

Easy to Snack—Hard to Digest? Strategies of Dis/Array in Streaming, Social Media, and Television

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Abstract

In the digital age, the television landscape is profoundly expanded and dispersed across multiple media, introducing new paradigms of (post-)televisuality shaped by its constant digital transformation. Television content is distributed across digital platforms that fundamentally change its consumption practices. Through its fragmentation and digitization, television is breaking down into snippets—short, engaging pieces of media—that provide a dynamic, customizable, and “snackable” viewing experience, so that it is supposedly easy to digest. As a result, not only is there a shift in how content is viewed, but there is also a shift in how content is produced. Social media platforms and their algorithms have emerged as central to this transformation, facilitating the dissemination and discovery of television content in unprecedented ways. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok are not just venues for discussion and sharing but are also directly influencing the digital transformation of television. While specific essential characteristics define television (such as its seriality, scheduling, or formats), the digital transformation emerging from the internet is disrupting the medium and requiring (or even demanding) participatory modifications based on experimenting with different forms of media so that television gets expanded, explored, manipulated, and played with by consuming snackable content bit by bit. The concept of dis/array proposed in this article encapsulates the dual forces of fragmentation and reorganization. Disarray, characterized by the oversupply of content, reflects the challenges audiences face in navigating a dispersed landscape. Conversely, array represents the efforts by platforms and users to restore order through algorithms, categorization, and interactive engagement. By analyzing current trends and audience behaviors, this article reveals how streaming, social media, and snippets contribute to the transformation of television.

Keywords

array; disarray; fragmentation; memes; participation; snippet TV; social media; streaming; television; transformation

1. Introduction: TV's Ongoing Transformation

Television is an ongoing process. In the digital age, the television landscape is undergoing a period of expansion and diversification across multiple media platforms, giving rise to new paradigms of (post-)televisuality shaped by the constant digital transformation of the medium. The term “post-televisuality” can be viewed critically, given its long-standing usage to describe new manifestations of television and the resulting ambiguity surrounding its definition (Piepiorka & Hebben, 2024, pp. 34–35). The conventional arrangement of a solitary television set in the living room has been complemented by the emergence of streaming services on portable devices and even immersive technology, thereby demonstrating that television has consistently exhibited a capacity for reinvention. Even during its formative years, television demonstrated a capability to adapt to various changes. Initially utilized for the broadcasting of singular events, such as a theater performance (Williams, 1975/2002, p. 35), television has evolved into a substantial global supply of streaming and on-demand content. The multiplication of platforms, content, and consumption patterns has given rise to new requirements for consumers and producers, a subject that will be explored in this article.

Television has included the newest technologies and devices ever since its beginnings. The medium's transformations are often categorized into technological, institutional, and behavioral changes that affect each other. In the 1990s, Caldwell introduced a comprehensive approach that captures television as a heterogeneous object in its complexity while also identifying and focusing on its essence. In an effort to capture the attention of viewers, networks have sought to differentiate themselves through unique selling points in various aspects of their programming, including formats, aesthetics, and innovative technologies. This has resulted in a distinctive appearance of television, which Caldwell summarizes under the term “televisuality” (Caldwell, 1995/2002). This approach encompasses stylistic performance and aesthetics, as well as industrial production processes, program design, viewer perspective, and connections to economic and social affairs. The advent of televisuality can be attributed to the adaption of technological innovations and the evolution of television. It is, therefore, a manifestation of transformation. Similarly, Williams' (1975/2002) concept of “flow” emphasizes the processual nature of the developments that have shaped fundamental aspects of television, including its programming and seriality. Williams suggests that television programming is not perceived as discrete, standalone units (i.e., individual programs or episodes), but rather as a continuous, uninterrupted sequence of content, a flow of images, sounds, and narrative elements. This flow of content blurs the boundaries between different types of content, including entertainment, news, advertisements, and announcements, creating a seamless viewing experience for the audience. The concept of flow posits that television is not merely a compilation of discrete programs, but rather an uninterrupted stream of stimuli designed to maintain the viewer's attention over time. It is imperative to consider the technological advancements in broadcasting and media production to fully comprehend the reasons behind the emergence of seriality in television, as postulated by Williams. These developments gave rise to novel modes of narrative and audience engagement that were structurally aligned with the concept of flow. Williams uses the concept of flow to describe the interdependent relationship between the television experience and its programming, which is inextricably linked to institutional, economic, political, and technological structures (Williams, 1975/2002, p. 35). The concept of flow evolves from a linear, curated experience in traditional television to a decentralized, participatory, and algorithm-driven phenomenon in social media, reflecting the dynamic interplay of structure and user agency in the digital age. The personalized, interactive nature of social media flow creates a sense of agency and immediacy but also

fosters fragmentation and potential disorientation. Both concepts, televisuality and flow, originate from transient periods of change, defined by technological and social developments that have resulted in new demands and media practices. And yet, they are fundamental and consistent qualities of television that still apply, even in expanded television texts that converged into other media.

Therefore, Keilbach and Stauff (2011, pp. 156–174) propose a re-conceptualization of television as an ongoing experiment, with the objective of defining change and transformation as fundamental characteristics of the medium. The authors acknowledge the challenge of formulating a coherent definition of television, given the medium's inherent complexity, heterogeneity, and constant evolution. The authors challenge the assumption of a distinct identity of television, which is now perceived as heterogeneous and complex. This implies that there was once a distinct identity of television, whose stability is now faltering. Instead, they propose a different perspective, viewing the evolution of television as an inherent characteristic of the medium itself. The conceptualization of television as an ongoing experiment permits the consideration of its infinite potential for transformation, the examination of its practices, and the production of phenomena. The intricate interplay of elements and practices (theories, objects, and instruments) inherent to television is subject to a perpetual process of re-articulation, transformation, and reorientation. This dynamic process is driven by the objective of constantly introducing new possibilities and broadening television's theoretical and methodological discourse.

The interdependency between television and social media represents a key example of transformational processes that can be observed and analyzed. The concept of flow is a defining feature of television. At the same time, it transfers structures inherent to television to other areas, resulting in the expansion of television content beyond the traditional boundaries of the television screen. Streaming platforms and social media have emerged as significant platforms for viewing content, with these platforms also relying on features such as seriality. The distribution of television content across digital platforms has resulted in a fundamental shift in the manner in which it is consumed. Technological changes result in alterations to programs and structures, necessitating participatory modifications that rely on experimentation with various forms of media (Hebben, 2024, p. 268). Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok serve not only as forums for discourse and content sharing but also exert a direct influence on the digital transformation of television. Therefore, the meaning of television is currently debated in media and television studies. While scholars concur on the concept of "televisual seriality" (Grampp & Moskatova, 2025) as objective, its contents are disseminated across various platforms, including social media and streaming services, in addition to television networks and channels. While specific essential characteristics define television (such as its seriality, scheduling, or formats), the digital transformation emerging from the internet is disrupting the medium and requiring (or even demanding) participatory modifications based on experimenting with different forms of media so that television is expanded, explored, manipulated, and played with (Hebben, 2019, p. 57). Through its fragmentation and digitization, television is breaking down into snippets—short, engaging pieces of media—that provide a dynamic, customizable, and snackable viewing experience (Piepiorka & Hebben, 2024). Concurrently, conventional television features are being integrated into other forms of digital media. Television continues to shape how streaming services and social media platforms engage with users. Features like serialized narratives, live broadcasting, event-based releases, and ad integration are deeply rooted in television's legacy, demonstrating its enduring influence on the broader landscape of digital media as they are now common characteristics of streaming and social media platforms.

By analyzing current trends and audience behaviors, this article reveals how snippets, social media, and its digital and algorithm-driven practices contribute to the transformation of television. The fragmentation of television into snippets has redefined how audiences interact with content. This shift, driven by streaming platforms and algorithmic curation, emphasizes brevity and personalization, catering to disorientation and diminishing attention spans. However, the rise of snippets has disrupted traditional TV structures, creating a landscape marked by dis/array: a dynamic tension between order and fragmentation. This research aims to describe the interplay between array and disarray and how it underscores the transformative role of snippets in reshaping television consumption. While the oversupply of fragmented content fosters disorientation, platforms and audiences actively work to re-establish coherence through categorization, recommendations, and interactive strategies. The theoretical framework is derived from media studies, with a focus on television, as well as from academic and practice-oriented discussions of social media (marketing) in order to examine the phenomena from multiple perspectives. Recent case studies are used as descriptive elements to support the observations. These have been selected specifically in relation to the hypotheses and are therefore deliberately limited to the year 2024.

This article sets out to explore the following research questions:

RQ1: How are streaming, social media, snippets, and the algorithms that underpin them, contributing to the transformation of television?

RQ2: How do providers as well as consumers/users find orientation within a dis/array of content?

RQ3: Are strategies of dis/array effects that emerge from dealing with fragmentation and snippets, and do they only occur through the interaction of television and social media?

2. Digitization and Dispersion: Plurality of Possibilities

The contemporary media environment is shaped by the concept of “media convergence” (Jenkins, 2006). Even prior to the advent of digital technologies and media, Williams (1975/2002) and Caldwell (1995/2002) described how the fundamental concepts of flow and televisuality emerged from processes of technological progress and change that were adapted by television. The advent of media convergence can be attributed to the technological convergence of individual, actually divergent media and, consequently, communication technologies caused by digitization. This results in a technological understanding of media convergence which in turn gives rise to changes in the technological and economic models that underpin it (Anderson, 2006, pp. 3–6). Jenkins (2006, p. 282) posits that media convergence represents an “ongoing process...between different media systems.” He further characterizes the phenomenon of “convergence culture” which emerges from the integration of diverse media forms, extending the purely technical aspects to include communicative, social, and cultural dimensions. In this sense, televisuality encompasses aesthetics, industrial production processes, the viewer’s perspective, and links to economic and social issues.

This enables a phenomenon that is not new and can be found above all in television and film: “transmediality.” This term is composed of the Latin prefix *trans*, which stands for “over” or “through.” Transmediality thus refers to a concept that takes place “across media” or “through media.” This implies a coordinated interplay of different media and their utilization. Thus, the textual and narrative design is not

limited to the source medium, but the boundaries of media may be exceeded. As a result, narratives are designed in such a magnitude that they are retold in several media. These elements, depending on their specific medium, can be perceived successively and are not necessarily tied to the inherent temporality of the series, allowing the order in which individual fragments are experienced to be flexible. This results in a simultaneity of fragments and starting points for the development of different texts (Piepiorka, 2017, p. 75). Therefore, a transmedia television series can be understood as the “simultaneous presentation of fragments across different media contexts, offering a plurality of possibilities” that continuously expands (Olek & Piepiorka, 2012, p. 81).

This has resulted in the evolution of innovative storytelling techniques and audience engagement that are inextricably linked to the concept of flow. This concept underscores the continuous, evolving processes that have shaped key elements of television, emphasizing the fluid progression and continuity in storytelling and viewer interaction. Jenkins (2006) has argued that this development reinforces and describes a “participatory culture.” In contrast to consumer culture, individuals are no longer just passive consumers, but rather active co-creators. This shift, particularly within the context of social media, which offers a relatively accessible platform for participation, has led to a proliferation of creative co-creation in various forms.

Developments such as convergence culture and transmediality and the current oversupply of content are also reshaping concepts of flow and televisuality and changing production and reception. These changes are due to a number of developments that go beyond the circumstances described above. They pave the way for a platformization and dispersion of content in so-called “snippets.” Platformization (Stollfuß, 2023, pp. 12–16) describes the increasing influence of digital platforms on various social, economic, and cultural areas. In the context of streaming services, platformization refers to the way in which platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, and other streaming services are changing the media landscape and access to content. In addition to the consequences of the monetization of platforms and content, the economic significance for the media landscape, exclusivity, and original productions, platformization has another salient meaning from the perspective of this article: the proliferation of algorithms and content. Streaming platforms utilize algorithms to curate content based on user preferences. Consequently, individual media consumption is heavily influenced by these platforms. These platforms function not only as distributors of content, but also as decision-makers, determining which content to highlight or recommend. This phenomenon bears a striking resemblance to that observed in social media platforms, which also utilize algorithms to deliver a customized user experience.

Both platform types are the basis for an oversupply that consists of small parts: Various developments in television, such as the fragmentation of the medium and the associated presentation of snackable content from television series, which can be ideally distributed via social media platforms, have led to the identification of new defining characteristics. Piepiorka and Hebben (2024) propose a new terminology, “snippet TV,” to describe the changes in the television industry. They argue that traditional television is being transformed into a fragmented medium, with content divided into short, discrete segments, or “snippets.” This, in turn, results in the fragmentation of the audience and a reception that is disseminated in short, fragmented parts. The term snippet is borrowed from marketing, which refers to a short textual representation of information on search engine results pages. A snippet highlights the uniqueness or value of the website and its offering, for example, through a promise, an outstanding deal, or special information (Ahrholdt et al., 2023, p. 27). For streaming providers, a short description of the content on the homepage or

social media is now essential to survive in the attention economy of this media environment and to generate enthusiasm for the content in a short time. Commercial media platforms establish a new form of communication, which is by snippets and therefore by “algorithmically prefigured information processes” (Stollfuß, 2019, p. 517). This term is also used in social media marketing: A “snippet” is a short text statement or an excerpt from a longer post or content that is shared on social networks. It can be observed that—both on the part of the users and the producers—a portion-appropriate production and reception in bites and snippets is relevant (Piepiorka & Hebben, 2024, pp. 39–42). Furthermore, the content behind these eye-catching elements is designed to be as easily digestible as a snack, requiring minimal effort to consume (Hagen & Münzer, 2019, p. 122). Snippets are often used to arouse curiosity and retain followers in the long term, reminiscent of Williams’ description of the flow as a mode of reception (Williams, 1975/2002, p. 38). Ultimately, all TV and streaming providers strive to motivate their audience to watch and interact with their content. The focus here is on “snackable” content (Hagen & Münzer, 2019, p. 122)—content that is specially prepared for users with diminishing attention spans. One may anticipate that the saturation of cultural content on television will occur at an accelerated rate. The sheer volume of television content, including web-exclusive material from various channels and productions, makes it challenging to stay abreast of the rapidly evolving landscape. Moreover, the abundance of content has an impact on the capacity of individuals to maintain their attention (Einwächter & Jensen, 2024, p. 109). An emerging strategy to deal with this fragmentation and oversupply is to produce and consume content in smaller, easily digestible portions such as bites and snippets. Thus, the result is a parallel mass of content in which viewers and users have to find their way around (Piepiorka & Hebben, 2024, p. 41). As previously stated, the aforementioned concept is characterized by a plurality of possibilities that are continuously expanding, and which are received as snacks and bites. This inherent intricacy can result in modes of reception that are characterized by a state of disorientation: “To orientate oneself seems to be difficult both within and even outside the television frame. Complex television evokes a potentially disorienting narrative” (Piepiorka, 2013, p. 198). In addition to transmediality, digestibility and snackability contribute significantly to disorientation. Orientation can be a challenge both within and beyond the television screen.

3. Sorting out TV’s Oversupply in the Digital Landscape

The advent of worldwide interconnectedness, coupled with the proliferation of transmedia programs, has given rise to a virtual space wherein the process of orientation becomes difficult. Orientation and disorientation appear to be inherent in all processes of engaging with the world through media. While these technologies facilitate broadening one’s perspective and enhancing knowledge, they simultaneously present an augmented array of choices concerning subsequent actions, destinations, and explorations (Eckel et al., 2012, p. 11). In the domain of psychology, orientation refers to a mental function that involves the awareness of three key dimensions: time, place, and person/self (Baars & Gage, 2010, p. 257).

Piepiorka (2013, p. 184–204) has shed light on how this applies in particular to narratively complex narrative styles in series. An orientation guide here seems to be time, place, and characters that create a narrative network of information that is comprehensible through a series of perceptual and cognitive processes, ultimately resulting in a coherent story. Thus, causality within time and space, both of which are shaped by places, plays a central role, with characters acting as agents of causes and effects. Within the narration, this refers to televisuality, characters, story arcs, and time. Causality creates orientation. Conversely, a lack of causality creates disorientation. By establishing order within the elements of time, place, and characters, it is

possible to gain orientation through the process of causality. When assessing the narrative complexity of a series, it is imperative to consider not only the content presented within the series, but also the extensive amount of supplementary material available on social media and as snippets. In such cases, orientation becomes a pivotal factor. As previously outlined here and by Piepiorka and Hebben (2024), the dissemination of television content in fragmentary form described as snippets has resulted in the creation of disorientating structures which render navigation challenging, “thereby raising the question of how far media and (dis)orientation can be considered mutually dependent,” and further, “how exactly do media technologies orient and disorient us?” (Eckel et al., 2012, p. 11).

Thus, the question emerges: How do viewers navigate the complex structures of dispersed television and the abundance of simultaneous content? It is evident that certain offers and strategies are employed, leading to orientation and order through a two-way causal relationship, originating from both the series producers and the audience. Despite the fact that series creators very consciously distribute snippets of the series for entertainment purposes, they offer forms of connection that lead back to the series and thus create causality. Consequently, viewers and fans endeavor to re-establish these to achieve orientation and establish order. These strategies for order and connection to overcome disarray and dispersion of content can be surmised from the examples that follow.

In the television and streaming landscape, an oversupply of content is developing, which relates to the large number of available television and online offerings that are accessible to viewers. This has various effects. On the one hand, users have access to an enormous variety of content. On the other hand, streaming providers are endeavoring to offer strategies to maintain an overview of this huge range. Algorithms and recommendations are used here (Piepiorka & Hebben, 2024, p. 40). Netflix’s Instagram account provides an illustrative example of this approach, offering diagrams that demonstrate strategies and potential behaviors.

One such example of how networks and streaming platforms structure their dispersed and extensive content is assembling them by special occasions. These events may include release dates and new releases, ratings, genres, current trends, and internet phenomena (see Figures 4–7). Holidays and seasons are also considered (see Figure 1). The categories are used within the structure of the streaming platforms’ apps, as advertisements within the platforms, and in their social media appearances. As illustrated in Figure 1, “summer vs autumn,” Netflix’s Instagram account provides a categorization that divides between summer and autumn. The illustrated flash and “versus” imply that there is a clash or competition, which enables engagement in the comment section and to vote on which season and shows the audience prefers. Furthermore, it combines and recommends different shows and genres. The shows presented range from current releases, e.g., *The Perfect Couple* (Bier et al., 2024) or *Emily in Paris* (Fleming et al., 2020–present) to shows that ended 17 years ago like *Gilmore Girls* (Sherman-Palladino et al., 2000–2007).

To have widespread access to dispersed content, users are forced to subscribe to multiple services, making it difficult to choose as there are endless options for content selection—creating a paradox of choice (Gasteier, 2017, p. 512) on the one hand and a phenomenon known as “series fatigue” (Einwächter & Jensen, 2024) on the other. In order to navigate the evolving media landscape, audiences must develop new strategies for engaging with the changing structures of media consumption. This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the vast array of media sources, which can be challenging given the high level of fragmentation and the excessive amount of content available (Piepiorka & Hebben, 2024, p. 45).



Figure 1. Summer vs autumn. Source: Netflix DE (2024b).

By categorizing its “extensive library of feature films, documentaries, TV shows, anime, award-winning Netflix originals, and more” (Netflix, n.d.) and showcasing a curated selection of summer and autumn-themed shows on Instagram, Netflix pre-selects and recommends content, similar to a must-watch list.

Figure 2 exemplifies an attempt to transfer a series that was completed 17 years ago into the contemporary discourse of television series. Despite the continuation of the series in 2016 as a four-episode special on Netflix, the images selected in Figure 2 are from the original series which ran until 2007. The fan-made illustration demonstrates the potential outcome “if rory had instagram...” (Gimme More Gilmore, 2024) and what her account would look like. A number of noteworthy observations can be made. Firstly, it demonstrates the dissemination of series fragments across the digital content space of social media. Additionally, it showcases the updating and appropriation of contemporary discourses that were not present in the original *Gilmore Girls* series (Sherman-Palladino et al., 2000–2007). At the same time, it facilitates identification with the characters, thereby enabling an immersive engagement with the show’s narrative universe. These fragments are linked back to the main text of the series, which can be accessed via reruns on television, DVD box sets, or streaming platforms such as Netflix. The snippets are characterized by their ease of consumption and the ability to be engaged in short, uninterrupted sequences. Thus, they invite viewers to rewatch the series and show a recursiveness that links back to the original text of the series and simultaneously enables an even broader spectrum of participation (Hebben, 2024, p. 272). In general, recursiveness can refer to self-referential reasoning or circular logic. It involves the repetition or looping of a process in a self-similar or self-referential manner, allowing complex patterns and behaviors to arise from straightforward rules (Hofstadter, 1979). Thus, here and in the following examples recursiveness can be described as an organizing strategy of producers, streamers, and audiences insofar as snippets are looped or linked to the actual text by all involved and thus enable orientation within an environment of disarray. Several posts on Instagram show similar strategies of categorization, participation, and updating, e.g., the adaptation of the series characters into AI-generated worlds, reminiscent of rewriting the story as a form of fan fiction. Other examples are references to current trends such as TikTok or films, for instance, a comparison of the protagonists of *Gilmore Girls* (Sherman-Palladino et al., 2000–2007) with characters from the Disney film *Inside Out 2* (Mann, 2024).

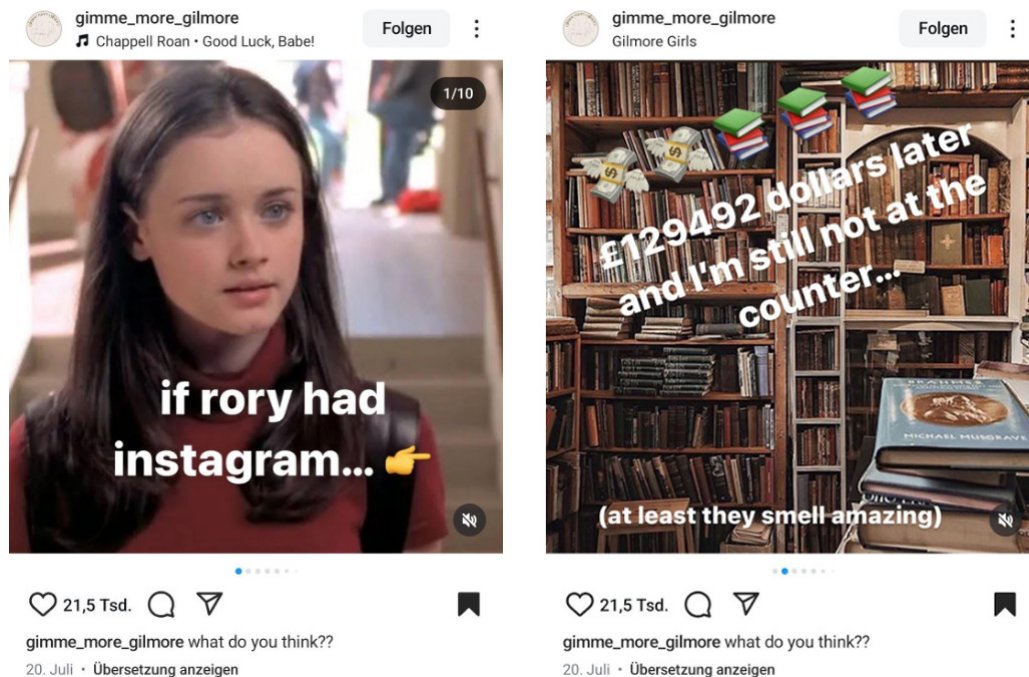


Figure 2. If rory had instagram. Source: Gimme More Gilmore (2024).

The example presented in Figure 3 illustrates a direct link to the original organizational structure of the television series *Gilmore Girls* (Sherman-Palladino et al., 2000–2007), comprising its seasons and episodes. In a post on the image-sharing platform Instagram, a *Gilmore Girls* fansite prompts its followers to “describe your favorite *Gilmore Girls* episodes using emojis” (Gilmore Girls Fan Page, 2024). This encourages users to engage with familiar classification systems, demonstrating a high level of commitment and participation. Not only do users post their favorite episodes as emojis, but they also engage in guessing and discussing about these episodes. They categorize the episodes according to seasons and episodes, which leads them back to the original text with a recursive movement (Hebben, 2024, p. 272) and invites them to rewatch. This shows that strategies of dis/array emerge from dealing with fragmentation and snippets.

Another example that shows not only the challenge of sorting a high level of fragmentation and the excessive amount of content of one series but a high level of several layers of popular references on top of the series content, emerges from the so-called “demure trend.” The demure trend on TikTok began in August 2024 when influencer Jools Lebron (2024) shared a video describing her understated makeup look for work as “very demure, very mindful.” The term “demure” traditionally means modest or reserved, but the trend emphasizes a natural, mindful presentation that combines confidence and style. Users on TikTok show how to “demure” everyday activities, linking the trend to themes such as “quiet luxury” and minimalist elegance (Swift, 2024). The audio track of the original video is repurposed as an audio meme and distributed with one’s own video content. Memes as a cultural practice of the internet are also increasingly being used by content providers. According to Shifman (2013) memes are: “A group of digital elements with common characteristics in terms of content, form, and attitude, created, circulated, imitated and modified with awareness of each other” (Shifman, 2013, p. 41). Memes have the capacity to engender novel affects, meanings, relevance, and knowledge through random connections and similarities in the socially fragmented and attention-driven “splinternet” (Mücke et al., 2022, p. 11). Consequently, they reflect fragmentation and

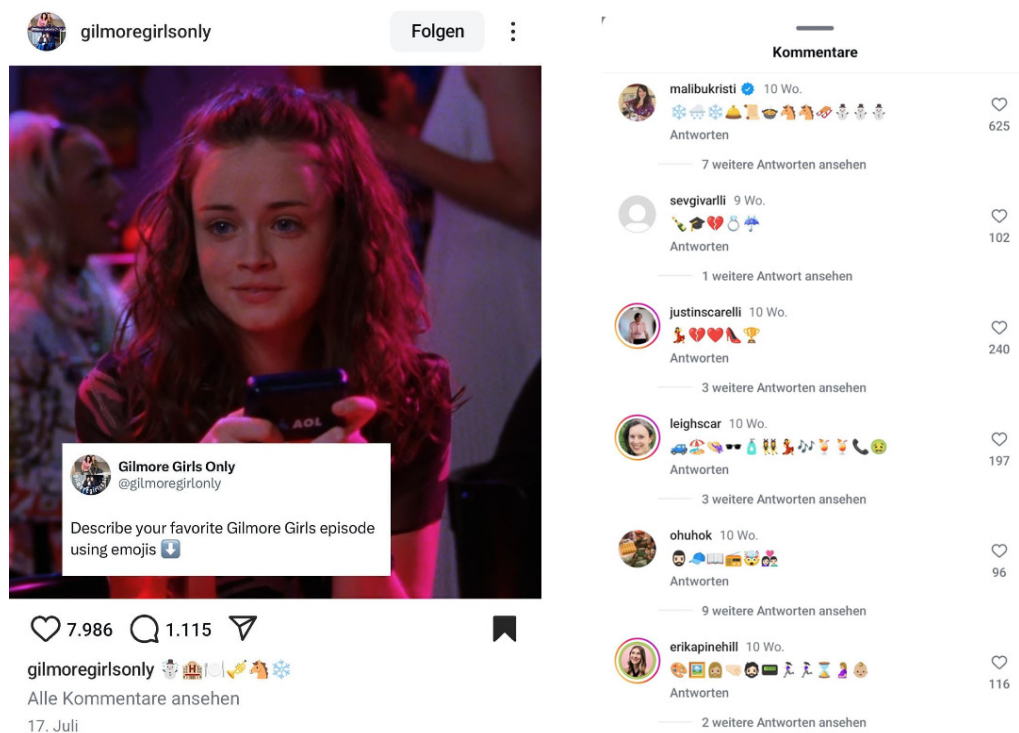


Figure 3. Describe your favorite *Gilmore Girls* episode using emojis. Source: Gilmore Girls Fan Page (2024).

often manifest in the form of brief, attention-grabbing snippets that convey content in a condensed image–text combination. Providers are increasingly resorting to memes or producing content that is deliberately designed for memeability. As Zündel (2022) notes in the context of the series *Euphoria* (Levinson et al., 2019–present), television and streaming series deliberately incorporate or even anticipate the creation of memes from the outset. Comprehension of these memes necessitates awareness of the original or active engagement within the relevant social media bubbles. Television providers strategically appeal to viewers’ desire to always be up to date, thereby transforming television into a daily, habitual practice of self-obligation (Zündel, 2023).

Additionally, actor Penn Badgley makes a direct reference to the demure meme, associating the television series *You* (Siega et al., 2020–2023) with the TikTok trend (see Figure 4). He produces a video from the set of the series and shows how demure he behaves there, which was posted by Netflix (Netflix US, 2024b). This establishes a correlation between the Netflix-produced series, the streaming provider itself, and the TikTok trend. In response to this trend, Netflix has strategically partnered with the creator of the original video content. A “very demure, very mindful” category (see Figure 5) is being created on the streaming platform, in which series on this topic are offered (Netflix US, 2024c). The demure meme as a snippet exerts a direct influence on the platform’s organization, thereby contributing to the transformation of the streaming provider. Furthermore, Netflix leverages this trend on its Instagram account, positioning series between the “demure” category and the preceding TikTok trend “brat,” which epitomizes loud, self-confident, and direct behavior (see Figure 6). This approach mirrors the aforementioned seasonal meme (see Figure 1) as a means of categorization and preselection. This highlights the intricate interplay of multiple layers of popular cultural references that serve to orient users and consumers: The contemporary implications of the term “brat,” which also serves as the title of a recent album by British singer Charli XCX with a neon green color on its

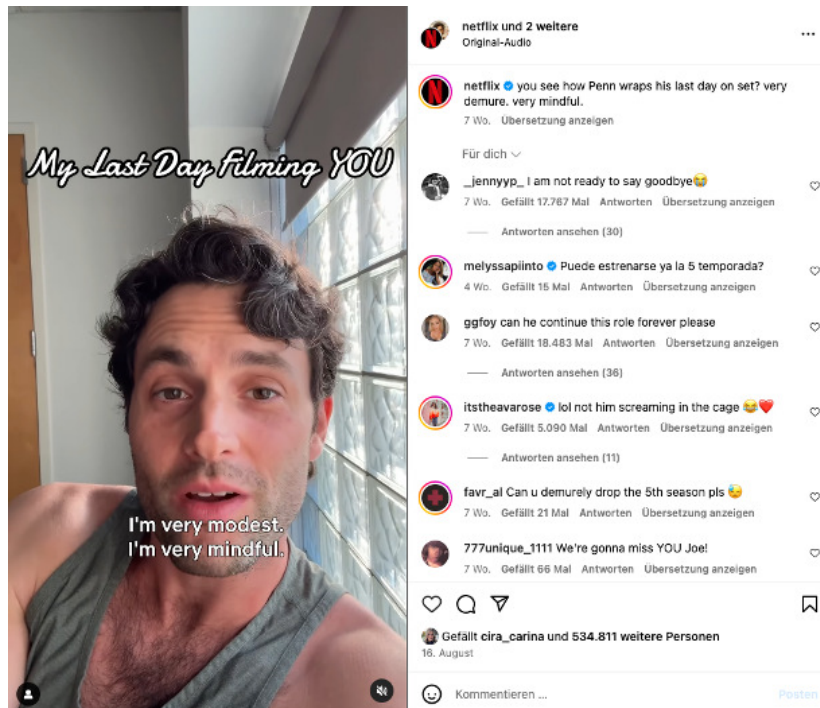


Figure 4. My last day filming You. Source: Netflix US (2024b).

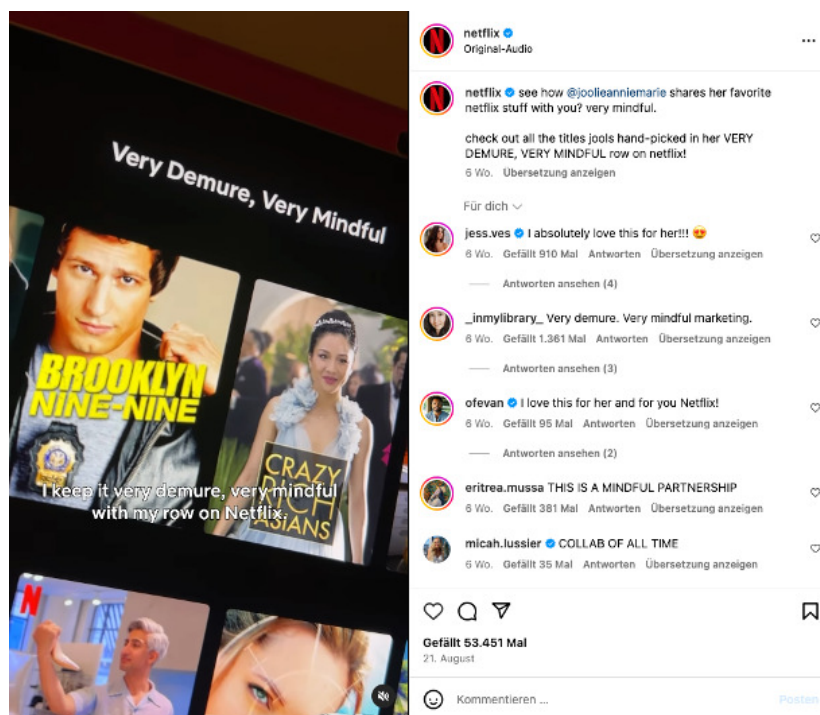


Figure 5. Very demure, very mindful category on Netflix. Source: Netflix US (2024c).

cover, is encoded in the lime green color trend when users began using the color in their profile pictures and creating memes with it. Both the color and the term “brat” have been referenced in the 2024 US election campaign, when Kamala Harris’ campaign went lime green to embrace the meme of the summer

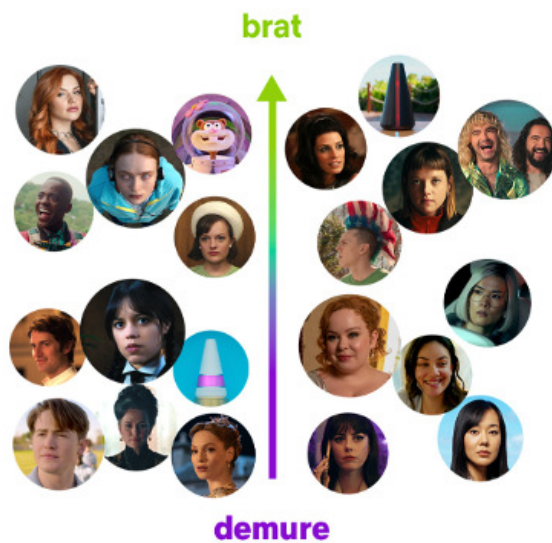


Figure 6. Demure to brat. Source: Netflix DE (2024a).

(Demopoulos, 2023). This raises the question: How do categorizations facilitate viewer orientation while simultaneously leveraging the audience’s familiarity with specific social media trends as a prerequisite for engagement? The answer to this question is twofold. Firstly, the sheer volume of content can be challenging to process. However, by employing strategies similar to those utilized by consumers, providers, and evolving popular culture, navigation becomes more manageable. This awareness of trends and popular cultural references becomes particularly evident in emerging memes, as the next example clearly demonstrates.

The last example shows that these suggestions for different forms of organization and arrangement are being accepted and expanded upon. The boundaries between fan-produced and platform-produced snippets are blurring. Videos using the word “demure” appear in the social media content space. One such example is a clip from the 1993–1999 television series *The Nanny* (Jacobson et al., 1993–1999). It is unlikely that the quote from protagonist Fran Drescher and TikTok creator Jools are related. Nevertheless, both videos have been collated in a manner akin to the assembly of a mosaic (Piepiorka & Hebben, 2024, p. 51) within the social media content space, with a connection sought and an order enforced. Netflix extends this line of reasoning by identifying and reinforcing the perceived connection between the TikTok meme and television. Additionally, the term “demure” is referenced in a prominent manner within the context of a particular scene (see Figure 7) situated within the 153-episode narrative of the television series *Gilmore Girls* (Sherman-Palladino et al., 2000–2007). The scene, which is brief, is currently being disseminated via the internet as a short clip. Concurrently, Netflix has reposted the meme on their Instagram account. This act of homage functions to reinforce the perceived order of the fan-produced snippets, while simultaneously establishing a direct link between the TikTok trend “demure” and the television series *Gilmore Girls*. This illustrates the recursive movement of such content between social media and television platforms along with the process of organization to establish array.



Figure 7. The demure trend in *Gilmore Girls*. Source: Netflix US (2024a).

4. Conclusion: Navigating the Dynamics of Dis/Array in the Transformation Of TV

This analysis highlights how the fragmentation of television into snippets and its integration with social media platforms have fundamentally reshaped the medium. It is evident that social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok function not only as forums for discourse and interaction but also exert a direct impact on the digital transformation of television. These platforms mirror the increasingly fragmented and expanded media landscape, reflecting the ongoing transformation processes. Television represents a paradigmatic case of continuous technological change, which is invariably accompanied by the adaptation of new media practices. Concurrently, the fundamental attributes of television, such as its flow and televisuality, are contingent upon the evolution of the medium, which in turn gives rise to modified practices and paradigms. One consequence of the transformation of televisuality is the emergence of transformed forms and modes of media convergence and transmediality. These not only facilitate the platformization of television but also prompt further changes in practices and formats. It is produced, distributed, and received in bites and snippets.

The concept of dis/array, which is central to this analysis, encapsulates the dual forces of fragmentation and reorganization. Disarray, defined by the overwhelming oversupply of content, reflects the challenges audiences face in navigating a dispersed landscape. Conversely, array signifies the endeavors by platforms and users to reestablish order through the implementation of algorithms, categorization, and interactive engagement. In response to the challenges posed by the deluge of options and the disarray of content, novel practices are emerging to establish a revised meaning of orientation. The intertwined and mutually reinforcing nature of array and disarray is a salient feature of this dynamic landscape.

On the one hand, algorithms are an inherent strategy of the digital world, which is used by streaming platforms and social media networks for personalized consumption. Furthermore, algorithms facilitate the dissemination of TV series fragments, which are then rearranged, updated, or manipulated in the form of memes. This perpetuates inherent characteristics of television such as seriality with its structure of variation and repetition. At the same time, the algorithms curate the content and thus influence the user's attention. The viewer is confronted with an overwhelming array of options and information, coupled with a high degree of control through pre-selection. What appears to be easily digestible content actually requires a variety of strategies in order to be fully and causally received.

In addition to seasons and episodes, narrative elements such as time, places, and characters, which contribute to the establishment of causality, constitute an established organizational structure. The interplay between formal and narrative structures is evident in the examples presented. On the one hand, the snippets are linked back to the original text of the series and to the broadcasters and streaming platforms, as Mittell (2015) has already described in the context of transmedia storytelling in the series *Lost* (Abrams et al., 2004–2010). Conversely, the characters and narrative elements are continued in the snippets and adapted to align with contemporary discourses. This phenomenon also fosters forms of immersion and role-playing, as evidenced by Figure 2. An active search for order is evident when, for example, individual fragments such as the word “demure” are searched for and categorized in a television context. This process culminates in a convergence of fan-produced and official content. These examples elucidate strategies of categorization, participation, and the appropriation of prevailing discourses. These categorizations ultimately lead back to the platforms and broadcasters in a recursive movement, inviting participation in the texts, for example in the form of re-watching. The dynamic interplay between these platforms, the series content, and the reception practices of the audience collectively define the contemporary transformations of television. This phenomenon is exemplified by the multi-layered forms and practices of dis/array.

This study reaffirms television's adaptability and enduring influence, even as its boundaries blur within a converged media environment. By examining how snippets and social media contribute to this evolution, the analysis underscores television's capacity for reinvention, maintaining relevance in a rapidly changing digital world.

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Conflict of Interests

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