
Narrative analysis and creation of drama series: The first season of the television series *Los 80*

*Análisis narrativo y creación de series dramáticas:
la primera temporada de la serie Los 80*

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Abstract

Los 80 (2008–2014), one of the most outstanding Chilean fiction series in terms of critics and audience results, motivates a narrative analysis focused on the first chapter of this show, to deepen in the dramatic study of serials stories that achieves a strong identification and anchorage in viewers over several seasons. This allows to develop a Series Construction Matrix, which seeks to contribute to the analysis and creation of fiction series that aspire to a wide audience willing to watch (and watch over again) a story composed by many episodes. It is finally established that this relationship is possible through a pilot that includes dramatic features that make possible an exciting and coherent narrative expansion of the series.

Keywords: Television fiction, dictatorship, memory, reception.

Resumen

Los 80 (2008–2014) una de las series de ficción chilenas más destacadas en términos de críticas y resultados de audiencia, motiva un análisis narrativo enfocado en el primer capítulo de esta producción, para profundizar en el estudio dramático de series televisivas que logran una fuerte identificación y anclaje entre los espectadores a lo largo de varias temporadas. Se desarrolla una Matriz de Construcción de Series, que busca contribuir al análisis y creación de ficciones seriadas que aspiran a un público amplio dispuesto a mirar, y volver a mirar, una historia compuesta por varios capítulos. Se establece finalmente que esta relación es posible a través de un capítulo piloto que contempla recursos dramáticos que posibilitan una emocionante y coherente expansión narrativa de la serie.

Palabras clave: Ficción televisiva, dictadura, memoria, recepción.

1. Introduction

Los 80 (2008–2014), was a dramatic series centered on a middle-class family, set within the context of the military dictatorship in Chile between 1973 and 1990. It ran for seven seasons, with a total of seventy-eight episodes and won audience acclaim (see **Table 1**). The strong cathartic link between the fictional story of the Herrera family and the audience was once again on display when Channel 13 of Chilean broadcast television reran the show in 2019. The relaunch has now reached second place in the channel's programming with 10-point peaks, increasing the television station's ratings by 16% in that timeslot. (Fotech, 2020)).

There are no other Chilean dramatic productions that even approach the records of longevity and audience approval of the *Los 80*. The lack of anchored local dramatic productions in national audiences is a situation that needs to be addressed, and we start with a narrative analysis of the first episode of *Los 80*. The intention, to paraphrase Ginzburg (1994), is to find the signs with which the series makes its mark. Following authors like Goldberg and Rabkin (2003) and Balló and Pérez (2015), we begin on the basis that the prolonged and atemporal interest in a series rests on the dramatic construction of the first episode. Under this premise we have studied in depth the pilot episode of *Los 80*, resulting in a Series Construction Matrix (see **Table 2**) which we hope will serve students and professionals in the audiovisual profession to analyze and create serial fiction incorporating artistic and commercial parameters inherent to the industry.

2. Theoretical Framework

There are many diverse publications on *Los 80* with objectives different to ours, such as Castillo, Simleio and Ruiz (2010), Schlotterbeck (2014), Antezana (2015), Antezana and Mateos-Pérez (2017) and Mateos-Pérez and Ochoa (2018). Some compare the series to others set in the historical context of the dictatorship such as the Chilean production *Los Archivos del Cardenal* (2011–2014), and the Spanish series *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (2001–) and *Amar en Tiempos Revueltos* (2005–2012). Still other

studies analyze issues inherent to the time period of the production, such as the economic crisis and socio-political events; for example, the introduction of stay-at-home mothers into the work force.

In another study Mateos-Pérez and Ochoa (2016) analyze *Los 80* from the perspective of gender representation, including in the analysis another two local productions, one the aforementioned *Los Archivos del Cardenal* and *El Reemplazante* (2012–2014). The authors concluded that the protagonists' domestic space determined the standards for gender relations, in this case a patriarchal model, and that the story has an innovative beginning that progresses from a simplified representation. Another conclusion from the same study is that, despite certain sectors of the audience criticize the lack of political commentary and/or consensual agreement in the fictional series, it still manages to involve the spectator on two levels: the quality of the story and the link it evokes with spectator memory of the period depicted in the series.

The studies mentioned above allow researchers to “posit other analytical possibilities (...) examining the results obtained from other applications” (Aumont & Marie, 1990, pp. 268–269). We are particularly interested in delving deeper into the arguments they have presented to affirm that the narration of *Los 80* is particularly noteworthy in terms of quality, and always playing to our goal: to study in detail the pilot episode of a series that has a significantly strong cathartic effect in the audience, both when originally aired and in the rerun, making it a model to study and on which to base the creation of fictional series considered “timeless”.

Regarding the creation of a series, the audio-visual industry uses the term ‘bible’ for any document where an author presents a guide for the format or project (Douglas, 2011) or a description of its content (Toledano & Verde, 2007). The extent and style of the bible will depend on factors such as the genre of the series and the receiver. The latter consists of television stations, audiovisual producers, distribution platforms among others. The main goal of a bible is to transmit the fundamental pillars of the series in terms of how to narrate the story, produce, present and commercialize. The dramatization of a series begins with how it is shaped in the aforementioned bible, where the author will define the particulars of the project in accordance with concepts

such as the logline, storyline, genre and narrative projection. Beyond the details or discussion on the varying elements that make up a bible and the way in which they are laid out, the essential interrogative is how in practice they are translated into narrative terms in the script for the first episode, the cornerstone on which the survival of a serial production is built. In the industry it is a common assumption that the first episode *lays it all on the line*, a phrase that goes beyond the audience ratings for the episode. It also refers to the capacity of a determined production to prove it has sufficient narrative resources from the outset to extend up until its possible conclusion. As Pérez & Garín (2013) state:

Faced with laws inherent to linear storytelling, that there must be a beginning and an end, the many universes of serial fiction contain the memory of a genesis, and can allude to a possible apocalypse, but the interest it generates —the proliferation of an infinite development of episodes— lies in the between (p. 589).

To maintain the emotional investment of a serialized story from the start until its eventual end, the author will roll out several dramatic resources in the pilot episode, resources that will be given new narrative shapes in every following episode. According to Goldberg and Rabkin (2003): “At its core every series has a central contradiction: *it has to be the same show every week, and yet at the same time, it has to be new, fresh and different*” (p.14). In every new episode, the spectator establishes a relation between what they know, recognize and don’t know, that lends a novel addition to the story. In other words, the conflicts, situations and character dynamics depicted in the first episode are renewed in every subsequent episode so that, like the concept of leitmotif, every episode tells the same story, but in a different way. It is in this manner that the serial narrative is deliberately reiterative and novel at the same time, because the interplay between the recursive and the unprecedented is absolutely necessary to earn the emotional commitment and complicity of the spectator, and with that, garner their interest spanning over several episodes.

The concepts of origin and conclusion, or genesis and apocalypse, refer to the notions of rising action and climax of a story. The rising action, or in McKee’s (2002) words the inciting incident, is the

event that triggers the main conflict in the story, and also determines the climax prior to the closing. Before and after McKee other theoreticians of audiovisual story telling such as Field (2001) posit that, to develop a story, the rising action and climax must be clear. Considering these authors refer to full-length features or stand-alone productions, is the conclusion applicable to a serialized story, especially one that can extend to many more hours than what the creator originally planned? Given the particulars of the serial production industry there is no single answer to this question. Rodrigo Cuevas, screenwriter for the series *Los 80*, admits that in conjunction with the production team for the first season, they originally thought it would be the only season (R. Cuevas, personal communication, October 2009). Beyond those circumstances, the first season of *Los 80* possesses a clear dramatic relationship between the rising action (episode 01) and the climax (episode 10), which, as we will demonstrate, is key to generating high levels of spectator interest in the story, and subsequently, its continuation.

Taking into consideration all the above, the most appropriate starting point in analyzing the longevity of a production like *Los 80*, is to study in detail the very first episode to determine its capacity to establish serial continuation, or as Balló and Pérez (2005) define it, an “infinite chain of in-between events” (p.18). The author of a series works to set up a dramatic world and plot that can be extended to many more episodes in the very first airing of the show. As a result, it becomes necessary to give the audience a glimpse of many more potential installments beyond that first episode, and that full story potential will hopefully engage the audience and trigger their interest.

3. Methodological Framework

The first episode of *Los 80* was analyzed; the pilot called “A Colorful Penalty”, produced by Wood Producciones and broadcast by Canal 13, a Chilean television station, on the 12th of October 2008. The show was given a prime-time slot, and can be re-watched on the station’s web page, or alternatively on YouTube. The pilot episode was studied using a narrative analysis to examine how it integrated all the elements of the dramatic universe; characters,

conflicts and dramatic projections in the series. The general objective is to see how the first episode determines how the story will unfold in each new episode, and the interest it inspires over time. In regards to the previous, the specific objectives are: 1) Identify the narrative resources in the pilot episode of *Los 80* and how they are used throughout the episode; and 2) establish how dramatic projections are reflected in the pilot episode of the series.

To fulfill the second specific objective, we analyzed episode 10 of the series —the last in the first season— to verify how the dramatic projections in the pilot episode are expressed. To give further insight

into the general and specific objectives of the study, and how they relate to the particulars of serial audiovisual story-telling, the concepts expressed in this paper so far will be analyzed to determine how they relate to one another (bible, seriality, novel continuation, rising action and climax). To do so the researchers will refer to a body of authors that have studied audiovisual storytelling, focusing on the serialized format (Balló & Pérez, 2005; Cascajosa, 2007; Douglas, 2011; Field, 2001; Goldberg & Rabkin, 2033; McKee, 2002; Péres & Garín, 2013; Toledano & Verde, 2007), resulting in the design of a Serial Construction Matrix.

Table 1: Average Audience Ratings per Season of *Los 80*

Season	Episodes	Broadcast	Average Audience (rating)
1	10	October 12 th 2008 – December 21 st 2008	20.9
2	10	October 18 th 2009 – December 27 th 2009	25.4
3	10	October 17 th 2010 – December 19 th 2010	26.7
4	11	October 16 th 2011 – December 20 th 2011	29.8
5	12	September 23 rd 2012 – December 16 th 2012	25.8
6	12	October 13 th 2013 – January 12 th 2014	23.1
7	13	October 5 th 2014 – December 21 st 2014	21.2

Source: Kantar Ibope Media

Table 2: Serial Construction Matrix; Pilot Episode of *Los 80*

NARRATIVE UNIVERSE

Set in the family dining room of a middle-income Chilean family, the Herrera´s, who are watching black and white television footage of General Pinochet sending off the Chilean Football team on their way to compete in the Spanish World Cup of 1982.

CHARACTERS

Leads: The Herrera family: Juan and Ana, and their children Claudia, Martín and Félix.

Supporting: Exequiel, Genaro, Petita and Bruno.

CONFLICT FIRST ACT

Rising action first plot line (main story): Juan, the series protagonist, is hesitant about getting a bank loan to buy a color TV set as an anniversary gift for his wife Ana.

Rising action second plot line: Claudia clearly expresses her disgust with Pinochet.

Rising action third plot line: Félix breaks his soccer cleats just before the final of a school soccer championship.

First plot twist: Juan's imminent job promotion.

CONFLICT SECOND ACT

Developing main plot line: Without assurances of his promotion at the factory, Juan buys the television on credit and also a pair of soccer cleats for Felix.

Developing second plot line: Claudia faces off with Martin, openly criticizing the Chilean military, increasing tension between the siblings.

Developing third plot line: Félix misses a penalty he kicked with his new cleats, which he then accidentally breaks. His classmates rib him about it and he lies to skip school.

Second plot twist: The dictatorship depreciates the dollar and the company Juan works for goes into financial crisis.

[...continuation]

CONFLICT THIRD ACT

Climax main plot line: Juan attempts to assuage his family's concern about the company, but ends up getting angry and shutting down all talk of money (story remains open).

Climax second plot line: Claudia blames the military for the crisis, once again facing off with Martín and her parents. Juan repeats to his daughter that she is not to talk about politics, but she insists (story remains open).

Climax third plot line: Felix opens up with Juan confessing how he missed the penalty and broke his new shoes; Juan manages to cheer him up (story closed).

DRAMATIC PROJECTIONS ESTABLISHED IN PILOT EPISODE

Juan: Can he support his family if he loses his job?

Ana: What will she do with Juan's job instability?

Claudia: If she keeps insisting on talking politics, how will it affect her relationship with her family, her boyfriend and her dream of studying medicine?

Martín: Will he be accepted into the Air Force? Will he grow even further apart from his sister Claudia?

Félix: How will their financial woes affect him? What will his *new adventure* be?

Exequiel: How will he be affected by the imminent closing down of the factory and how will it affect his political views?

Genaro-Petita: Will they really be affected by the financial crisis? (Their role is of comic relief).

Bruno: Will he be Felix's sidekick in a new adventure?

Source: Own elaboration.

4. Results and Analysis

Episode 01 of *Los 80* has sixty-three scenes. Nineteen are of archival footage. Of these nineteen scenes, fifteen are images seen on a television which trigger conflict and interaction between characters. The remaining four are sequence shots or clips on historical context that function as time ellipses.

The audiovisual archive of the decade is relevant from the outset of the episode, in the opening credits, and serves to lay the foundation for the narrative universe and novel continuation of the series. The opening sequence, scored to *El Tiempo en Las Bastillas* (1978) by Fernando Ubierno, has a series of images representative of the time. At the beginning of the song's chorus we get our first glimpse of the Herrera's, the protagonists of the series. We see them in home video format, a resource also used in the opening of two series in the same genre, *The Wonder years* (1988–1994) and *Cuéntame Cómo Pasó* (2001–). The material we see in the home video footage shows how they dress, which in turn reveals they are a middle-income family, a representation further bolstered when the opening sequence presents the Herrera family friends and neighbors.

The first scene in the pilot episode is of a widening shot that starts with a black and white television

set in the family living-dining room. When the old set starts showing blurry images, Juan, the family patriarch, and his oldest son Martín, interrupt their dinner to fix the transmission. Felix, the youngest of the siblings, announces a news story on the Chilean soccer team and urges his dad to fix the television. "Just a good whack" comments Juan while trying to fix the television set by punching it, upon which we get a visual of General Pinochet. Ana admonishes her husband telling him to be careful and not hit the television. Following Genette's (1989) idea of transtextuality "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (pp. 9-10), Juan's comment and action of hitting the television set while making ever clearer the image of the military leader that overthrew Allende can be taken as an opening statement for the entire series: in Chile there was a military coup in 1973. Ana's line is perhaps the first antithesis of the thesis or point of view of the story, embodied by Juan, an aspect we will further analyze later on, and which can be summarized in one question: is the poorly treated television set a metaphor for a downtrodden country, with and in which one must be careful?

The opening scene continues with Claudia, the eldest daughter, who finally manages to get the television set to work. Is it her, or characters like her, that are going to get the television/country back on track? The television is definitively a reflection and

metaphor of a battered Chile, and also serves to drive the story. After Claudia's intervention, the television now displays a crisp black and white image of Pinochet in the presidential palace of La Moneda, sending off the soccer team who will travel to compete in the 1982 Spanish World Cup. Claudia's disgust with the image of the dictator is obvious and apparent, meanwhile Félix, ever unconcerned with politics, is excited to see the player Carlos Caszely, the team's star forward and well-known opponent of the military regime, who is incidentally giving a tense handshake with Pinochet. This is the first scene providing a profile for each of the members of the family, distinguishing their roles and characters. It is also the foundation for the first of the three plots running through the episode: "The Rebel", Claudia's plotline.

In the second scene, with the audience already aware of his love of soccer, we begin another one of the three plotlines, this one led by Félix: "The Penalty". The youngest member of the Herrera family is a star player at school, despite the trouble he has with his old soccer shoes. The third scene marks the beginning of the last of the plotlines: "The Crisis". The third plotline to reveal itself is the central story in the episode and begins with a conflict that is seemingly unrelated. While working in the kitchen, Ana tries to find out through her daughter if Juan has bought her something for their 20th wedding anniversary. The protagonist of this particular plotline is Juan, who in the next scene we see at work in a textile factory. We see him reluctantly talking to his friend and colleague Exequiel about buying a color television on credit as an anniversary gift. This marks the end of the sequences presenting the lead characters and the three plotlines that make up the episode, which very soon begins to intensify.

Felix's soccer shoes finally completely fall apart which threatens his ability to play in the school championship final. While his mother tries to fix them, he fails to convince his parents to buy him a new pair with the rotund explanation of "there's no money". On his way home, Juan walks by his neighborhood store, managed by Petita and Genaro, a fervent Pinochet supporter that celebrates the General's announcement that the peso will not depreciate with the dollar. Following Piglia's (2014) Thesis on the Short Story, this comment establishes the "hidden secret story" within Juan's plotline, well camouflaged by the "visible story" of a family man

admiring the new color television set and mulling over the idea of buying one for Ana.

Night falls and the news triggers a new conflict in "The Rebel" storyline: images of the Falklands War with the total defeat of Argentinian soldiers. This causes an argument between Claudia and Martín, the latter convinced that Chilean soldiers would have beaten the Argentinian forces if war had broken out between the two countries. Claudia questions the Chilean military in gradually increasing intensity, while Martín, who aspires to become a pilot in the Airforce, is of a different opinion. They both ignore their father who is trying his best to calm them down. Félix unwittingly joins in the argument when a news update on the Chilean soccer team comes on the news; this time about supporters who have gone to the airport to see the team off. Juan reprimands his older children telling them to stop arguing over the subject, which gives the viewer a window into the past history of the Herrera's, their respective beliefs and relationships between family members. The previous works as a function of the present conflict, in other words, actively, to use a dramatic term. It drives progress in each of the story lines running through the episode. At the same time, two of the three storylines become entangled or crossover, "The Rebel" and "The Penalty", revealing a social critique: the use of massive events such as soccer to hide or obfuscate social issues.

The central storyline then continues on to its first plot twist, when Juan attends a goodbye party for one of his superiors and a manager announces he'll be promoted to the position. This will change the course of the story and marks the transition into the second act of the episode. Juan goes home somewhat tipsy, excited and hopeful and shares the good news with Ana. The next day he's outside looking in the shop window at the television store. It is unclear if the salesman manages to convince him of the advantages of buying a television on credit. The central storyline then moves on to the next scene with Ana and Claudia. Once again in the kitchen, mother is convinced Juan has forgotten their anniversary. Immediately following Juan, the lead, puts into play the plan he has concocted with his children and the store employees to distract Ana and hide the color television in Felix and Martín's bedroom. That night, Juan lets his children watch television, and, on opening the box, Felix finds a brand-new pair of shoes for him. Thrilled, his emotional reaction in-

creases the level of empathy the audience feels toward Juan, making it clear the lead character's dramatic purpose: "My family is the most important thing". Seeing Martín's surprise with the purchases, Juan tells him proudly it's the fruit of years of hard work. Once more two storylines become entangled but now it's "The Penalty" with "The Crisis", and the episode reaches what Field (2001) calls the mid-way point of the story: an event in the middle of the second act and the story in general that takes the conflict to a new emotional level, and typically tends to be a false triumph for the protagonist. In effect, the situation does indeed take place mid-way through the story, a little after the episode's halfway point with the episode lasting for a total of fifty-eight minutes.

In the following scene Juan enters the bedroom, turns off the light, pretending he has forgotten Ana's anniversary, upon which we see Ana's restrained anger. The three plotlines continue the next day, first with Ana waking up in a bad mood, angry at her husband's memory lapse, and then finally a joyful reaction when she sees the new television. Later, Felix is mere moments away from playing in the championship, but his friend Bruno tells him it isn't a good idea to play wearing his new shoes, he won't be used to them yet. Parallel to that action we see Claudia, proud of her father for his imminent promotion. However, we very quickly begin to see the fallout. First Félix misses the penalty and his team loses. Leaving school his frustration leads him to throw his shoes on the street where a car promptly runs over them and breaks them. While he lies to his parents his schoolmates keep teasing him. Félix pretends to be ill to skip school. Juan knows his son is hiding something from him but remains understanding; once again viewer empathy toward the leading character Juan increases. The central storyline once again takes precedence, again we see the television set, the Herrera's and archive footage on the screen with the announcement that the Chilean peso will depreciate. The economic crisis has finally arrived. This is the second break or dramatic twist in the story, which paves the way for the third act.

We see Juan feeling anxious with the rumors that the factory he works at will not be able to pay his credit in dollars, and will consequently close. The threat coincides with Chile's debut game in the Spanish World Cup. Reactions center on Félix and his classmates, and on Juan and his work collea-

gues. After Caszely wastes a goal opportunity the feeling replicates Felix's own inner conflict, and the axis of the story once again falls back to the main storyline, with Exequiel telling Juan that, when it rains it pours, now with the almost certain closure of the factory.

The family eats their meal and watch the television: Caszely is beside himself explaining what happened. Martín insults the player, but Juan insists he be respectful, once again the audience's growing empathy for Juan is protected. Immediately after the news informs of the crisis affecting the company where the father works, once more the television is the main focus, now used to build toward the climax of the episode's two main storylines: Juan asks them to turn off the television. Ana says no, she wants to know if they are going to close the factory. Claudia criticizes the dictatorship: "It's the *milicos*" a derogatory name for the military "they've created a terrible mess with the economy". Ana replies telling her she has no idea what it was like before, "back then it definitely was a mess" she states, referring to Allende's turn in government. Juan intervenes, he demands no one speak of politics. Claudia insists saying she is referring to the economic crisis and Ana, scared, asks him if they can return the television set. Juan tries to calm everybody down, in the midst of Martín trying to convince him to keep the television set, and Claudia criticizing him for being selfish. The argument between the two of them escalates and Juan feels obligated to bang on the table and shout at his children telling them not to talk of politics or money. It is with this action that the "Rebel" storyline ends for this episode. Juan's anger has made Félix cry who has left the table and gone to his room, Ana reproaches her husband's reaction, who gets up to go and comfort his youngest child. This marks the climax of "The Penalty" and the end of "The Crisis": Felix confesses to his father that his team lost and everyone is teasing him about it. Juan now understands what Felix was going through and tries to cheer him up. However, he notices that something else seems to be upsetting him as well, but Félix is afraid to say "now that you have no money". Dad keeps his temper and manages to get Felix to confess that he broke his new shoes. Juan gives him a hug, and tells him not to worry. "That's just a small problem" in a tone almost foretelling the far greater difficulties ahead. The following scene is the last in the pilot episode

and the end of Félix's storyline, with Juan teaching Félix how to shoot a penalty and managing to bring back a little joy into the child's life.

4.1. Episode Recapitulation

The first episode of *Los 80* leaves two of its three storylines open, "The Crisis" and "The Rebel". Both stories invite the audience to speculate on what will happen to Juan and his family if he loses his job, and with Claudia if she goes deeper into politics. The audience's expectations and predictions about the story in a series are directly related to the dramatic events depicted in the first episode. That Juan is the lead role, that his family are protagonists, and his friends and neighbors the supporting cast are all part of these definitions, and one can also assume they will remain during the rest of the series' development. This is how the foundation is laid for the spectator to recognize the fundamental narrative resources in the serial format, and based on their function, experience the novel continuity put forward in every following episode.

Digging deeper into the dramatic projections defined in the pilot episode, we also see Martín's aspirations on becoming an Airforce pilot, and how this could affect the already tense relationship with his sister who is absolutely opposed to the military world. On her side, Claudia aspires to study medicine and it is implied she is not happy with her current partner. In the case of Ana, we see that her husband's work situation will be a determining factor in her dramatic development. In the case of Felix, the storyline in the pilot episode has narrative closure, with which the audience understands that the character will have a "new adventure" in every episode, once again with his friend Bruno as his companion. With the secondary characters, the audience is led to understand that Petita and Genaro are constant comic relief, compensating the stories that befall the Herreras. In the case of Exequiel, the audience is forewarned that he has a political stance that goes against the military regime which in the future may cause trouble, and like Juan, he also depends on what will happen to the factory.

For the purposes of this study, to concretely understand how a series can dramatically narrate the

projections it establishes in the pilot episode, the climax in episode 10 of *los 80* "Anything, but lies" was also analyzed, it being the last episode of the first season.

The Herreras are in the dining room, eating in silence. Claudia has just been released from jail after being detained at a protest against the dictatorship. Once more she argues with Martín, who at this point in the story is a cadet at the School of Aviation. The siblings mutually accuse each other of being communist, and Pinochetist, forcing Juan to intervene: "In this house there are people". The following action is Juan telling his daughter that he and her mother had to take out a loan so she could study medicine, and demands that she find a job if she's going to university just to get into politics. Claudia wants to leave the table and go to her room, but her father bangs the table and forces her to listen. The argument intensifies and culminates with Juan slapping Martín in the face at which point Ana decides to take Félix away from the table, but he doesn't want to go. Juan asks them both to stay and that they all listen closely:

"When there's a mess, it's people like us that foot the bill... the generals and politicians never lose... Or they stay in power or they're the first to run for the hills... and it's people like us that stay... we're the ones that have to continue working and peeling potatoes to keep on going... that is how things are and always will be".

The location of the scene, the family dining room, is the same as in the climax of the first episode. There's a mirroring effect where Claudia and Martín also argue in the same location, with Juan again banging on the table. In both moments the family face off with different stances on the "mess" the country is going through. In the pilot episode Juan could have intervened with the same position he professes in episode 10. However, at that time he decides it is not the appropriate moment. What this says is that the dramatic construction of the series allows for an explicit presentation of the thesis, point of view or message from the author from the very first episode onward, especially when dealing with a story that from the very start has already decided what it will say about the central topic of the story. Whether the first episode is the appropriate moment to manifest the thesis of the story is up for debate and depends

on many varying elements for consideration, like for example the genre of the series. In dramatic series like *Los 80*, the author's point of view that confines and outlines the story and protagonist is generally not explicitly revealed in the climax of the first episode. The previous notwithstanding, it is quite often the case that the producers of a series do not know if there will be a new cycle of episodes, and such was the case with *Los 80*. That is precisely the reason that the author's opinion be expressed over the course of the first season, independent of whether the thesis or ultimate interpretation thereof can be made after the broadcasting of the last episode.

In this particular case, the climax of the pilot episode of *Los 80*, dramatic circumstances do not seem appropriate to patently express Juan's feelings/thesis of the story. We have only just begun to journey through the main character's dramatic development, which means that identifying and empathizing with the main character is a process that is still under construction. If Juan had expressed his stance freely and completely in the pilot episode, the thesis of the story would not have reached the powerful dramatization, nor been as persuasive as it was in the climax at the end of the first season. In the pilot we have only just begun to get to know the protagonist and our interest in the character is still undecided. This is ultimately how a series is able to create the very best narrative circumstances to express a feeling or a position in the strongest and most effective way.

In the first episode, it is far more relevant to clearly state the leading character's objective: Juan wants what is best for his family and keep them all together. In concrete terms this means keeping a stable job, which in the first episode is uncertain. In the climax of the first season we can now effectively prove that Juan's goal has always been the same, while at the same time the character has evolved in the face of everything he has gone through due to the socio-economic crisis. The protagonist has gone through a dramatic arch or transformation that is clearly evident in episode 10; a development that has taken place in response to an implicit promise inherent to serialized drama. It is consistent with the audience wanting to know more and go deeper into a new dimension or layer of the main character (and eventually with other characters as well) at the end of every season (Venis, 2013).

Other situations that mirror each other between the pilot episode and the final episode of season one of *Los 80* is that Juan once again gets a loan but this time to pay for his daughter's college tuition. A difference between Episode 01 and Episode 10 is that Félix no longer cries when his father gets mad, nor does he want to leave the dining room. Ana also no longer reprimands Juan for getting angry, on the contrary, she smiles, overcome with emotion and stays by his side. It would be interesting to study to what level the spectators are aware of these crossover points. These crossovers are a deep integral and unheralded part of novel continuation when compared to the more evident and visible parts of the story in a series; they can be the dynamic interactions between characters, scenarios, music and sound design, and it would be interesting to analyze how they influence the spectator interest and emotional investment, in conjunction with our disposition to watching it again over time.

5. Conclusions

The spectator's interest and emotional investment in a series depends on the narrative unfolding of a series of dramatic resources in the first episode of the series; in essence the narrative universe, characters, conflicts and dramatic projections, which once again must make a new appearance in every new episode in the series. This adheres to a function that Goldberg and Rabkin (2003) call novel continuation. Reiteratively recurring to what was first established in the pilot episode is significant in determining the audience's enjoyment and loyalty for the program. The spectators expect to recognize narrative elements while simultaneously experiencing *something new*, progress in the story, and in characters that inspire feelings such as empathy, humor, intrigue, to identify with the characters and experience new points of view. For example, the position Juan Herrera describes in the climax of the first season of *Los 80*, which is a demonstrably ingrained into Chilean culture.

In the understanding that the first episode of a series first presents the rising action in the story and encapsulates its possible climax, in the case of *Los 80*, the rising action is the economic crisis, the development of the conflict is how the crisis threatens

Juan's goal of supporting his family and keeping them together, and the climax is the result of that struggle. The pilot episode implies then that it must establish a rising action in service of the narrative unfolding of the story over all the following installments up until the climax of the final episode, which could occur at the closing of the first season or in subsequent seasons. This requires that the serialized story remain open, or rather have a flexible ending, such as was the case in the first season of *Los 80*, which gave rise to new production cycles that were initially unintended.

To extend the ending of a serialized story the pilot must establish characters and conflicts with the potential for dramatic progression in every new episode, characters that in and of themselves, or together with the rest of the ensemble, are capable of maintaining the audience's interest to see the ultimate climax of the story. Effective novel continuation means reaching a balance between the classic and new dramatic resources the script for each new episode resorts to, at the risk of losing viewers for abusing the reiteration of elements or deviating from the narrative. This results in creating a flexible bible for the series that always functions in service of the script, as it allows the inclusion of new narrative elements that independent of whether they are expressed in the story, seek to keep the audience's

interest alive and maintain their joy in watching the show. The issue here is, how much can one innovate? If in the new episodes the author changes the code of the pilot episode in excess, the story becomes unrecognizable to the audience and eventually loses them. Therefore, when intervening in the story of a series in an attempt to extend its longevity, the author must reutilize what makes it identifiable to continue creating a story based on novel continuation. That is to say, attempt to surprise and thrill the audience while continuing to remain loyal to and consistent with the origin of the series.

In short, the satisfactory result of a relationship built between the author and receptor of a series depends on the diverse requirements demanded from this type of story, such as developing an attractive dramatic universe, empathizing with characters, conflicts that reconcile emotion and consistency, generating expectation in the progression of the narrative in each episode, and present a thesis, messages, or points of view on certain topics dealt with in the appropriate dramatic instances. This is how from the very first episode a serialized story lays the necessary foundation to expand the narrative, and determine up to what level the spectators, either consciously or unconsciously, internalize and express the meanings in a series they experience in different circumstances of their lives.

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