HBO, 2001-2005, 5 seasons).
Squid Game (Netflix, 2021 – ongoing, 1 season).
Stranger Things (Netflix, 2016 – ongoing, 4 seasons).
The Simpsons (Fox, 1989 – ongoing, 35 seasons).
The Sopranos (HBO, 1999-2007, 6 seasons).
Star Trek (NBC, 1966-1969, 3 seasons).
Suburra (Netflix, 2017-2020, 3 seasons).
The Twilight Zone (CBS, 1959-1964, 5 seasons).
Twin Peaks (ABC, 1990-1991, 2 seasons).
The Umbrella Academy (Netflix, 2019-2024, 4 seasons).
Veronica Mars (UPN/The CW, 2004-2007, 3 seasons).
You (Lifetime/Netflix, 2018 – ongoing, 4 seasons).
The Walking Dead (AMC, 2010-2022, 11 seasons).
Wednesday (Netflix, 2022 – ongoing, 1 season).
Westworld (HBO, 2016-2022, 4 seasons).
The Wire (HBO, 2002-2008, 5 seasons).
The Witcher (Netflix, 2019 – ongoing, 3 seasons).