

Disney Plus and the debate on “The End of Television”

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Abstract

The medium of television has gone through drastic changes over the years since its prime time in the 1950's, also referred to as the medium's Golden Age by various scholars. Nowadays, streaming services, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu and Disney Plus, are considered to be the most popular form of television entertainment due to their accessibility and variety of content. In this essay the streaming service called Disney Plus is inserted into the debate concerning the "end of television," as contemplated by Henry Jenkins and Elihu Katz or if television is entering a new phase as argued by Amanda Lotz and John Ellis and alluded to by Jérôme Boudone. Additionally, the research reveals the shifting understanding of television in the Internet era in accordance with Sanson and Streier's three levels of aspects. The analysis of the first two levels of ownership structure and business deals provided historical context and insight to the Disney company as well as how technological changes and media convergence, as discussed by Michael Newman and Elana Levine, Newton Lee and Krystina Madej's, J.P Tolette and Wheeler Winston Dixon, assisted in Disney's developments and that of streaming services in general. Furthermore, the analysis of the most important level, television aesthetics, revealed that the three concepts of liveness, flow and choice are presented differently in the streaming service Disney Plus in comparison to cable television. Lastly, in the conclusion the argument is made that Disney Plus represents an example of the next phase of television and illustrates how television can be understood in the context of the Internet.

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1. Introduction

In the year 2019, a new streaming service called Disney Plus was released. The idea behind the platform is to make all the shows and movies from Disney, as well as Pixar, Marvel, *Star Wars* and National Geographic, available to the public on the same platform.

The Walt Disney website states that the streaming service is meant to bring “together for the first time an unparalleled lineup of content.”¹ When the platform first launched, the service provided over 500 films and 7500 television episodes of original Disney content, as well as library titles and Disney Plus originals.² The streaming service is a subscription-based platform where a monthly fee is paid in return for a wide selection of content the subscriber can access. The analysis will focus on the streaming service Disney Plus and examine whether it is an example of how television is ending, as suggested by Henry Jenkins and Elihu Katz, or only going through a phase of transition as discussed by Amanda Lotz and John Ellis and contemplated by Jérôme Bourdon. Thus, the research question that will be answered at the end of this paper is “How can we understand the streaming platform Disney Plus in light of the discussion to what Katz calls “the end of television” with regard to the aspects of flow, liveness and choice?”

In order to analyze Disney Plus further, the following concepts and theories will be applied to the case study: the end of television, media convergence, flow, liveness and choice. The example of Disney Plus was chosen for a variety of reasons. Firstly, when the platform launched Disney already possessed existing content, including acquired content from purchasing companies such as Marvel and Pixar. Disney’s backstory and extensive history of how the company began as a small film studio and progressed into other forms of media is informative, especially in comparison to other streaming platforms, because Disney’s

¹ “Disney + Launches Today – and a New Era of Disney Entertainment Begins,” News, The Walt Disney Company, last modified November 12, 2019, <https://thewaltdisneycompany.com/disney-launches-today-and-a-new-era-of-disney-entertainment-begins/>.

² The Walt Disney Company, “Disney + Launches Today.”

journey of expansion led to the creation of a streaming service. Moreover, streaming services have had a hand in spurring the debate on the end of television, thus the analysis of Disney Plus will reveal what it means for a media conglomerate to launch its own streaming platform. Lastly, I personally have a subscription to the platform, which will help provide more insight into how the platform works.

The structure of this paper will follow Sanson and Streier's analysis of the platform Hulu. Their aim is to "link our analyses to some of the key questions and concerns about what contemporary television has become and how it should be studied."³ More specifically, by introducing Hulu to the debate surrounding streaming services, they wish to suggest an alternative understanding of television in the era of the Internet from Netflix and Amazon.⁴ This understanding of streaming services according to Sanson and Steirer is "seen as a global game", which signifies that streaming is "conducted by large multinational tech companies."⁵ The authors explain further how the "production, distribution, and reception practices traditionally associated with legacy television" have been transformed by the company's "employment algorithms and non-linear programming."⁶ Thus, the objective of this paper is to connect Disney Plus to the debate on "the end of television", regarding the understanding of television in the Internet era and how the changes from broadcast to digitalized television have affected liveness, choice and flow.

To begin, the theoretical framework will provide a summary of the debate on the end of television according to various scholars as well as the current understanding of the concepts flow, choice and liveness. The approach will be conducted based on Sanson and Streier's three steps, which are ownership structure, business deals and television aesthetics. The first two steps will provide context to Disney as a company, more specifically how it started and expanded to become the

³ Kevin Sanson and Gregory Steirer, "Hulu, Streaming, and the Contemporary Television Ecosystem," *Media and Culture Society* 41, no. 8 (2019): 1210. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/0163443718823144>.

⁴ Sanson and Streirer, "Hulu, Streaming," 1210.

⁵ Sanson and Streirer, "Hulu, Streaming," 1211.

⁶ Sanson and Streirer, "Hulu, Streaming," 1211.

media conglomerate it is today. Thus the sub-questions: “How has the ownership structure of Disney developed and how does Disney Plus fit into this development?” and “What business deals have been made and how have they shaped Disney Plus as a platform?” will be considered. These steps will lead into the third and final step, television aesthetics, which will center around Disney Plus as a platform and reflect on the sub-question: “How can we characterize the aspect of liveness, flow and choice in the context of Disney Plus as a platform?” Correspondingly, the platform will be studied in terms of how it is based on a product that already exists and what makes it different from other streaming services but this is not the main focus. Lastly, the conclusion aims to answer the research question, reflect on the analysis, and deliberate on what the popularization of streaming services, specifically Disney Plus, means for television as a medium.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The End of Television

Firstly, the debates concerning the “end of television,” according to Jenkins, Katz, Bourdon and Lotz will be analyzed in order to research the emergence of new media, how it has developed and the position of television in relation to it.

Henry Jenkin’s article examines how “television is undergoing some radical shifts,” and how this “represent a significant tipping point” for the medium.⁷ More specifically, it signifies a shift in the production, distribution and consuming of television.⁸ Despite these observations Jenkins does not specifically state that television is in fact dying but rather considers the idea that it may be. In relation to Jenkin’s argument, Elihu Katz considers the questions “What, then, is television?” and “Is television really dying?” and further explains what the notion of

⁷ Henry Jenkins, “Is This the End of Television as We Know It?”, edited May 21, 2013. <http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2013/05/is-this-the-end-of-television-as-we-know-it.html>.

⁸ Jenkins, “Is This the End of Television as We Know It?”

television dying signifies.⁹ Primarily, his definition of television is “a technological apparatus” that is “embedded in a social institution consisting of rules, roles, and organizations in an environment of other institutions.”¹⁰ Katz states that television may be dying because it is developing “content wise from “same” to “differentiated,” and contact wise from “together” to alone.”¹¹ This signifies that “classic” television, meaning television that provides “audio-visual channels of over-the-air broadcasting,” is “publicly regulated,” “charged to inform, educate and entertain” and “characterized by national audiences dispersed in their homes” is disappearing so to speak.¹² Hence, both authors discuss how the progression of television is alluding to the medium disappearing in the traditional sense, meaning it is becoming more digitalized and accessible. Although, these debates are limited since no concrete answer of whether television is ending is given.

Furthermore, Katz references John Ellis and how he also proposes that the medium is going “from a ‘collectivist’ to an ‘individualist’ phase.” This means that television is no longer an act of togetherness but rather consumed in one’s own time and space, which Ellis defines as television entering a new phase instead of dying.¹³ Additionally, Amanda Lotz has argued that television as we know is not necessarily ending, rather evolving. The term television, as she explains, has been widely used to refer to a “singular technology,” but following the network era it has “enabled a range of experiences.”¹⁴ Therefore, according to Lotz, post network television does not signify the end but rather “the beginning of a new era.”¹⁵ The reason being that television “remains a cultural experience,” but with the advancements of

⁹ Elihu Katz, “Introduction: The End of Television?,” *The ANNALS of American Academy of Political and Social Science* 635 (September, 2009): 7, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/0002716209337796>.

¹⁰ Katz, “Introduction”, 6.

¹¹ Katz, “Introduction”, 8.

¹² John Ellis, *Seeing Things* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000). **quoted in** Elihu Katz, “Introduction: The End of Television?,” *The ANNALS of American Academy of Political and Social Science* 635 (September, 2009): 7. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/0002716209337796>.

¹³ Ellis **quoted in** Katz, “Introduction,” 7.

¹⁴ Amanda D. Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized, Second Edition* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 34, ProQuest EBook Central.

¹⁵ Lotz, *The Television*, 35.

technology it involves “new rituals of use,” such as the digitalization of television making content more accessible.¹⁶ Hence, she explains how technology is contributing to the next phase of people watching television and enhancing their viewing experiences.¹⁷ Furthermore, in a more recent text by Lotz, she has stated that one should be cautious with “claims of new things “killing of” existing media and media practices.”¹⁸ She maintains the argument that technology and the internet have contributed to the changes television has gone through and that instead of claiming that the internet is “killing television, it has “improved how we watch.”¹⁹

To contrast the previous scholars, Jérôme Bourdon’s argument states that television is still a “unified medium” and the use of live-broadcasting remains an important aspect of television.²⁰ He states that liveness is not going to disappear with the emergence of new television but recognizes that “multiplicity of channels” and the “increased competition and ‘choice’ they entail” will impact liveness.²¹ Bourdon also implies that live-broadcasting may not be disappearing but could be entering a new phase, which links to Lotz’s and Ellis’ arguments on television entering a new phase as well.²²

Hence, the aforementioned authors’ observations on television and streaming services can further elaborate on whether Disney Plus is an example of the “end of television” or entering a new phase, which will be discussed throughout the analysis.

2.2. Technological Changes

¹⁶ Lotz, *The Television*, 263.

¹⁷ Lotz, *The Television*, 54.

¹⁸ Amanda D. Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast: How Cable Transformed Television and the Internet Revolutionized It All* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018), 180, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁹ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 5.

²⁰ Jérôme Bourdon, “Live Television is Still Alive: On Television as an Unfulfilled Promise,” *Media, Culture & Society* 22.5 (2000): 531-532, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/016344300022005001>.

²¹ Bourdon, “Live Television,” 553.

²² Bourdon, “Live Television,” 553.

Technological changes are an important factor when discussing media convergence as it links to the altering social status of television and will help to analyze if these changes are reflected in Disney Plus.

Additionally, the technological changes provide context to the concepts of flow, choice and liveness in the sense that they contributed to the alterations they went through during the modernization of television.

Michael Newman and Elana Levine discuss the convergence era and how “many media come together and begin to blur into one another,” which is what the term media convergence signifies.²³ This is seen in the way that nowadays “movies are watched most often on television”, television is watched on “personal computers and mobile devices” and “the electronic media” is digitalized.²⁴ Furthermore, Newman and Levine discuss the cultural legitimation of television by examining the changing cultural value of television, wherein convergence is crucial to the context to establish the conditions “under which television’s status is being renegotiated.”²⁵ The scholars also state that convergence is not only a technological process but the aesthetic and social aspects are of importance.²⁶

The technological advancements Disney has made with regard to television are explored by J.P. Tolette. Tolette specifically discusses how Disney strives to make use of the best forms of technology with the aim of distributing their content.²⁷ In connection to Tolette, Newton Lee and Krystina Madej’s discuss how technical innovations have been applied in order to create and distribute Disney’s content through various forms of media.²⁸ The focus for both texts will be on how Disney became involved in television and what this new form of technology meant for the growth of the company. Additionally, these statements support Katz’s argument on choice and contact as well as Lotz’s argument on the

²³ Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (London: Routledge, 2012), 4, ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁴ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 4.

²⁵ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 5.

²⁶ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 5.

²⁷ J.P. Tolette, *The Mouse Machine: Disney and Technology* (University of Illinois Press, 2008), 1. ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁸ Newton Lee and Krystina Madej, *Disney Stories: Getting to Digital* (New York: Springer, 2012), 1. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1007/978-1-4614-2101-6>.

role of technology in the evolution of television, meaning the viewer has “control over how, when and where to view” television, such as on laptops or phones.²⁹

Lastly, Wheeler Winston Dixon states that a new form of media, known as streaming services, are taking over the classic roles of cinema and television because “more viewers are cutting the cable cord.”³⁰ He contemplates how the digitalization of film and television impacts these forms of media. The topic Dixon discusses adds to the debate on the “end of television” and the changes the medium is going through because “the landscape of both life and technology is constantly changing.”³¹ Overall, these observations have the potential to display how the technological innovations contribute to the changing associations made in regard to television and can be useful when analyzing how the technological changes and media convergence has led to streaming services, such as Disney Plus.

To further explore the changes television has gone through, the concepts of flow, liveness and choice will be analyzed in correspondence with the aforementioned authors.

2.3. Flow

The definition of flow, in regard to television is explained by Michael Kackman in accordance to Raymond Williams. Williams coined the term in 1974 and defines flow as “the abutting and collision of programs, advertisements, promos, film trailers to be the “central experience of watching television.”³² For example, cable television used to adhere to a schedule, meaning programmes would be aired at specific times during the day which creates a flow of content. Flow, according to Newman and Levine, used to be live but then became more of a stable sequence of

²⁹ Lotz, *The Television*, 54.

³⁰ Wheeler Winston Dixon, *Streaming: Movies, Media and Instant Access* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky), 1. doi:10.2307/j.ctt2jcs6f.

³¹ Dixon, *Streaming*, 105.

³² Michael Kackman, Marnie Binfield, Matthew Thomas Payne, Allison Perlman, and Bryan Sebok, eds. *Flow TV: Television in the Age of Media Convergence* (Routledge, 2010), 1.

content.³³ This shift meant that viewers were able to watch each episode of the series in chronological order from start to finish; making the “experience of TV less casual and more intense.”³⁴

Lotz expands on the notion of flow in a more modern context and states that the most important distinction between internet distributed television and cable television is “that it does not require time-specific viewing.”³⁵ Time specific viewing, or linear distribution, is categorized by capacity constraint and time specificity, which in turn influences the viewer’s experience of watching television.³⁶ Contrarily, nonlinear distribution “eliminates time specificity” and reduces capacity constraint, therefore in contemporary times television is no longer considered to be a linear model but rather a nonlinear curation according to Lotz.³⁷

2.4. Liveness

In relation to flow, the concept of liveness is an aspect in broadcast television that has changed in relation to the development of streaming services. Liveness is a challenging concept to define particularly in the contemporary context and in regards to television it can be understood in various ways. Karin van Es explains in her article that Philip Auslander discovered that the term “live”, in the context of media, originated during the “introduction of broadcasting.”³⁸ Auslander states that typically the assumption is made that a “live event is ‘real’ and the mediatized events are secondary and somehow artificial reproductions of the real.”³⁹ Additionally, he says that liveness in television remains “a crucial part of the televisual imagery” because it “can ‘go live’ at any moment to convey sight and sound at a distance” although it is not the main feature

³³ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 132.

³⁴ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 132.

³⁵ Amanda D. Lotz, *Portals A Treatise on Internet-Distributed Television* (Maze Books: Michigan Publishing, 2017), 2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9699689>.

³⁶ Lotz, *Portals*, 2.

³⁷ Lotz, *Portals*, 2.

³⁸ Karin van Es, “Liveness Redux: On Media and Their Claim to be Live,” *Media, Culture & Society* 39, no. 8 (2017): 1246, <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/0163443717717633>.

³⁹ Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (Routledge, 2008), 3.

anymore.⁴⁰ Newman and Levine explain that live television was “a profound experience for the viewer” who could watch the program from the comfort of their own home in real time.⁴¹ Furthermore, the authors have stated that liveness and continuity are no longer defining features in contemporary television due to the convergence era.⁴²

In connection to this, Katz declares that since watching television is more of an individualist activity now, the act of watching a live broadcast together is quite rare.⁴³ Additionally, Lotz describes “liveness” and how changes have been made in terms of watching behaviors, which include “watching a show when you want, rather than when a network schedules it” and that one is able to download shows on electronic devices or “watch them live on a mobile phone whenever you receive a signal.”⁴⁴ She adds that the notion of immediacy and liveness were thought to be vital aspects to the experience of watching television but turned out to be “a by-product of its previous distribution technologies.”⁴⁵ In fact, Lotz states that the digitalization of television allowed for the viewers to access content “at their command,” which no longer adhered to a timed schedule.⁴⁶

Bourdon’s understanding of liveness is from before the time of when streaming services began; liveness is “a way to conquer time and distance, to have vast groups of people commune in a new experience.”⁴⁷ In contrast to the previous authors, but in correlation to Auslander, he states that live broadcasting has remained an influential aspect in television and the language of something being “live” is “virtually present in many programmes or sequences of television.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, he states that the live television connects the viewer “to something, to a specific place, to a specific person.”⁴⁹ Bourdon clarifies that in the early

⁴⁰ Auslander, *Liveness*, 13.

⁴¹ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 21.

⁴² Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 4.

⁴³ Ellis **quoted in** Katz, “Introduction,” 7.

⁴⁴ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 3.

⁴⁵ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 128.

⁴⁶ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 128.

⁴⁷ Bourdon, “Live Television,” 533.

⁴⁸ Bourdon, “Live Television,” 532.

⁴⁹ Ellis **quoted in** Katz, “Introduction,” 533.

days of television liveness was understood as “the transmission of sounds and images of an event at the time when it is occurring,” which turned into an institutional performance.⁵⁰ This meant that the live program “is performed by an institution” that is in control of “the apparatus of the transmission of events to viewers.”⁵¹ It can also be understood as a “public phenomenon” where people are viewing the live programming at the same time.⁵²

2.5. Choice

Lastly, the concept of choice will be explored. Elihu Katz refers to John Ellis when he discusses the term choice in regards to television. Ellis explains that during the initial phase in 1950 and 1960, television was known for its scarceness, meaning “choice was limited to a very few over-the-air channels.”⁵³ Subsequently, satellite and cable created competition which allowed for the television of plenty where “choice was suddenly expanded.”⁵⁴ Ellis therefore deduces that in contemporary times television is in a position to provide “infinite choice”, meaning we “can view what we like; when we like; where we like; on a variety of screens and telephones, websites and the rest.”⁵⁵ Similarly, to Ellis in Katz’s text, Lotz makes the point that “cable service offered limited choice” because only “a few dozen channels” would be available to the viewer.⁵⁶ Over time, when television became more digitalized, the choices viewers could make with regard to the variety of content to watch increased. Lotz states that digital cable “made the experience of an abundance of channels the dominant experience for television.”⁵⁷ Thus, the devices that provided the variety of choices became increasingly popular, such as DVR’s which allowed the viewer to choose when and

⁵⁰ Bourdon, “Live Television,” 534.

⁵¹ Bourdon, “Live Television,” 534.

⁵² Bourdon, “Live Television,” 534.

⁵³ Ellis **quoted in** Katz, “Introduction,” 7.

⁵⁴ Ellis **quoted in** Katz, “Introduction,” 7.

⁵⁵ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 9.

⁵⁶ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 9.

⁵⁷ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 98.

what they wanted to watch.⁵⁸ With the introduction of the internet, the choices viewers could make concerning media content continued to increase. Lotz uses the examples of Netflix, Hulu and HBO and claims these platforms “introduced a *distinctive viewing experience*”, which can also be applied to Disney Plus.⁵⁹

3. Approach:

The approach for the analysis of Disney Plus as a streaming service will follow a similar structure to that of Kevin Sanson and Gregory Steirer’s research on Hulu. More precisely, the research approach and method will be a mixed-method, which consists of an analysis of a media platform in connection with media organisations and companies. The aim is to ascertain three elements pertaining to the platform, which are ownership structure, business deals and televisual aesthetics.⁶⁰

The first level of ownership structure has the purpose to focus on how The Walt Disney Company became what it is today, how Disney’s original library influences Disney Plus’ current library and the technological changes Disney went through in the era of cable television. By reflecting on how the Walt Disney company started, it could divulge how the original Disney library shapes that of Disney Plus and will correspondingly reveal to what degree the subscribers can access and choose the available content. Thus, the questions “How does the original Disney library help to shape that of Disney Plus?” and “To what extent is Disney Plus’ library available to the subscribers?” will be considered in this section of the analysis.

Secondly, business deals explore Disney’s library further in relation to the movies and shows the platform provides, the business deals Disney has made as well as the expansions and partnerships Disney has made. The analysis will help to determine how these expansions have affected the choices subscribers can make on the Disney Plus platform

⁵⁸ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 98.

⁵⁹ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 113.

⁶⁰ Sanson and Steirer, “Hulu,” 1210.

with regards to content. Therefore, by raising the question: “What does Disney Plus’ library offer and by what means has that influenced the options of the subscriber?”, the concept of choice will be investigated further. To further explore the television aspect of Disney, J.P Tolette’s text aims to study how Disney became involved with network television and how it shaped “the traditional film industry and the fledging television industry.”⁶¹ Janet Wasko’s text describes the process the Disney company underwent, in terms of expansion, the production of films and shows and business deals, to become “one of the largest and most dominant media and entertainment corporations in the world.”⁶² Furthermore, articles from the *Hollywood Reporter* by Natalie Jarvey, the *Business Insider* by Kevin Webb and *Variety* by Cynthia Littleton and Janet W. Lee are relevant to the analysis because critical information regarding the introduction of the platform with the media that is added and produces are discussed in more depth.

Lastly, the level of television aesthetics, namely the most essential level for the analysis, emphasizes all three concepts of liveness, choice and flow. This last step will disclose the arrangement of when new content becomes available on the platform in terms of where and how it is announced to the subscriber. More specifically, this step will take the design of the platform into account and how it shapes flow, liveness and choice. Thereby the question: “To what extent does the layout of the streaming service shape choice, flow and liveness?” will be taken into account. In order to explain what the Disney Plus platform consist of, the text from Walt Disney’s website will be used to give further insight as to process of creating and launching Disney Plus and how the design of the platforms shapes choice, flow and liveness

4. Analysis:

⁶¹ J.P Telotte, *Disney TV* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 26, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁶² Janet Wasko, *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy* (John Wiley & Sons, 2020), 25. Apple Books.

4.1. Ownership Structure

To begin, Disney Plus' ownership structure will be examined with the purpose of providing insight into how the Walt Disney Company came to be, with a particular focus on the development of their broadcast network Disney Channel and the formation of the Disney Plus platform. Before the Walt Disney Company became one of the largest media conglomerates in the world, Walt Disney, who showed an interest for drawing and animation, formed his own film company called Laugh-O-Gram Films in Kansas City, 1922. Subsequently, the Disney company was officially formed on October 16, 1923.⁶³ As the company grew and became more successful, the famous animated classics that are still cherished by many to this day, such as *Snow White* (1937), *Dumbo* (1941), *Bambi* (1942), *Pinocchio* (1940), etc. were created.⁶⁴ Thenceforth, Walt Disney Productions would produce a variety of animated films while also expanding into broadcast networks.

The authors J.P Tolette and Lee and Madej explicitly address the technological changes Disney has undergone regarding television. Tolette states that this newer version of technology "had loomed on the horizon of the film industry for a considerable time."⁶⁵ At first, the film industry viewed television as "a future competitor, even a possible replacement."⁶⁶ By the 1950's it became clear that the medium did offer improvements, for instance it "offered the studios a way of utilizing their excess production capacity," "another form of exhibition," "means of advertising" and "prove an outlet for older films."⁶⁷ Fundamentally, television would replace older forms of media that served similar purposes before, such as radio, and present new ways of distributing and creating content.⁶⁸ According to Lee and Madej, the Disney brothers

⁶³ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 40.

⁶⁴ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 51.

⁶⁵ Tolette, *The Mouse Machine*, 96.

⁶⁶ Tolette, *The Mouse Machine*, 97.

⁶⁷ Tolette, *The Mouse Machine*, 97.

⁶⁸ Tolette, *The Mouse Machine*, 97.

“believed that it offered opportunities for their motion picture features,” specifically concerning a more direct relationship with their audience.⁶⁹

Disney began producing a weekly series called *Disneyland* in 1954 on ABC after producing a selection of Christmas specials for NBC in 1950.⁷⁰ After seven years, the *Disneyland* series then moved to NBC as *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color*.⁷¹ Wasko expresses how Disney is deserving of credit when it comes to “moving into television,” as well as “recognizing its potential value in promoting and diversifying the film business.”⁷² Following these television series, Disney presented a daily scheduled television show in 1955 called *The Mickey Mouse Club*, which only lasted for three seasons.⁷³ At the beginning of the 1980's, Disney initiated the introduction between the film industry with cable and home video, which were seen as “new opportunities for distribution of theatrical motion pictures” and “opportunities for new investments.”⁷⁴ In 1983 the company was focused on the “cable industry” and “creating its own broadcast site” Disney Channel, according to Tolette.⁷⁵ Tolette discusses that the Disney Channel started to broadcast a mixture of Disney produced regular series, family themed movies, older series and specials on the 18th of April 1983.⁷⁶

Subsequently, Disney moved beyond the cable network due to the “audience limitations of cablecasting” by creating its own distribution network called Touchstone Television.⁷⁷ This allowed for the company to develop and provide programming to the main networks, increase the variety of shows, reaching new audiences and “create series for possible syndication.”⁷⁸ Since then, the medium of television has changed significantly. Newman and Levine state that television has gone through various technological updates therefore, “we can think of TV as a

⁶⁹ Lee and Madej, *Disney Stories*, 77.

⁷⁰ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 61- 62.

⁷¹ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 62.

⁷² Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 62.

⁷³ Tolette, *Disney TV*, 115.

⁷⁴ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 90.

⁷⁵ Tolette, *Disney TV*, 115.

⁷⁶ Tolette, *Disney TV*, 115.

⁷⁷ Tolette, *Disney TV*, 116.

⁷⁸ Tolette, *Disney TV*, 116.

perpetually new medium.”⁷⁹ After the increase in viewer agency, digital improvements and additional possibilities of “interactions with the television set,” the development of new technologies made accessing content “away from the television set” possible.⁸⁰ These developments would guarantee viewers a viewing experience without commercials and therefore present a “liberation from traditional television viewing.”⁸¹ They go on to say that this encourages viewing “in a mode of newfound agency,” which is one of the main improvements that is “promised by the digital technological revolution.”⁸² Thus, the authors claim that a result of the convergence of television with computers is that the viewer becomes the user. Moreover, Dixon proclaims that digitalizing of media “has radically and irrevocably” changed the way we perceive cinema as well as “music, texts, anything that can be streamed.”⁸³ For that reason, he makes the claim that streaming is the dominant form of technology due to the fact that “it’s easy to access and requires no storage space.”⁸⁴

Disney’s most recent development involves the creation of the streaming service Disney Plus. The company also owns another streaming service, namely ESPN+ which launched in 2018.⁸⁵ The idea of Disney Plus was announced on the 8th of November 2018 by the Disney Chairman and CEO Bob Iger.⁸⁶ On the 12th of November 2019, the streaming service would launch and was set to “come stocked with programming from across the company’s vast library.”⁸⁷ Due to the platform offering movies and television, the platform would be considered an example of media convergence. Media convergence, as discussed by Newman and Levine, is where various forms of media

⁷⁹ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 129.

⁸⁰ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 145.

⁸¹ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 145.

⁸² Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 151.

⁸³ Dixon, *Streaming*, 1.

⁸⁴ Dixon, *Streaming*, 8.

⁸⁵ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 110.

⁸⁶ Natalie Jarvey, “Disney + Launch Date, Price and Additional Details Revealed,” *The Hollywood Reporter*, April 11, 2019, [https://advance-lexis-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VW1-YRM1-DYRM-W2CN-00000-00&context=1516831](https://advance.lexis-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5VW1-YRM1-DYRM-W2CN-00000-00&context=1516831).

⁸⁷ Jarvey, “Disney + Launch Date,” 1.

“begin to blur into one another,” meaning media is distributed on numerous platforms and can be watched on a multitude of devices.⁸⁸ As Natalie Jarvey states, the service was created with the intention to become “an international product”, with plans to become available in “North America, Western Europe and parts of Asia” and more areas in 2021.⁸⁹ The overall intent of this platform, Jarvey claims, is to ensure that the company would be able to develop a straightforward relationship with their consumers instead of selling their shows to a third party channel such as Netflix.⁹⁰

Noteably, streaming services offer content that already exists and as Dixon explains, original programs are produced specifically for these platforms.⁹¹ In comparison to other streaming services, a unique feature Disney Plus has is that all the original movies and shows from Disney’s broadcasting network Disney Channel and Disney are available on the platform, which allows for a wide-range selection for the subscribers.

4.2. Business Deals

In terms of Disney Plus’ business deals, the agreements Disney has made over the years in order to expand the brand and their library will be examined in addition to how these elements have shaped choice on Disney Plus. Due to the expanding and diversifying of their programming, the Disney company became “a dominant player in the entertainment business.”⁹² The change in ownership to Michael Eisner and management team in 1984 caused the Disney empire to “extended its tentacles more widely and tenaciously than ever before.”⁹³ This included not only increasing their array of motion pictures but also the amount of business deals and actions as well as “diversifying outside the traditional Disney label.”⁹⁴ In July 1995, Disney took over Capital Cities/ABC,

⁸⁸ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 4.

⁸⁹ Jarvey, “Disney + Launch Date,” 1.

⁹⁰ Jarvey, “Disney + Launch Date,” 2.

⁹¹ Dixon, *Streaming*, 6.

⁹² Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 1.

⁹³ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 92.

⁹⁴ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 92.

which improved the position of the company in areas such as television, sports programming, international marketing and included the addition of publishing and multimedia.⁹⁵ Robert Iger, who became Disney's CEO in 2005, continued with the expansion of the brand and company with the purchasings of the Muppets (2004), Pixar (2006), Marvel (2009) and Lucasfilm (2012).⁹⁶ Wasko delves into some background information on the companies and how Disney acquired them for the purpose of context. Jim and Jane Henson created the Muppets in 1958 and became popular in 1969 with their show *Sesame Street*.⁹⁷ According to Wasko, the acquiring of "already successful franchises", in this case the rights to the Muppets, was one of first steps planned to continue expanding the Disney brand.⁹⁸ In 2004, the rights to the Muppets and the Bear in the Big Blue House were sold to Disney as a result of the Henson company having previously worked together with Disney on multiple projects.⁹⁹ Hereafter, The Muppets Studio, LLC was created in order to "manage the use of the Muppets characters and trademarks" as well as "serve as the production for many Muppets projects."¹⁰⁰

Pixar, officially established in 1986, became another important business partner by entering into an agreement with Disney in 1991 whereby the company would produce and distribute "at least one computer-generated animated movie, which resulted in the release of *Toy Story* in 1995."¹⁰¹ In 1997, the partnership between Pixar and Disney developed further and eventually in 2006 Disney purchased Pixar for 7.4 billion dollars.¹⁰² Following Pixar, Marvel was bought by Disney in 2009 for 4.64 million dollars after undergoing bankruptcy and other "corporate restructuring moves" took place.¹⁰³ Before the acquisition of Marvel, Disney made deals with the company to incorporate certain

⁹⁵ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 96.

⁹⁶ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 124.

⁹⁷ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 125.

⁹⁸ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 125.

⁹⁹ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 125.

¹⁰⁰ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 125.

¹⁰¹ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 127.

¹⁰² Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 127.

¹⁰³ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 129.

characters for their cable channel Disney XD and video games.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the purchase provided Disney with opportunities to “move beyond its traditional brand” along with “reaching new demographic groups.”¹⁰⁵ In 2012, Lucasfilm, formed by George Lucas in 1971, was purchased by Disney for 4.06 billion dollars.¹⁰⁶ Subsequently, Disney obtained the ownership of its “operating business in live-action production, consumer products, video games, animation, visual effects, and audio post-production.”¹⁰⁷

In 2019, Disney officially acquired 21st Century Fox, which included 21st Century Fox film and television studios, television enterprises, cable entertainment networks, a portion of the international TV business and cable networks.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the transaction incorporated franchises and brands such as X-Men, Fantastic Four, Avatar, The Simpsons, Family Guy as well as FX Networks and National Geographic.¹⁰⁹ Subsequently, Fox presented Disney with the opportunity to expand Disney further in terms of “direct-to-consumer offerings” through the 21st Century Fox’s entertainment content in addition to Hulu.¹¹⁰

These numerous investments and acquisitions would prove that the Disney company “has become greater than just one universe,” which Wasko refers to as “the ‘Disney Multiverse’”.¹¹¹ Hence, Disney Plus’ library consists of Pixar films, Disney Channel original movies and shows, *Star Wars* films, Marvel films, National Geographic programming, Disney Plus originals and the *Simpsons*. The library exhibits the selection of content a viewer is able to choose from, which has continued to increase since its initial launch date. Jarvey points out that the strategy behind Disney Plus is to “take on Netflix, Amazon Studios and, soon, Apple in the growing streaming arms race.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁴ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 130.

¹⁰⁵ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 130.

¹⁰⁶ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 133.

¹⁰⁷ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 134.

¹⁰⁸ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 136-137.

¹⁰⁹ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 137.

¹¹⁰ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 137.

¹¹¹ Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 25-26.

¹¹² Jarvey, “Disney + Launch Date,” 2.

Moreover, she explains why Disney “forfeited millions in Netflix licensing revenue”, meaning the company could have sold their product to another streaming service but made the decision not to and instead prioritize the development of “a more direct relationship with its consumers.”¹¹³ Thus, Disney’s original content, consisting of classic films such as *Bambi*, *Snow White* and *Beauty and the Beast* for example, and shows from Disney Channel such as *Kim Possible*, *That’s So Raven* and *Wizards of Waverly Place*, inspired the company to create their own platform instead of selling their programmes to already existing streaming services. It can therefore be determined that the original Disney content has an influence on the current Disney Plus library in terms of what the platform decided to offer to the consumer.

4.3. Television Aesthetics

Disney Plus’ televisual aesthetics, which Sanson and Steirer describe this as the “content-delivery model,” has the purpose of disclosing the way in which the layout of the platform influences the scheduling of their programs and how that influences their availability to the subscribers,¹¹⁴ Additionally, the range of choices the viewers are able to make are considered for this step. The aforementioned aspects of the Disney Plus platform will be examined in accordance to the three concepts of flow, choice and liveness.

4.3.1. Choice

Firstly, choice concerns choosing which streaming services to pick out of the available selection. Lotz affirms that choice has increased in the selection of providers and the content the providers offer thereby creating more competition amongst the services.¹¹⁵ In regards to Disney Plus, Cynthia Littleton states that before the launch of the service, Disney

¹¹³ Jarvey, “Disney + Launch Date,” 1.

¹¹⁴ Sanson and Streirer, “Hulu, Streaming,” 1218.

¹¹⁵ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 138.

made the statement that “its streaming service will not try to match Netflix”, signifying that the quantity of originals will not be produced at the same level as Netflix.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, Disney has intended to make certain that the streaming service will have a “steady stream of fresh content” following the launch.¹¹⁷ Notably, since the launch, new content is consistently added to Disney Plus including series and films. Some examples include the *Hamilton* musical, the live action version of *Mulan*, *Star Wars: The Mandalorian* series, *Soul* and many more.

The Disney Plus login and home page as well as their Instagram page reveal a great deal of information concerning the content that is offered, their availability and how it is offered to their audience. For instance, it is stated on the login page that the viewer is able to watch however they choose, which alludes to the wide selection of devices on which Disney Plus is accessible.¹¹⁸ More specifically, it is stated that the service can be accessed on “your television, tablet, phone and more”; this gives the consumer the opportunity to choose the device on which they want to watch Disney Plus on.¹¹⁹ The aspect of being able to choose where, what and how viewers watch multimedia aligns with Ellis’ arguments that are discussed by Katz surrounding the expansion of choice.

Furthermore, Sanson and Steirer state the schedule aesthetics reveal how the platform “approaches search and discovery for its content library.”¹²⁰ Thus, the design of Disney Plus’ platform influences the choices subscribers make. Similarly to Netflix, Disney Plus presents their libraries in “a procession of tiles extending endlessly off the screen horizontally and vertically” as seen in image A).¹²¹ The rows are labeled according to categories and genres, such as “Reimagined Classics,” “Marvel Cinematic Universe,” “Animated Movies,” while others are

¹¹⁶ Cynthia Littleton, “Inside Disney’s Daring Dive Into the Streaming World,” *Variety*, January 29, 2020, <https://variety.com/2019/biz/features/disney-plus-streaming-plans-bob-iger-1203120734/>.

¹¹⁷ Littleton, “Inside.”

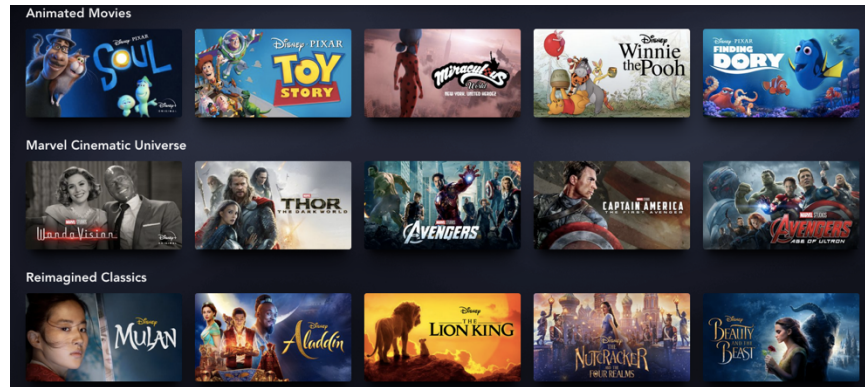
¹¹⁸ “Stream Disney, Marvel, Pixar, National Geographic in Germany,” Disney +, Accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.disneyplus.com/en-de>.

¹¹⁹ Disney +, “Stream Disney.”

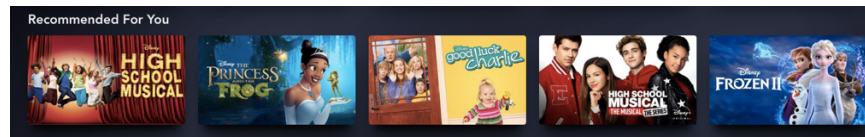
¹²⁰ Sanson and Streirer, “Hulu, Streaming,” 1219.

¹²¹ Sanson and Streirer, “Hulu, Streaming,” 1219.

labeled “Recommended For You” or “Because You Watched [...]” according to what the algorithm believes the viewer would want to see based on their watch history, as seen in image **B**).



¹²², **A)**



¹²³, **B)**

The five main collections shown on the home page, as seen in image **C**), are organized by production company or brand, which are owned by the Disney company. This is telling to the viewer because they will know what to expect based on the pictured logos. The libraries displayed in these collections are either produced by one of the companies or are a part of one of the brands; the content is then sorted by genre or category, such as “Walt Disney Animation Studios” or “Disney Documentaries” in the Disney category.¹²⁴ The platform itself possesses numerous categories which are distributed on the home page and in the five main groups. The homepage itself displays 24, Disney has 14, Pixar has 9, Marvel has 8, Star Wars has 6 and National Geographic has 12. Some categories overlap between the five collections and the home page,

¹²² “Home,” Disney +, Accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.disneyplus.com/home>.

¹²³ Disney +, “Home.”

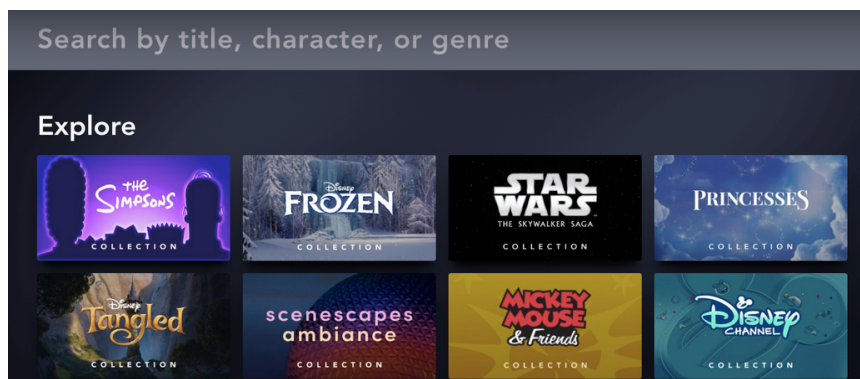
¹²⁴ “Disney,” Disney +, Accessed February 3, 2021, <https://www.disneyplus.com/brand/disney>.

for example on the home page a category is labeled “Marvel Cinematic Universe” and the same set appears under the Marvel collection.

Moreover, the search page offers to explore a range of collections sorted by themes such as “Princesses” and “Disney Channel” as seen in image **D**). The collections shape choice by giving the viewer a prearranged selection of content that could pertain to their interests regarding shows, movies, categories and even production companies. The amount of possibilities offered to the subscribers reveals the various demographics and niche audiences Disney Plus is pertaining to, which is seen by the way the platform is designed to frame choice to the subscriber.



¹²⁵, C)



¹²⁶, D)

It can be said that the concept of choice has become more prevalent in connection to television over time, specifically with regards to Ellis’ and Lotz’ arguments. Now, viewers have more autonomy in the act of choosing what, when and how to watch a show or movie and there is more content and media service providers to choose from. Lastly, the

¹²⁵ Disney +, “Home.”

¹²⁶ “Search,” Disney +, Accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.disneyplus.com/home>.

way in which new content is added to the Disney Plus library and the immediate accessibility grants the viewers with an abundance of choices which are shaped by the layout of the platform.

4.3.2. Flow

The constantly increasing selection of programs suggests a type of flow that Lotz defines as non-linear, meaning it is not restricted to a scheduled program nor limited by the notion of “capacity constraint”, which allows for an extensive amount of content to choose from.¹²⁷ The platform Disney Plus offers an “ever-growing selection of titles in 4K” and will be releasing new original content every month exclusive to the platform.¹²⁸ On Disney Plus’s Instagram account, a story highlight called “New +” is made visible where the release of new content is announced weekly, usually on Friday’s. The announcements include new Disney Plus originals as well as general new content from Pixar, Disney, Marvel, National Geographic and *Star Wars*, which establishes the unscheduled flow on the platform. The new streaming content is released in the categories of “Originals,” as seen in image **F**), and “New to Disney +,” as seen in image **G**), signifying the distribution of original content produced by Disney Plus and already existing content from Disney and Pixar for example. In regards to the series, they are either launched either per season, per episode or an entire season at once.

¹²⁷ Lotz, *Portals*, 2.

¹²⁸ Disney +, “Stream Disney.”



¹²⁹, F

Disney Plus' release schedule impacts the experience of the viewer and as Lotz explains instead of just watching television or “see[ing] what is on,” viewers can watch a specific film or show at any time.¹³⁰ Furthermore, the Walt Disney website states that the service has been created to “provide subscribers a best-in-class experience that is available anywhere, anytime, with high-quality and commercial free viewing.”¹³¹ Thus, Newman and Levine state that this new form of convergent television represents a “liberation for the active viewer” by removing the interruption of commercials and rejecting “conventional television, watched on a daily, or weekly schedule,” which creates an updated sense of flow.¹³² With regard to uninterrupted flow, premieres for the upcoming content are launched in anticipation for the actual release of the movies and shows. Additionally, the Instagram page also acts as a marketing tool to advertise upcoming content on the Disney Plus app. As a result, a separate flow on Disney Plus and Instagram, specifically curated for advertisements, is created.

¹²⁹ Disney + (@disneyplus), “New +,” Instagram Story, January 29, 2021, <https://www.instagram.com/disneyplus/>.

¹³⁰ Lotz, *Portals*, 2.

¹³¹ The Walt Disney Company, “Disney + Launches Today.”

¹³² Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 133.

Typically shows and films are immediately available to the viewer once they are released on the platform, but there has been an exception, namely the live action film *Mulan*; is a live adaptation of the original 1998 animated version. In Kevin Webb's article, it is specified that the movie was originally intended to be released in theatres but due to COVID-19 theatres closed and the film was released on Disney Plus instead.¹³³ The movie was initially only accessible to subscribers through Premier Access with an additional fee of \$29.99, but as Janet W. Lee states, it will become available for all subscribers in December 2020.¹³⁴ Webb goes on to say that multiple other Disney movies were faced with similar issues and were launched on the Disney Plus platform or have been delayed instead of debuting in theatres.¹³⁵ Hence, the aspect of flow in the example of Disney Plus, is shown by the way in which the platform decides to release content and when it becomes available for the viewer to watch. Hence, it can be seen that flow on Disney Plus is non-linear, which grants the viewer more freedom and flexibility.

4.3.3. Liveness

An unscheduled and uninterrupted flow would lead one to believe that liveness is no longer present in streaming services. Despite the lack of a live flow, Disney Plus, and streaming services in general, present another type of liveness. Bourdon believes that there are various understandings attached to "live" which change with time and therefore he states that "Live television is not an absolute" but rather "a question of degree."¹³⁶ Auslander also expresses that even in contemporary times where programs are prerecorded "the television image remains a

¹³³ Kevin Webb, "Mulan is now available to stream on Disney Plus for all subscribers without an extra fee – here's how to watch the blockbuster movie at home," *Business Insider*, December 4, 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-watch-mulan-movie?r=DE&IR=T>.

¹³⁴ Janet W. Lee, "What's Coming to Disney Plus in December 2020," *Variety*, November 24, 2020, <https://variety.com/feature/whats-on-disney-plus-new-shows-movies-1203517920/>.

¹³⁵ Webb, "Mulan."

¹³⁶ Bourdon, "Live Television," 534.

performance in the present.”¹³⁷ Disney Plus offers the possibility to download the shows and movies onto the individuals device, or they can be watched on the chosen device in present time with a connection to the internet. Thus, it could be said that in relation to Auslander and Bourdon’s understanding, Disney Plus’ programming is to an extent live as long as the content is streamed with a WiFi connection it is streamed in the present.

The Disney website states that Disney Plus provides “high quality and commercial-free viewing,” which aligns with Newman and Levine’s observation that digital convergence has revolutionized television in the sense that viewers do not have to adhere to live programming where the flow is interrupted by commercials.¹³⁸ Additionally, Lotz discusses how television used to cater their programmes to “mass audiences” and now “to an array of niche tastes of interests.”¹³⁹ Correspondingly, Katz observes how people no longer come together to watch television unless it is a “rare live broadcast.”¹⁴⁰ With regard to the Disney Plus website, content can be streamed on “4 screens at once, so everyone is happy,” thereby promoting the possibility of individual viewing.¹⁴¹ Therefore, the possibility of being able to stream on multiple screens at the same time allows for different flows at the same time. This means that the content is being streamed in the present, creating type of flow that could be considered live due to Boudon and Auslander’s arguments. Thus, liveness in the context of streaming services is no longer a main characteristic nor solely associated with the content being in a state of liveness but rather with watching the content in present time with a WiFi connection.

5. Conclusion:

¹³⁷ Auslander, *Liveness*, 15.

¹³⁸ Newman and Levine, *Legitimizing Television*, 130.

¹³⁹ Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast*, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Katz, “Introduction”, 7.

¹⁴¹ Disney +, “Stream Disney.”

To conclude, this research sought to analyze the streaming service Disney Plus and divulge how we can understand the platform in light of the discussion to what Katz calls “the end of television”, with regard to the aspects of flow, liveness and choice. More specifically, the aim of this paper is to expand on the topics of conversation surrounding what is understood as television in the era of the internet. By inserting Disney Plus into the debate on the “end of television”, it became clear that flow, choice and liveness have adapted with the rapid evolution of television due to technological changes and media convergence.

As stated by Newmand and Levine as well as Lotz, flow is now non-linear. Disney Plus decides when to release content, which is revealed on their Instagram page every week. Once the show or movie is made available on the platform, the subscriber is able to view it at any time. Furthermore, commercials do not interrupt the main flow, rather a separate flow is created for premeires and trailers and Instagram is used as a marketing tool for those purposes as well.

Choice is more wide-ranging and is influenced by the set up of the platform which relates to Ellis’ and Lotz’s arguments. The way the content is divided into specific categories and collections shapes the viewers choices and attempts to appeal to niche audiences and a range of demographics. Thus, creating a layout where the subscriber knows what to expect.

Finally, liveness is no longer a distinct characteristic of television, as Newman and Levine and Katz determine but Auslander’s and Bourdon’s arguments on liveness can be understood in the sense that the term does not necessarily refer to a state of liveness. More precisely, viewing in the present time with a WiFi connection could be considered live, which alligns with Lotz’s statement. Although, it can be argued that the debate on liveness is no longer relevant regarding streaming services because in the example of Disney Plus liveness is not referred to in connection with its content. Instead, the focus is on providing choice and availability to the viewer.

Thus, the analysis of Disney Plus adds to the debate on “the end of television” in the sense that the platform represents and example of

how television has evolved and therefore fits into the new phase of television as debated by Lotz and Ellis.

Sanson and Steirer's approach was helpful due to the examination of the three levels. Firstly the level of ownership provided historical context in terms of when and how the company started and how it became the company it is today. The second level of business deals examined the expansion of the company through purchasing of other companies, such as Pixar and Marvel, which provided insight into how the libraries that came with these purchases shaped the current Disney Plus library and therefore the choice of the subscriber. Lastly, the analysis of the televisual aesthetics provided a better understanding of the platform Disney Plus regarding how the layout influences the framing of flow, liveness and choice to appeal to the majority of audiences. Overall, the analysis of Disney + according to the three levels helped to reveal a connection between the background of the company and the streaming service, which assists in understanding the development of Disney Plus as a streaming service.

5.1. Limitations and Suggestions

The limitations of this research pertain to how the audience's perspective and experience was not taken into consideration, it only focused on one streaming service when analyzing the changes television has undergone and the further expansion of the Disney company into amusement parks and video games could not be discussed. To further the research, an audience analysis could be conducted to research how the individual viewer experiences the Disney Plus platform, which would reveal their personal opinions and how they perceive it. Furthermore, a comparative analysis could be conducted by comparing Disney Plus to other streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Plus with regards to the three levels Sanson and Streier propose and how their platforms are structured and frame liveness, flow and choice. This type of analysis would demonstrate the similarities and differences between Disney Plus and the other streaming services. Lastly, the exploration of Disney's

expansion and how their multiuniverse is connected through transmedia storytelling, according to Henry Jenkins, would show how the Disney stories are continued through different forms of media. An example would be the *The Little Mermaid* movie because the story has been continued by Disney in other forms of media, such as a television series and video games.

Word Count: 7697

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