

The dramaturgical construction of journalistic TV characters in fictional series (2012-2024): psychological profiles and transformation arcs

La construcción dramática de personajes periodistas televisivos en series de ficción (2012-2024): perfiles psicológicos y arcos de transformación




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Abstract:

The success of the series *The Newsroom* was accompanied by controversy among media professionals regarding the idealism of the protagonists. Although series about television news journalists existed before the arrival of *The Newsroom*, the media impact of its premiere inaugurated a new trend in the genre. This article looks at some of

Resumen:

En 2012, el éxito de la serie The Newsroom vino acompañado de la polémica que suscitó, entre los profesionales del medio, el idealismo de los protagonistas. Aunque las series sobre periodistas de noticiarios televisivos ya existían antes de la llegada de The Newsroom, el impacto mediático que originó su estreno inauguró una nueva tendencia en el género. Este artículo indaga en

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the television productions that have emerged between 2012 and 2024 in the wake of *The Newsroom*. The study examines the development of a contemporary classification of the personality archetype of the protagonists of this kind of sub-genre, based on the premise that the plots of the series analyzed should reflect the day-to-day activity of a television newsroom, while at the same time the dramatic burden of the conflict falls on the ensemble cast. The aim is to determine which dramatic construction of the characters is preferred by the scriptwriters for the purpose of making the plots of this specific type of series more attractive and interesting. This research focuses on the three main roles that are typical of a television news program: who directs it, who produces it, and who anchors it. To this end, film scripting strategies used to develop dramatic characters have also been applied to this study. Moreover, the findings confirm that some of these roles converge.

Keywords:

Journalism; television; anchor; producer; TV series.

algunas de las producciones televisivas que han surgido entre 2012 y 2024 a raíz del comienzo de The Newsroom. El estudio centra la investigación en la elaboración de una clasificación contemporánea del tipo de personalidad que ostentan los protagonistas de este tipo de subgénero, partiendo de la premisa de que las series analizadas deben reflejar en sus tramas los comportamientos cotidianos de una redacción televisiva al mismo tiempo que el peso dramático de los conflictos recae sobre un protagonismo coral de los personajes. El objetivo es mostrar cuál es la construcción dramática de los personajes preferida por los guionistas para hacer más atractivas e interesantes las tramas de este tipo concreto de series. La investigación ha centrado su análisis en los tres roles principales que son comunes y característicos de los informativos televisivos: quién dirige el informativo, quién lo produce y quién lo presenta. A su estudio se han aplicado las estrategias de guion cinematográfico en la elaboración de personajes dramáticos. Las conclusiones confirman la confluencia de algunos roles.

Palabras clave:

Periodismo; televisión; presentador; productor; serie de TV.

1. Introduction

From classic Hollywood until the 21st century, we find numerous feature films starring journalists of different cinematic genres and typologies, including the following: comedies such as *It Happened One Night* (Frank Capra, 1934), *His Girl Friday* (Howard Hawks, 1940), and *The Front Page* (Billy Wilder, 1974); dramas such as *Call Northside 777* (Henry Hathaway, 1948), *Ace in the Hole* (Billy Wilder, 1951), *Network* (Sidney Lumet, 1976), and *The Insider* (Michael Mann, 1999); investigative thrillers such as *All the President's Men* (Alan J. Paluka, 1976); and exotic adventures such as *The Passenger* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1975), *The Year of Living Dangerously* (Peter Weir, 1982), and *The Killing Fields* (Roland Joffé, 1984).

In recent years, we have found many productions that deal mainly with investigative journalism, such as *Spotlight* (Tom McCarthy, 2015), *The Post* (Steven Spielberg, 2017), *Richard Jewell* (Clint Eastwood), and *She Said* (Maria Schrader, 2022). In between those films, we find *Bombshell* (Jay Roach, 2019), which tells the story of three women who confront the Fox media empire, in addition to war correspondent biopics such as *A Private War* (Matthew Heineman, 2018), and *Another Day of Life* (Raúl de la Fuente and Damian Nenow, 2019).

Despite the variety, these stories do not depict the everyday activity of a newsroom. Instead, their plots use extraordinary events as a source of dramatic conflict. Reflecting the journalistic profession in film has been extensively studied by Saltzman (2002) and Ehrlich (2006), who collaborated in publishing *Heroes and Scoundrels: The image of the journalist in popular culture* (Ehrlich and Saltzman, 2015). There are also numerous studies on the convergence of journalism and filmmaking. In Spain, Mera Fernández (2008) compared films that adapt the stories of real journalists with others that are purely fictional. Moreover, Ofa Bezunartea et al. (2007, 2008a, 2008b and 2010) analyzed journalistic tasks, clichés, female characters, and narcissistic characters that appear in film. Recently, Coronado Ruiz (2024) has analyzed stereotypes of female journalists in

US series of the last three decades, concluding that the image of these characters “continues to be simplified and stereotyped” (2024: 242). Other works that stand out include the compilation by Mínguez Santos (2012), as well as specific studies on the sub-genre of investigative journalism, such as “*El periodismo de investigación en el cine*” [investigative journalism in films] (Martínez-Salanova, 2019), and “*Las velocidades del periodismo en el cine: ocho filmes sobre Slow Journalism*” [the speed of journalism in cinema: eight films about slow journalism] (Serrano Martín, 2022), among others.

As to why journalistic plots generate interest among the public, Mera Fernández (2008: 507) observed that the protagonists are “privileged spectators of the important events that happen in the world”. This could explain the success of adventurous tales starring reporters and war correspondents, as well as investigative plots with the ultimate goal of re-establishing justice. Nevertheless, it is not very easy to transfer the everyday work newsrooms to film, as the stories could become lost in a multitude of plots that might result in a loss of interest and impact on the audience. For this reason, García Martínez and Serrano-Puche make the following assertion:

“The series format allows us to recreate the daily journalistic routines and work of a newsroom. Moreover, it enables us to focus on gathering detailed information, on learning how to gain the trust of a source, on managing dead time, on the friction between employees and managers, on dealing with ethical problems, on confronting dead ends of an investigation, or on the short pieces that feed into a more far-reaching exclusive” (2013: 280).

In the 21st Century, not only films but also television series built around journalistic plots started to appear, and what began as a one-time event such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970-1977), followed by its spin-off *Lou Grant* (1977-1982), and rounded out by *Murphy Brown* (Diane English, 1988-1998), has become more commonplace over the last twenty-five years¹. The appearance of *Sports Night* (1998-2000), a drama about a TV sports news program, *The Generation Kill* (2008), linked to the Iraq War from the point of view of a war journalist, as well as *The West Wing* (1999-2006) and *Borgen* (2010-2022), whose main plots revolve around politics, not only gave journalism a meaningful subplot, but they also paved the way for a succession of journalistic series. Though not as numerous as other genres such as crime, thrillers, and family dramas, these series have significantly increased the production in this genre compared to previous decades.

In this context, the premiere of the television series *The Newsroom* in 2012 represented a substantial divergence from previous series. On the one hand, it “generated interest and controversy among specialized critics and the public” in terms of its reception and, on the other hand, it conveyed a “perception of idealism in the way the profession is depicted” (Novoa-Jaso & Serrano-Puche, 2023: 196). The series aroused such intense interest among media professionals and academics of university journalism that in some cases it was used as a resource for the deontological training of future journalists, as shown by Nicolás-Gavilán et al. (2017). Along the same lines, Huerta Floriano and Pérez Morán (2024: 402) have asserted that “the approach to such a transcendental issue for the sound functioning of democratic societies produced nearly every imaginable effect with the exception of indifference”.

1 For a more comprehensive list of fictional series about television journalism, we could add the following: the British parody *Not the Nine O’Clock News* (1979); Argentina’s *Mesa de noticias* [news desk] (1983); another British parody called *Drop the Dead Donkey* (1990); Australia’s *Frontline* (1994); and the American sitcom *The Naked Truth* (1995).

This is the essence of the study at hand, because in today's society where opinion is highly polarized and information is transmitted without filters, mainly due to the rise of social media, the work of journalists must hold an essential place in society, if possible, when it comes to communicating news objectively. The rise of journalistic TV series is no coincidence, especially since 2012, after a financial crisis with enormous social consequences that began in 2008, along with the emergence of many populist movements around the world that have ideologically polarized Western society, which coincides with the loss of faith in the more moderate and traditional political class.

For this reason, the cornerstone of this article lies in the way contemporary series portray the essence of the journalistic profession, because this "is how journalism fulfils one of its most basic principles: the surveillance of public institutions" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2012: 155). Moreover, it "refers to journalism as the 'fourth estate,' or in other words, as an institution which, given its public service essence, must control the activity of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers" (García Martínez and Serrano-Puche, 2013: 281).

1.1. Objectives

The first objective of this study is to identify fictional series that are similar, which were released between 2012 and 2024. In other words, serialized fictional stories that place a team of journalists in a television newsroom and build the plot according to plausible dramatic conflicts that could arise in their daily professional work.

The second objective is to conduct a comparative analysis of the different series in our sample with regard to the portrayals of diverse characters. We will observe whether the real professional roles of the anchor, the producer, and the news director are found in the journalistic teams of these series².

The third objective is to analyze the dramatic conflicts that comprise the backbone of the different stories and the transformation arcs of the characters.

2. Method

2.1. Selection of the simple

The timeframe of 2012-2024 was chosen due to the media impact of the premiere of *The Newsroom*, as many journalism professionals viewed Sorkin's portrayal as a lesson on what a reporter's ethics should be. The scriptwriter used real news stories to develop plots regarding the professional routines of a television news program, thereby implicitly suggesting how the news should have been covered at the time. The controversy was so intense that Sorkin publicly apologized: "I have never tried to lecture journalists on how they should work [...] there has been a terrible misunderstanding" (Europa Press, 2014).

2 To identify the characters in our analysis, we have relied on the classification system established by Novoa-Jaso, Sánchez-Aranda and Serrano-Puche (2019) regarding the typology of journalists.

Despite the controversy, the script has an idealistic tone consistent with Sorkin's previous film work, which led to a subsequent influx of series about journalists. The purpose of the article at hand is not to study the impact of *The Newsroom* on its successors, but rather to identify patterns within the field of television journalism that will enable the construction of an archetypical, recurring character in contemporary series of this genre.

The series known as *The Hour*, which started its broadcasts a year before the appearance of *The Newsroom*, and which logically escaped its possible influence, has been included due to its having complied with all the requirements of our sample. Furthermore, the timeframe of this production generally coincides with that of the study.

By contrast, we discarded several programs for the following reasons: *The Crack* (Joel Joan, 2014), and *The Curse* (Fielder and Safdie, 2023), due to their being reality shows; *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (2014), because of the lack of an ensemble cast and a shortage of collaborative work in the newsroom; *UnReal* (Shapiro and Noxon, 2015) due to its being a dating show; *The Producers* (Seo Soo-Min and Pyo Min-soo, 2015), as the plot was set in an entertainment department; *Incarnation of Jealousy* (Park Shin-woo and Lee Jung-heum, 2016) for prioritizing romance over collaborative newsroom work; *Embeds* (Danny Jelinek, 2017) because its characters work for news agencies; *Murphy Brown II* (Diane English, 2018) for being a sequel to the iconic 1990s sitcom; *Reboot* (Steven Levitan, 2022), as it narrates the production and filming process of a sitcom; *Nolly* (Russell T. Davies, 2023) because it focuses on developing a soap opera; and *Prime Time* (Cohn and Duprat, 2023), which prioritizes the investigation of a crime over the routines of a newsroom. These are just a few examples among many other series.

Of all the journalistic series examined, our search yielded six that fulfilled the established requirements: five are considered *dramedies*, if we adhere to the definition given by Gómez Martínez and García García, according to which these are television formats that “realistically combine humor and drama without either aspect going to an extreme or clearly dominating” (2010: 141). The fifth is a type of comedy sitcom, “which is heir to a theatrical tradition whose roots can be traced to certain radio series of the 1930s” (2010: 111), in an attempt to make the viewer laugh by ridiculing the characters.

We have also discarded *Stay Tuned!* (Tadahisa Fujimura, 2017), a Japanese series of merely one season that mixes the sitcom format with a mockumentary. Despite having a producer and reporters at the TV station, neither the anchors nor the news director provide enough dramatic relevance for analysis. Also, the dramatic conflicts are too insignificant to allow the authors to compare it with other series.

2.2. Description of the sample

The Hour (Abi Morgan, 2011-2012), produced by the BBC, consists of two seasons of six episodes each; *The Newsroom* (Aaron Sorkin, 2012-2014), produced by HBO, consists of three seasons; *Argon* (Lee Yoon-jung, 2017), made by Netflix, is a South Korean miniseries consisting of eight episodes; *The Morning Show* (Jay Carson, 2019-), made by Apple TV+, has three seasons; *The Newsreader* (Michael Lucas, 2021-) is an Australian production with two seasons; and *Great News* (Tracey Wigfield, 2018) is a sitcom consisting of two seasons.

2.3. Methodology

None of the characters is free of conflict. The real interest in a dramatic personality comes from the level of difficulty of the conflicts they face. As argued by McKee, “The true nature of a character is revealed through the choices each human makes under pressure: the greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation, and the more appropriate the choice we make about the character’s essential nature’ (McKee, 2003: 132). In this regard, several studies affirm that the aspects of analysis and evaluation to be considered when addressing dramatic characters lie in the evolution of their personalities throughout the story, which corresponds to their psychological features. This point is argued in the respective studies of Forster (1927), Seger (1993) Sánchez-Escalonilla (2001), Galán Fajardo (2005), Sánchez Noriega (2006), Marks (2009), Truby (2009), Pérez Rufí (2016), and Gutiérrez Delgado (2023). Likewise, Galán Fajardo and Pérez Rufí also place emphasis on the construction of a dramatic character based on their physical and sociological aspects.

However, in view of these authors’ agreement on the psychological aspects of the characters, the article at hand will focus on analyzing and comparing the psychological dimension with the intention of discovering the similarities in the construction of their personality. Thus, with regard to the psychological facet of the characters, three aspects will be studied: personality; desire and need; and the transformation arc. We do not intend to develop an original and innovative methodology, but rather to apply a series of parameters for analyzing characters that are widely acknowledged among scriptwriters.

1) Personality prevents each character from “becoming a human being that is unrealistic”. Therefore, the persona must be built on human psychology, “which distinguishes two integrating principles of personality: temperament and character” (Sánchez-Escalonilla, 2001: 276). Temperament “is the innate and spontaneous dimension of personality’ (idem), which does not vary throughout the life of an individual, because if a change were to occur it would affect the personality in a way that would cause the advent of a new person. On the other hand, character refers to “the stamp left on the personality by the free actions of an individual and the education received’ (idem). In fiction, we often work on the psychological typologies applied to reality by Hippocrates and Jung. For both philosophers, temperament is defined by a person’s extroversion or introversion, depending on the degree of interrelation the individual has with the environment. However, character is where viewpoints diverge. For Hippocrates, character is the degree of stability or instability of a person in relation to the fragility or strength that they exercise over the control of their emotions and feelings. Thus, there are people who are sanguine (extrovert-stable), choleric (extrovert-unstable), phlegmatic (introvert-stable), and melancholic (introvert-unstable). For Jung, people forge their character based on four ways of behaving when facing a problem. The *reflective* individual “shows a special ability to detect and solve a problem” (Sánchez-Escalonilla, 2001: 283); the *sensitive* person “is more interested in the people who suffer from those problems rather than in the solution” (idem); the *perceptive* person “is skilled at imminent conflicts... these are highly sensorial individuals who are aware of objects before people”; and finally, the *intuitive* person “is able to see problems projected into the future and seek solutions, but rarely offers a rational explanation... they anticipate events with a precision that baffles those who are reflective” (idem). According to Jung, a combination of the two types of temperament and four kinds of character result in eight psychological typologies that define people and, of course, fictional characters.

In this regard, Galán Fajardo considers that “there are four areas of psychology that define the internal character of a fictional personality, which are the following: the hidden past, the unconscious, the types of characters, and abnormal psychology, all

of which are indispensable for its understanding” (2005: 272). Of the four aspects, we are interested in the one referring to character types, which is directly related to the ideas of Sánchez-Escalonilla.

For Pérez Rufi, the psychological aspect depends on whether a character is *flat* or *round* according to the degree of complexity of its dramatic construction. He defines the round character as one that is “full of ambiguity and doubt, and who is unstable and full of contrasts”, while the flat character “is built upon a single idea or quality and is easily identified, as they are unchangeable” (2016: 541). In his study of aspects of a novel, Forster was the first to distinguish between flat and round characters. He argued that the former are defined by a single idea or quality, while the latter have the ability to surprise in a convincing way, since they bring with them the unpredictability of life (1927: 48-55). Likewise, Sánchez Noriega approaches these same categories following Forster’s example, yet this author adds that the traits of the flat character “make them behave in a predictable way” (2006: 53). For his part, Seger delves into the multidimensionality of a character by giving them three characteristics on which to build their personality: their way of thinking, the ability to make decisions, and their emotional life: “The character is built when all of these aspects work together. They enter the story by adopting certain attitudes (mindset), actions (decisions), and emotions (emotional life), and when they leave the story, they having changed on each of these levels” (1993: 208).

2) Desire “is what the protagonist wants in the story; his or her particular goal... the driving force” (Truby, 2009: 62). Need “is what the protagonist must fulfil internally in order to improve their life’ (2009: 58). Both aspects comprise the two factors that enable them to reach the goal. Therefore, weakness is necessary for transformation to take place. Marks calls it the *fatal flaw*, which “distinguishes an aspect of the character that not only defines his or her behavior, but also establishes the inner conflict that guides the story” (2009: 115).

3) The transformation arc traces the character’s evolution from their initial identity to the appearance of their true personality based on psychological criteria, and driven by their desires and needs, which outline the way they learn the lessons of life in the story. This occurs based on the obstacles encountered in the plot, which sometimes shape the character, and the temperament on other occasions as well, because “every inner change manifests itself in the personality” (Sánchez-Escalonilla, 2001: 350). Therefore, narrating the development of a character “forces us to explore the recesses of the human soul [and, therefore,] ... to lay out arcs of transformation” (2001: 292). The different transformation arcs are defined as *flat* when neither the character’s personality nor their thinking evolves in the plot; they are *moderate* when the fictional character maintains their temperament and character, yet there is an evolution in their way of thinking; they are *radical* when the “dominant life force gives up its preeminent position in favor of another” (2001: 293). In other words, this occurs when fictional characters modify their personalities according to Hippocrates, Jung, or both; and finally, they are *circular* when the character undergoes a radical evolution, generally during the second act, only to return to their initial personality during the third act.

For his part, Seger addresses the development of the transformation arc under a different name, yet essentially in a way that is similar to the above definition. He argues that every transformation arc is sustained by two positions: the *initial position* is defined by the way of thinking, the way of making decisions, and the character’s emotional life, which define the character in the approach to the story; and a *process of evolution*, which can be determined by the character’s transformation toward the following two mutually exclusive positions: the *moderate position*, from which the character modifies the emotional dimension of their life, and even the way of thinking; and the *extreme position*, when the change also includes decision-making, or actions. As can be seen, this classification is similar to the moderate and radical arcs proposed by Sánchez-Escalonilla.

Marks also affirms the possibility of a character's transformation, approaching the issue as a triad of mutually dependent conflicts, so that the main discord cannot be resolved without the character overcoming the inner strife that stops them from taking action, and first resolving the relational conflict that keeps the character inwardly paralyzed (2009: 165).

3. Results

3.1. The characters' personalities

3.1.1. The Hour

Table 1. Main characters of *The Hour* and their occupation

Character	Occupation
Freddie Lyon	Reporter and anchor
Hector Madden	News anchor
Bel Rowley	Producer
Clarence Fendley	News director (T.1)
Randall Brown	News director (T.1)

Source: prepared by the authors

Fendley is characterized as an enigmatic and observant personality. He does not speak more than is necessary, and he confronts the owners of the network when they ask him to make the editorial line more supportive of the government. Moreover, the revelation in the last episode of his being a Soviet spy gives him a personality which, according to Hippocrates would be phlegmatic, and according to Jung would be an intuitive introvert, since the real purpose of his work, apart from managing the network's news, is to recruit disciples among the British to supply information to the USSR. His double-dealing is doomed to failure when his intentions are discovered by Lyon.

Meanwhile, the new head of the news department, Brown, displays a confident personality who does not hesitate to make tough decisions when the professional or personal situation calls for it. These judgements, however, suggest a pragmatic attitude that avoids jeopardizing the program and his position in the face of government pressure. Nevertheless, he ultimately becomes more idealistic and committed to the journalistic profession. Thus, according to Hippocrates and Jung, Brown has a sanguine and perceptive-extrovert personality as well.

Rowley, on the other hand, is a tough and astute producer who always tries to inform the public while remaining objective. In this regard, she concurs with Lyon's ideals of making a program that objectively informs the audience. Moreover, the love triangle she

enters into with Madden and his wife, and the final decision she makes to put aside the interests of her heart, reveal a stable character, even if she has at times surrendered to the temptation of love. For this reason, Rowley is considered a sanguine and reflective extrovert. Finally, the two anchors Lyon and Madden could not be more antagonistic. Lyon also works as a reporter. He is idealistic, always in search of the truth, and committed to democracy and the need for journalism aimed at informing without filtering for scoops or giving biased reporting, in his opinion. This situation causes regular confrontations with his superiors, except for Rowley, who supports his view. His personality is that of a sanguine and reflective extrovert.

Madden is a person subject to manipulation, who has no appreciation for journalism; all he wants to do is satisfy his ego and lust for success. In fact, he has been appointed as an anchor by his father-in-law, who is a shareholder in the broadcasting company. For him, the ideal news program is the one that involves as little commitment as possible. This attitude makes him lose his temper on various occasions, especially when he is under pressure from Lyon and Rowley. Therefore, the personality that best describes his behavior is a choleric and perceptive extrovert.

3.1.2. *The Newsroom*

Table 2. The main characters of The Newsroom and their occupation

Character	Occupation
Will McAvoy	Anchor
MacKenzie McHale	Producer
Charlie Skinner	ACN News Director

Source: prepared by the authors

Skinner's personality can be described as romantic and idealistic, which leads to his making a drastic decision in the first episode: to make a program that simply reports the facts, without being influenced by the ideological bias of the news, "because the important thing in democracy is to have a well-informed electorate" (1x01). At the same time, he must stand firm in his decision in the face of pressure from the more pragmatic and self-interested owners of the station, represented by Leona Lansing and her son Reese, whose goal is to meet the financial objectives of the business. His extroverted temperament and stable character make Skinner a sanguine personality, according to Hippocrates, and a reflective extrovert, according to Jung. McHale's idea of journalism matches the new spirit that Skinner hopes to bring to the program. Moreover, she is the one who can best deal with the self-centered and arrogant personality of the anchor, as they had a romantic relationship in the past. As head of news production, her main task is to convince McAvoy to make a commitment to offering an objective and truthful news program, while at the same time prevent him from thinking about ratings. McHale has a sanguine personality, according to Hippocrates, and is a sensitive extrovert based on Jung's psychology, which allows her to "remain faithful to the values she knows" and not fall in love "with the wrong person" (1x01).

McAvoy, on the other hand, has a bold and impetuous personality. He is impulsive when faced with situations beyond his control. In front of an audience, he can maintain an affable and friendly tone, even if his attitude were insolent or overly effusive just moments before going on the air. His ability to adapt emotionally to the demands of the situation displays a sanguine personality. For Jung, he would be considered a perceptive extrovert, as the character is governed by a cynical, realistic and pragmatic attitude based on ratings.

3.1.3. Argon

Table 3. The main characters of Argon and their occupation

Character	Occupation
Kim Baek-jin	Anchor
Sin Chul	Producer

Source: prepared by the authors

There is not a news director in this series, as the role is carried out by the anchor instead. Baek-jin is a withdrawn and patient character who carries an inner wound caused by the death of his wife. This experience has turned him into a phlegmatic and intuitive introvert. However, he has a total commitment to the truth, and despite his introverted temperament he stands up to the owners of the TV station in order to maintain the veracity of the information.

Producer Sin Chul is Baek-jin's faithful squire, yet he is much more confrontational in his dealings with other people. He has a personality that leads him to make drastic and improvised decisions to remain loyal to his conscience, even if he himself is harmed by those decisions. These traits make him a choleric and sensitive extrovert.

3.1.4. The Morning Show

Table 4. Main characters of The Morning Show and their occupation

Character	Occupation
Alex Levy	Anchor
Bradley Jackson	Anchor
Cory Ellison	UBA News Director
Chip Black	Producer

Source: prepared by the authors

Levy has a mainly sanguine personality who, according to Jungian typologies, is a perceptive extrovert as well. She is likeable and able to disguise her feelings of rejection. Moreover, she performs well in social circles and does not allow her emotions to influence her professional activity. This is how she maintains her position as a news anchor while her former colleague, Mitch, is regularly criticized. Though constrained by political correctness, she knows how to compromise and please others so as not to damage her reputation.

Jackson is also mostly sanguine, although her impulsiveness can be related to the choleric type as well, yet with an outgoing and intuitive demeanor. Her spontaneity and sincerity appeal to audiences, who believe she is synonymous with authenticity. These character traits lead her to champion noble causes and even to be politically incorrect, which leads to immediate tension with those who do not share her point of view.

Ellison also has a mainly sanguine temperament, coupled with an outgoing and intuitive personality. Despite his intentions to restructure the TV station, he has no specific program to do so: he is guided by intuition and is deeply pragmatic, willing to modify his plans if he considers it more useful for the broadcaster. He hires Jackson on a whim, and despite the uncertainty of what could happen he enjoys the daily tasks without giving it much thought. For this reason, his psychological profile is not that of a perceptive personality, because rather than pursuing his own benefit he is more interested in the well-being of the station.

As producer of the news team, Black is a sanguine and thoughtful extrovert. Not only is he rational and orderly, but he resolves crisis situations as well, even if he dislikes improvisation and uncertainty. Moreover, he acts as Levy's advisor when she goes too far.

3.1.5. *The Newsreader*

Table 5. The main characters of *The Newsreader* and their occupation

Character	Occupation
Helen Norville	Anchor
Dale Jennings	Anchor
Dennis Tibb	Producer
Lindsay Cunningham	News Director

Source: prepared by the authors

As for Norville, she has a mostly sanguine personality and is a reflective extrovert as well. Her glamour is attractive to both the TV crew and the audience, and she is not afraid to commit herself to risky projects, nor does she compromise in the face of injustice. However, she sometimes displays insecurity and occasionally doubts her decisions, both professionally and in her relationships with others, which leads to distancing herself and breaking the bonds of affection.

Jennings is phlegmatic and sensitive introvert. Due to his difficulty in establishing emotional bonds, he exudes inner complexity and hesitates to share his feelings with others, as he does not even understand himself. Despite his apparent rationality and control of the situation, his sensitivity sometimes leads him to become irrational in extreme situations.

Tibb, on the other hand, is mostly sanguine, according to Hippocrates' ideas, and a perceptive extrovert according to Jung. Although he is poor at reasoning, he is pragmatic. The actions he takes as producer are not daring, as he relies instead on Cunningham's decisions to reject certain news items. Moreover, he seems rather lazy and even ignorant in some of the newsroom meetings.

Finally, Cunningham has a choleric personality, according to Hippocrates, and a perceptive-extrovert personality, according to Jung. Although he is a well-respected professional with a nose for news, his aggressive and dismissive way of dealing with reporters, as well as his racial prejudice, make him a difficult character to deal with.

3.1.6. *Great News*

Table 6. The main characters of *Great News* and their occupation

Character	Occupation
Katie Wendelson	Reporter
Greg Walsh	Producer
Chuck Pierce	Anchor
Portia Scott-Griffith	Anchor

Source: prepared by the authors

The personality of Wendelson is both sanguine and sensitive-extrovert. Though insecure, she is cheerful, hardworking, and stable. She is very interested in the opinion of her team, avoids falling in love with Walsh, and feels she is undervalued given the tasks she is expected to carry out in the newsroom.

Walsh has a phlegmatic and reflective-extrovert personality. Underscoring his British background, his personal life is a mystery to his workmates. Moreover, he is often unfriendly when communicating with his anchors and reporters.

Veteran anchor Pierce exhibits a demeanor that is both extrovert-choleric and perceptive. Obsessed with being popular, he has made compromises throughout his career in order to keep his position as an anchor. His arrogance, the reluctance to innovate, and his refusal to accept new ways of doing things results in rejection by his team.

Portia, on the other hand, is a sanguine and perceptive extrovert. Although she is young, modern, and feminist like Pierce, she is also pragmatic, realistic, and lacking in ideals. However, her sanguine personality, which is unlike that of Pierce, leads to her being accepted by the newsroom.

3.2. *Desires, needs, and the transformation arc*

From Lyon's opening monologue, *The Hour* makes a commitment to objective news as the essence of quality journalism. Truthful information is absolutely everything. In this regard, the character of Fendley, who is news director in the first season, has no needs other than to avoid being discovered as a spy, yet he wants to recruit followers who are sympathetic to the communist ideals of the USSR. As he fails to undergo any evolution, the psychological profile of Fendley's behavior remain stable, thereby displaying a flat transformation arc.

Brown, however, has a need; he dares not break the government's rules about how the news program is to be run, yet he is eventually driven by the desire to tell the truth no matter who falls by the wayside. He remains sanguine in terms of the Hippocratic aspect of his psychological profile, yet he undergoes an evolution in line with the ideas of Jung. This is displayed by his submissive obedience to the government mandate not to broadcast any material that could be detrimental to those at the executive level, and his character evolves into that of a reflective extrovert who strives to broadcast the truth despite the consequences for the powers that be. Furthermore, the same evolution continues in his search for his missing daughter.

As producer of the program and Lyon's main supporter, Rowley, in her idealistic crusade, has a personal need: to live with Madden, with whom she has fallen in love, even though she knows the difficulties of maintaining a relationship with a married man. In the professional realm, her desire is reflected in her ambition to broadcast honest news without a subjective slant. From the beginning of the series to the end, she exhibits a sanguine and reflective-extrovert personality, and she keeps her feet on the ground while never doubting the service that the television program should offer to the citizens of a democracy. Thus, her transformation arc is flat.

Finally, the psychological profiles of the two anchors undergo very different transformation arcs. On the one hand, Lyon's need takes shape in his reckless behavior in search of the truth, which impels him to put his life at risk on many occasions. Driven by idealism, his desire coincides with that of Rowley: to communicate the news to society in an objective way. He remains the same throughout the series, so his personality does not evolve, even though it has been constantly tested. Thus, his transformation arc is flat.

Madden has several crippling needs: he is an inveterate womanizer and his commitment to news is far from the truth, as his main aspiration is to maintain his standard of living, which results in a pragmatic life. Desired objectives finally settle into his head when, in the middle of the second season, he makes a commitment to the journalistic profession equal to that of Lyon and Rowley, discarding everything that has kept him morally half-hearted. Thus, he has a transformation arc that allows him to evolve psychologically when he finally makes a commitment to the program and decides to make an effort to broadcast the truth. His arc of transformation is radical, according to both Hippocrates and Jung, evolving from choleric to sanguine, and from perceptive-extrovert to reflective-extrovert, respectively.

In *The Newsroom*, neither the character of Skinner nor McHale displays any need at the beginning of the story. Nevertheless, they have one desire: to tell the facts as they are. However, McAvoy has a need, or weakness: he is a despotic and arrogant character who treats his colleagues as such, and his lack of commitment to reality leads him to deal with news without real interest so as not to damage his popularity. After learning of Skinner's new directive, he reluctantly accepts his wish. From then on, pressure and conflict come from outside forces, mainly from the top management of the TV station.

Skinner, on the other hand, does not evolve according to Hippocrates' concept: he remains sanguine despite his occasional angry outbursts resulting from the buckling of his idealistic and rational attitude in the first season, and at times during the third season, when social networks threaten to replace the work of the classic journalist. However, according to Jung, the character becomes a perceptive extrovert, adopting a more pragmatic and materialistic view in order to save the TV station. As a result, his transformation arc is radical, according to Jung, although the series' approach to this change is rather comical.

As for McHale, the series' succession of obstacles and vicissitudes do not bring about any evolution in her personality, neither in the classification of Hippocrates, nor in that of Jung. Therefore, her transformation arc is flat.

Nevertheless, McAvoy remains a sanguine psychological type, becoming somewhat more restrained and balanced than at the beginning of the series. According to Jung's parameters, he makes a shift from extrovert-perceptive to reflective, as he becomes a person of righteous principles who finally accepts Skinner's challenge and forges ahead with all its consequences. In this way, his transformation arc is radical, according to Jung.

In *Argon*, news anchor Baek-jin displays a need, which is the lack of attention his daughter receives due to his professional commitments, and which gradually causes a greater distance between the two of them. The difficulty of balancing his professional and personal lives is his weakness, which is described in the first chapter. A longing arises from the successive clashes he has with his daughter, which makes him realize that he must not sacrifice his love for his daughter by dedicating all his time to his work. He undergoes a small transformation by pushing his idealism to the limit when he places journalistic duty before his own reputation, because his conscience forces him to report a story that shows his lack of professionalism, which happened on the same day of his wife's death. For Baek-jin, however, this circumstance does not lessen his indirect responsibility in the case, which highlights the character's high moral character. For this reason, his transformation arc is moderate: he rediscovers his paternal commitment to his daughter and approaches her.

Sin Chul's case is similar to that of the anchor, as he feels the need to subordinate his entire personal life to the professional realm. A desired objective does not appear until he falls in love with a female editor, at which time his mindset starts to change. He evolves into a sanguine and intuitive extrovert, thereby balancing his personal and professional lives as a result of falling in love.

Looking at the characters on *The Morning Show*, we see that Levy wants to keep her job as host of the show, and she is willing to place all the blame for the sexual abuse on Mitch and hire Jackson, if it leads to higher ratings. As she is afraid of losing her job and reputation, her conflict revolves around whether she can overcome this fear, and whether she can stay true to herself by telling the facts and moving away from political correctness, or if she will just continue to pretend. She undergoes a moderate transformation, yet with different interpretations: she becomes aware of her deficiency in setting an example while anchoring the program with Mitch; she comes to terms with her involvement in the cover-up of the sexual abuse; she acknowledges her part in the superficial news coverage; and she comes to terms with the pain she has caused to her family. This results in her teaming up with Jackson at the end of the first season to expose Fred, who is the owner of the station. However, there is an ongoing inner conflict between whether she is acting out of selflessness or from a hidden desire not to damage her reputation, as the concern for her image continues in the second season (Maggie's book). Moreover, she fails to resolve her family conflict, and she is not able to end the relationship with Mitch.

Jackson wants to change society for the better through journalism. Therefore, she obviously does not want to work for a prestigious media outlet. Nevertheless, she appreciates being hired by *The Morning Show*, as she now has a larger audience for exposing social problems. Of all the characters in the series, she is the most idealistic. Her dramatic conflict arises from the clash between her idealism and the show's pragmatism: although she wants to be honest and address politically incorrect topics, she must continually decide whether to give in to the demands of production. In Jackson, we see a radical transformation of her character. The impetuous behavior she displays at the beginning is moderated for the purpose of conforming to the demands of television journalism. Moreover, she also loses her initial quixotic ideas in order to embrace pragmatism, which occurs at the end of the second season. As such, she claims to be responsible and loyal to the network in order to keep the show on the air, yet the program loses its initial freshness and spontaneity that defined it at the beginning.

As for Ellison, his desire is to regain the lost reputation of UBA in the wake of Mitch's sex scandal. As news director, he finds himself caught between the newsroom and Fred. He wants to bring new ideas to the newsroom and avoid past mistakes, so his dramatic conflict is between siding with political incorrectness and the new approach embodied in Jackson, or pragmatism, silence, and the fear of a paradigm shift embodied in Levy and Fred. Regarding Ellison, he undergoes a moderate transformation, yet it is more personal than professional. Although he remains true to his personality, his initial independent behavior is overlaid by his dependence on and infatuation with Jackson.

Lastly, Black's conflict stems from the debate between producing fresh, politically incorrect content or continuing to rely on the innocuous and superficial reporting of the past. In the same vein, he hesitates between confessing what he knows about the alleged sexual abuse or remaining silent to protect the station. He undergoes a very moderate transformation in the first season when he decides to take part in reporting the abuse. However, his involvement is blurred in the second season.

Consequently, the dramatic conflict on *The Morning Show* is based on a previous situation of journalistic and labor malpractice. Faced with this situation, the characters are torn between exploring what has happened in depth, which in some cases would entail acknowledging their own guilt, or keeping silent and continuing to produce the same superficial infotainment content.

As for *The Newsreader*, Norville wants to regain her prestige as an anchor and gain influence over production decisions. Following a career decline due to relationship and health issues, she aspires to become a prestigious anchor once again. Loss of affection and self-esteem are problems she needs to overcome. Conflict arises from professional strain with Geoff and Cunningham regarding whether or not to give in to their labor demands, and romantic tension with Jennings regarding whether to get involved with him or not. Given the situation, Norville undergoes a circular transformation. Her initially sanguine temperament takes on a melancholic tone as a result of her conflict, and later becomes sanguine once again. The viewer sees her as a talented and independent journalist, yet one who has fallen from grace due to loneliness and insecurity. As the episodes progress, she regains her self-confidence and the courage not only to anchor the news, but also to lead a team of people in search of an exclusive story. Based on the theories of Jung, she loses her reflectiveness in order to become sensitive, and later returns to being reflective again.

Jennings is mainly interested in professional recognition, not in a general sense, but from a specific female character embodied in Norville. Jennings strongly desires Norville's admiration, and the conflict results from the romantic tension between the two. His rise and fall in the profession, his achievements, and his insecurities, are linked to Norville's greater or lesser recognition.

Jennings undergoes a radical transformation as he gradually changes from being introverted and phlegmatic to a more sanguine personality. Professionally, he overcomes his shyness to lead projects and report the news on the scene. Above all, he changes emotionally: in his romantic relationship with Norville, he never made a full commitment because he did not confide in her with his most intimate secrets. Forced by circumstances, such as the revelation of his brush with homosexuality, he confesses his complex personal situation and shares his feelings.

Cunningham does not display any specific need beyond maintaining the prestige of the station's news desk, which is the same for Tibb in his role as producer. On successive occasions, the two appear in the same camera shot, which indicates similar views in the way they run the news desk. This is further evidenced by the final conversation with Jennings when he is told in a matter-of-fact way that he will substitute Geoff in anchoring the news. Although these two characters remain flat, the latter begins to appreciate Noele when she starts to acquire sports knowledge.

Finally, we must bear in mind the sitcom format of *Great News*. Due to her insecurity, Wendelson has a desire to be recognized and valued professionally. Her need is linked to self-esteem and how she is perceived by others. Thus, her purpose is to uncover an exclusive story and gain influence in the newsroom. As for Walsh, his conflict is linked to the infatuation he feels for Wendelson. As a producer, he does not want a relationship that might interfere with his professional work. Both characters undergo a moderate transformation. Although their temperament and character do not change, Walsh learns to communicate and have conversations with Wendelson, and he is more flexible in the profession. Finally, Wendelson gains self-esteem despite the opinion of her mother, as well as the views of Walsh and her colleagues.

Regarding Pierce, as an anchor he feels the need to maintain his popularity with the public. He undergoes a radical transformation from choleric to sanguine, and from a perceptive extrovert to an intuitive extrovert: the formerly pragmatic coward becomes an idealist. As for Portia, although she has the support of the audience and the newsroom staff, she has a strong desire to be recognized by a veteran anchor like Pierce. Consequently, her character is flat.

4. Discussion and conclusions

There seems to be a common belief that an anchor must have an extroverted temperament, which is considered essential and dramatically necessary in order for scriptwriters to create a profile of charismatic personalities. There are only two cases of dramedies in which the character is developed based on an introverted temperament. These are Baek-jin (*Argon*) and Jennings (*The Newsreader*).

Both of these characters experience inner conflict arising from events in the distant past. These events have left a mark on each individual, with which they are still struggling. In the case of Baek-jin, it involves the death of his wife. As for Jennings, there was a homosexual encounter, which he keeps hidden, yet it generates internal conflict to such an extent that it prevents him from interacting naturally with other people. Regarding the other anchors, although they experience inner conflicts that arise during the development of the plots, these struggles do not involve traumatic events for the characters, but instead revolve around personal flaws they must confront.

Table 7. Temperament, character, and transformation arc of the anchors and reporters

Anchors and reporters				
Series	Character	(Hippocrates)	(Jung)	Transformation arc
<i>The Hour</i>	Freddie Lyon (reporter and anchor)	Sanguine	Reflective extrovert	Flat
	Hector Madden (anchor)	Choleric	Perceptive extrovert	Radical transformation He evolves into a sanguine and reflective extrovert
<i>The Newsroom</i>	Will McAvoy	Sanguine	Perceptive extrovert	Radical transformation Evolves into being reflective
<i>Argon</i>	Kim Baek-jin	Phlegmatic	Intuitive introvert	Flat
<i>The Morning Show</i>	Alex Levy	Sanguine	Perceptive extrovert	Radical transformation Evolves into being reflective
	Bradley Jackson	Sanguine	Intuitive extrovert	Radical transformation Evolves into perceptive
<i>The Newsreader</i>	Helen Norville	Sanguine	Reflective extrovert	Round
	Dale Jennings	Phlegmatic	Sensitive introvert	Radical transformation Evolves into Sanguine Evolves into a reflective extrovert
<i>Great News</i>	Katie	Sanguine	Sensitive extrovert	Moderate
	Chuck	Choleric	Perceptive extrovert	Radical transformation Evolves into being sanguine Evolves into an intuitive extrovert
	Portia	Sanguine	Perceptive extrovert	Flat

Source: prepared by the authors

Regarding the producers, they all have extroverted temperaments, which is typical of professionals who must know how to organize the work of a team always pressed for time. The exception is *Great News*, which gets its humor specifically from the phlegmatic personality of the producer Walsh.

Table 8. Temperament, character, and transformation arc of the producers

Producers				
Series	Character	(Hippocrates)	(Jung)	Transformation arc
<i>The Hour</i>	Bel Rowley	Sanguine	Reflective extrovert	Flat
<i>The Newsroom</i>	MacKenzie McHale	Sanguine	Sensitive extrovert	Flat
<i>Argon</i>	Sin Chul	Choleric	Sensitive extrovert	Radical transformation Evolves into sanguine and intuitive
<i>The Morning Show</i>	Chip Black	Sanguine	Reflective extrovert	Flat
<i>The Newsreader</i>	Dennis Tibb	Sanguine	Reflective extrovert	Flat
<i>Great News</i>	Greg	Phlegmatic	Reflective extrovert	Moderate

Source: prepared by the authors

Regarding the directors, it can be affirmed that an extroverted temperament coupled with management skills also dominates, except in the case of Fendley, whose double-dealing leads him to be cautious and not reveal his true intentions.

Table 9. Temperament, character, and transformation arc of the news directors

News directors				
Series	Character	(Hippocrates)	(Jung)	Transformation arc
<i>The Hour</i>	Clarence Fendley	Phlegmatic	Intuitive introvert	Flat
	Randall Brown	Sanguine	Preceptive extrovert	Radical transformation Evolves into a reflective extrovert
<i>The Newsroom</i>	Charlie Skinner	Sanguine	Reflective extrovert	Radical transformation Evolves into being perceptive
<i>The Morning Show</i>	Cory Ellison	Sanguine	Intuitive extrovert	Moderate
<i>The Newsreader</i>	Lindsay Cunningham	Choleric	Perceptive extrovert	Flat

Source: prepared by the authors

When analyzing a character, it is much more common to find stable personalities, according to Hippocrates, which is inspired by the prototypical hero who is willing to fight for objective information in a situation where unbiased facts dominate. Jackson, McAvoy and Madden find it hard to engage in the same fight, as they struggle to control their choleric impulses. They must constantly grapple with the uneasiness of life that is in conflict with their professional side.

A stable character is also prevalent among the producers, except in the case of Chul, who displays a certain degree of instability at the outset, due to his being an impulsive person who does not know how to exercise common courtesy regardless of who he is talking to.

A similar situation occurs with the directors, as a stable character is prevalent, except for Cunningham, whose cantankerous behavior with everyone on the editorial staff of *The Newsreader* often borders on abuse and makes his behavior nearly unbearable for his colleagues.

However, if the characters are analyzed according to Jung's psychological profiles, there is no standard model to follow, since the character that defines directors, producers and anchors varies according to the series and the conflicts that emerge, nor can any common patterns be established. In this regard, it can be affirmed that what is truly important in creating an attractive character is to make them stable, rather than to establish a common model for the way they face problems. As a result, scriptwriters do not see the need to establish an ideal pattern.

Regarding the desire-need duality, which leads to overcoming a flaw in order to achieve a goal, it can be concluded that most of the characters have the desire to create honest newscasts committed to the truth, regardless of their role. Cynicism and pragmatism are either not the purpose of the protagonists, or in some cases they are flaws that must be overcome in order for the character to exhibit their true personality. In this regard, the only characters that deviate from the common criteria are news directors Fendley and Cunningham, producers Sin Chul and Walsh, and anchors Levy, Wendelson, Jennings and Norville. However, among the shortcomings there is a large and miscellaneous set of needs that make it impossible to obtain a common measure. Among these flaws, the following can be found; a lack of courage, recklessness, rudeness, excessive dedication to work, pragmatism, a lack of self-esteem, and the desire to please the audience.

Regarding the evolution of the characters as the transformation arc unfolds, there is a tendency among the news directors not to change their personalities. The only characters who break this mold are Skinner and Brown, yet for very different reasons. In Skinner's case, he undergoes a radical evolution along the lines of Jung's characteristics, yet he does so on a comic level that has little to do with serious drama. However, Brown's situation takes place on a more somber level being aligned with a commitment to convey the truth.

As for the producers, a flat transformation arc also dominates, either due to their status as secondary characters in the plot (e.g. Tibb and Black) or, even if they are main characters like McHale and Rowley, the reason could be that the obstacles they face further reinforce their initial ideas. Basically, these characters are free of inner conflict and their role is subordinated to that of the anchors they work for, who either make their mission easier, as in the case of Rowley, McHale and Black, or hinder it, as in the case of Tibb. Only Chul undergoes a radical transformation, which is even consistent with both Hippocrates' and Jung's parameters, thereby achieving a more stable life balance.

Regarding the anchors, there is more variety with a recurring phenomenon of radical personality transformation. Madden, Levy, Jackson, Pierce and McAvoy are characters who evolve into journalists more committed to the values of free and democratic journalism, which is typical of a democracy, except in the case of Jackson who becomes more pragmatic as he loses his initial idealism and starts to obey the orders of those in charge. As for Norville, she displays a round arc due to the fact that she finishes the series as an exemplary character, just like at the beginning, because despite having suffered personality setbacks during the story, she finally overcomes them and renews her original essence. The only characters who do not evolve are Lyon and Baek-jin, but for different reasons. Lyon keeps his personality intact despite the obstacles that his idealistic nature must confront as he struggles to comply with news ethics. For his part, we could say that Baek-jin fails due to his inability to overcome the wound he carries around following the death of his wife. In the end, his idealism is disregarded because he fails to implement his ideals into the guidelines of the network.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest contained in this article.

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