

COLOMBIA: TOWARDS A CRITICAL INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN TELEVISION FICTION.

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Introduction

Colombia offered a complex and turbulent context for the year 2024. In addition to growing political polarization, the 2024 Copa América took center stage, a sporting event that brought the nation to a standstill and kept it in suspense with an outstanding performance and high hopes for the tournament final. The runner-up position, received with more sadness than joy, contrasted with the tense political climate between the government and the mass media, as well as the endless debates regarding the proposed reforms, mainly in the areas of health and labor. Thus, the small screen was dominated by news programs, mainly covering the continental tournament and, additionally, reporting on political developments in the Senate and on the streets, without neglecting the increased presence of public media as an alternative source of information and, in the regions, the strengthening of regional channels and the emergence of innovative proposals in the audiovisual field. Also, the presence of *streaming* continued to expand and establish an interesting correlation with broadcast television, so that fiction was no longer premiered first on national channels and then moved to VoD, as was the case with *Pedro el Escamoso, más Escamoso que Nunca*, but the opposite process also took place, as was the case with *Betty la fea*, *la Historia Continúa* (*Ugly Betty*, *the Story Continues*) and *Darío Gómez*, which premiered on Prime Video before their scheduled release in 2025 on RCN.

Now, in terms of race and intersectionality, it is worth noting that the nation, both with the presence of *Cien Años de Soledad* on Netflix and *Devuélveme La Vida* on Caracol, reaffirmed a particular situation in Colombian television: the ability to critically show the multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of Colombia from the perspective not of its possibility of being put on screen, but rather of bringing the conversation

into the everyday world. Thus, fiction in the country not only reinforced the possibility of capturing the nation’s enormous cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as representing women and LGBTIQ+ populations, but also offered the challenge of intercultural communication in terms of thinking about and with the other, not only on screen, but also in hallway conversations and debates on social media, as was the case, for example, with the tension surrounding Rebeca’s beauty and her indigenous and Afro features in the case of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which made it possible to account for the challenge of moving from a presentation in fictional storytelling to intercultural communication in everyday practice.

1. The audiovisual context in Colombia in 2024

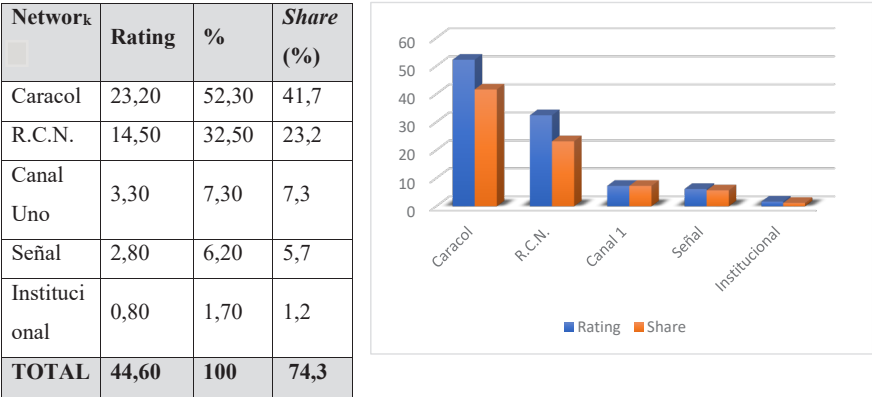
1.1. Open television in Colombia

Chart 1. national open television networks/channels in Colombia

Private networks / channels (3)	Public networks / channels (2)
Caracol	Señal Colombia
RCN	Canal Institucional
Canal Uno	
TOTAL CHANNELS = 5	

Source: Obitel Colombia

Graph 1. TV rating and share by station (rating per household)

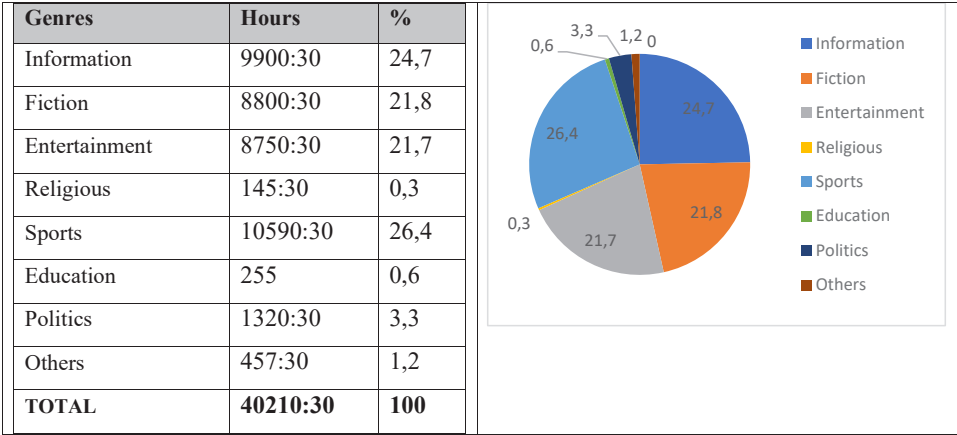


Source: Kantar Ibope Colombia - Obitel Colombia

In terms of audience and share, it should be noted that in 2024, Caracol once again became the most watched channel nationwide, even surpassing its rival RCN by a

wider margin. This was also reinforced by the presence of sports programming, particularly soccer and Copa América broadcasts, in which Caracol's coverage played a leading role.

Graph 2: Genres and hours broadcast in TV programming



In terms of genres and hours, 2024 was marked by a resurgence of sports programs (due to the importance of the Copa América), reinforced by an increase in news programs dedicated to these topics. This led to an almost equal distribution of time between fiction and entertainment. Other genres, as has been the norm, received little screen time.

1.2. Pay TV and VoD platforms in Colombia in 2024

According to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (MINTIC) in Colombia, the number of pay TV subscribers reached 12 per 100 inhabitants. Furthermore, at the end of the third quarter of the year, the number of pay TV subscribers reached 6,090,654, representing a contraction of close to 3.3% compared to the same period in 2023.

Also according to MINTIC, during the third quarter of 2024, gross operating revenues received by pay TV service operators reached \$808 billion pesos, compared to \$851 billion pesos in 2023, representing a 5% reduction in revenues. The five subscription television service operators with the highest percentages of gross operating income in Colombian pesos during the third quarter of 2024 are: Comunicación Celular S.A. COMCEL S with 46.7%; DIRECTV Colombia LTDA with 22.4%; UNE EPM Telecomunicaciones S.A. with 15.4%; Colombia Telecomunicaciones S.A. E.S.P with 10.02%; and Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Bogotá S.A. E.S.P. with 1.86%. At the time of writing, these were the subscription television

service operators with the highest number of subscribers: Comunicación Celular S.A. COMCEL S.A. with 3 million; UNE EPM Telecomunicaciones S.A. with 1.1 million; Colombia Telecomunicaciones S.A. E.S.P. with 800,000; DIRECTV Colombia LTDA with 500,000; and HV Televisión S.A.S. with 150,000.

Chart 2. Pay TV Channels in Colombia

10 TV most watched pay TV Channels in Colombia		
Channel	Genre	Origin
ESPN	Deportes	Estados Unidos
WIN sports	Deportes	Colombia
Fox Sports 2	Deportes	Estados Unidos
TNT	Ficción	Estados Unidos
HBO	Ficción	Estados Unidos
Space	Ficción	Estados Unidos
AXN	Ficción	Estados Unidos
Disney Channel	Infantil	Estados Unidos
Cartoon Network	Infantil	Estados Unidos
CNN en Español	Información	Estados Unidos

Source: Obitel Colombia

According to the Communications Regulatory Commission (CRC), these operators offer subscribers the option of choosing a VoD platform, with the following being the most popular among television subscribers: Netflix; Disney+; Amazon Prime Video; HBO MAX; YouTube Premium; Star+; Paramount+; Apple TV; and Crackle. In terms of fiction consumption, it should be noted that there is a clear preference among users for watching national fiction through national channels that are included in subscription television, such as Canal Caracol and Canal RCN.

In relation to the general use of VoD platforms in Colombia, by 2024 there will be a variety of streaming services available. Among the most used are Netflix, Disney+, YouTube Premium, Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max, Star+, Vix, RTVC Play, Paramount, Crunchyroll, and Crackle. It has been found that 31% of Colombian households have a subscription to a streaming platform. Netflix remains, as in 2023, the most widely used service by users, due to its economic flexibility, recommendations among users, and the inclusion of Colombian productions and premieres such as One Hundred Years of Solitude and Squid Game season 2, among others.

In Colombia, there is the RTVC Play platform, which belongs to the Colombian Public Media System and plays an important role in showcasing national productions. RTVC Play, which is a free platform, is not far behind the most consumed platforms in the country. Its architecture and design make it competitive in attracting users, with

its content of historical Colombian fiction and also hosting productions that were winners of incentives awarded by MINTIC calls for proposals. There, on RTVC Play, you can find topics such as: Series Al Oído; Radionovelas Al Oído; Radioteatros Al Oído; Entrevistas Al Oído; Podcast; RTVC de película; El mundo de los Niños; Estamos Retro; Recomendados de la semana; Aprender es Play; and a wide variety of topics such as fiction series, fiction films, fiction short films, documentary series, documentary films, documentary short films, innovators, memory slots, and music. Finally, as part of this major commitment and coverage, the same application allows users to watch the Señal Colombia channel live and listen to Radio Nacional de Colombia.

1.3. Sources of financing for the audiovisual sector

The audiovisual sectors in Colombia have a wide range of revenues that seek to finance and maintain content production. These revenues vary depending on their nature, i.e., whether they are private, such as Caracol or RCN, or public, such as the RTVC network, Canal del Congreso, and Canal Capital, along with regional channels such as Teleantioquia, Telepacífico, Telecaribe, TRO, Canal Trece, and Tele Islas. There are also channels with mixed financing, such as City TV and Red+

In the case of public channels, they receive public investment support, which is covered by the Single Communication Technology Fund. For this reason, the MinTIC filed Resolution 03556, which responds to the media convergence plan in Colombia, which seeks to modernize and digitize public media through Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), under the premise of switching off analog television in favor of democratizing content, in accordance with Law 1341 of 2009. This was reflected in the investment of \$83 billion for regional channels, which will take place in March 2025. Thus, for the year 2024, the following calls for proposals are established with their respective investments: Call for proposals “Abre Cámara 2024 - 2025” with a total investment of \$14 billion Colombian pesos, the call for proposals “Relatos en Serie” with an investment of 24,900,000, the National Program for Cultural Cooperation, with a maximum amount of \$50 million pesos per project. And the National Incentives Program, with a total of 33,390,282,000 invested.

In the case of private channels, financing is established through advertising during their broadcasts, the sale of content, which is reflected in the incursion of content on VoD streaming platforms, and sponsorships. Like public channels, they establish an agenda focused on the modernization and digitization of their content distribution media. Thus, official apps have been launched by the RCN and Canal Caracol channels, which have alternative digital sources, such as apps in the Play Store, such as Ditu (Caracol) and RCN Total, a commitment to social networks with

the possibility of monetization, such as TikTok, YouTube, and official pages with advertising content.

1.4 Communication Policies

Law 2416 of 2024, issued by the Congress of the Republic of Colombia, declared the provision of public telecommunications services to be a service of public utility and social interest, with the aim of promoting state telecommunications coverage throughout Colombia. In this regard, the guiding principle of this directive is the establishment of information and communication technologies as state policies framed within the context of social inclusion.

In relation to the incentives for 2024, it should be noted that the Colombian Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies allocated around 98.415 billion Colombian pesos to the digital transformation of the country's public television. In this regard, the resources were directed towards the modernization of the productions of regional public television channels. It also follows from the above that several of the economic incentives during 2024 were focused on the possibility of storytelling from and for the territories.

Among the most notable incentives was once again the “Abre cámara” (Open Camera) program, with an investment of 27.378 billion Colombian pesos. Through this program, which aims to promote and preserve national culture and identity, 95 audiovisual projects were financed, which fed into the programming of public television channels in Colombia. In the same vein, the call for proposals “Territorios al aire” (Territories on the Air) was designed to strengthen community radio stations, awarding 141 grants totaling 2.921 billion pesos.

Given that one of the priorities of Colombia's Ministry of Information and Communications Technology has been to work in the regions, another incentive that stood out in 2024 was precisely “Regiones sin límites” (Regions Without Limits), which provided economic incentives totaling 3.751 billion pesos to 23 productions aimed at developing audiovisual content that promoted diversity and visibility. “Regions Without Limits,” an incentive that provided economic incentives worth 3.751 billion Colombian pesos to 23 productions aimed at developing audiovisual content that promoted the diversity and visibility of the LGBTIQ+ community in Colombia.

1.5 Infraestructura de conectividad digital y móvil

During 2024, the Ministry of Science, Technology, Communication, and Information conducted a series of surveys to reveal the percentage of users constantly participating in activities such as social media use, internet interaction, and mobile device use, among other strategies. Based on this, the following conclusions were

drawn: around 82% of the Colombian population lived in urban areas, and nearly 77 million connections were maintained through cell phones. Thirty-nine percent of users were connected to the internet at the beginning of 2024, while 36% interacted with social media.

In this vein, the devices most commonly used to maintain connectivity or internet use were distributed as follows: 98% used cell phones in general; 98% used smartphones; 12% used cell phones without smart features; 66% used laptops or desktop computers; 27% used tablets; 24% used video game consoles; 26% used smartwatches; 18% used TV streaming platforms; 11% used smart home devices; and 4.6% used virtual reality devices.

It is concluded that, compared to previous years, there was a 0.4% increase in connectivity in 2024, indicating that approximately 12.7 million people did not use the internet, meaning that 24% of the population remained unconnected. However, compared to past periods, where the digital divide was evident, 2024 saw the rollout of 5G networks, a massive fiber optic installation, and the implementation of the Colombia PotenciA Digital program. These measures sought to cover both urban and rural areas in remote areas that are difficult to access. For this reason, although the increase was not entirely significant, it exceeded the expectations of previous years. It is suggested that there should be a greater flow of investment from the various government agencies, greater participation by public-private partnerships, the implementation of advanced infrastructure in remote regions, and effective supervision by the control agencies to ensure the reduction of communication and information access gaps.

In summary, Colombia has the largest fiber optic network in the region. There has been sustained growth in digital infrastructure, enabling massive data transfer thanks to the optimization of fiber optics, communication towers, data centers, and satellite implementation. This progress allows the country to move closer to global demands, although work still needs to be done to bring connectivity to homes located in areas that are difficult to access.

2. Analysis of the year: national and Ibero-American fiction premieres on broadcast TV

Table 1. Fictions shown in 2024

UNRELEASED NATIONAL TITLES – 8	UNRELEASED FOREIGN TITLES - 1
Caracol	Caracol
1. <i>Devuélveme la vida</i> (serie)	1. <i>Tierra de Esperanza</i> (telenovela - México)
2. <i>Pedro el Escamoso, Mas Escamoso que Nunca</i> (serie)	2. <i>Rubí</i> (telenovela - México)
3. <i>Klass 95</i> (serie)	
4. <i>Escupiré Sobre Sus Tumbas</i> (telenovela)	
5. <i>Paraiso Blanco</i> (serie)	
6. <i>Arelys Henao II</i> (serie)	
RCN	
7. <i>Rigo</i> (serie)	
8. <i>Rojo Carmesí</i> (telenovela)	
	UNRELEASED OBITEL CO-PRODUCTIONS – 0
	TOTAL UNREALEASED TITLES: 10

Source: Obitel Colombia

TABLE 1b. Exhibition of reruns during 2024

UNRELEASED NATIONAL TITLES – 8	UNRELEASED FOREIGN TITLES - 1
Caracol	Caracol
1. <i>Devuélveme la vida</i> (serie)	1. <i>Tierra de Esperanza</i> (telenovela - México)
2. <i>Pedro el Escamoso, Mas Escamoso que Nunca</i> (serie)	2. <i>Rubí</i> (telenovela - México)
3. <i>Klass 95</i> (serie)	
4. <i>Escupiré Sobre Sus Tumbas</i> (telenovela)	
5. <i>Paraiso Blanco</i> (serie)	
6. <i>Arelys Henao II</i> (serie)	
RCN	
7. <i>Rigo</i> (serie)	
8. <i>Rojo Carmesí</i> (telenovela)	
	UNRELEASED OBITEL CO-PRODUCTIONS – 0
	TOTAL UNREALEASED TITLES: 10

Source: Obitel Colombia

In Colombia, 2024 saw a rebound in the number of new domestic titles released in the country, with eight productions, plus two previously unreleased foreign titles, which counterbalanced the 11 reruns and created a landscape combining reruns with new fiction. Another noteworthy development in 2024 was the re-release of *Yo soy Betty la Fea*, which also achieved significant ratings in prime time.

Table 2 Formats of national fiction premiering in 2024 and their evolution over the five-year period.

Format	Titles						Hours					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Telenovela	4	7	2	3	2	18	270:00	472:30	54:30	248:50	119:30	1165:20
Series	4	2	5	7	6	24	270:00	202:30	260:30	315:40	270:50	1319:30
Miniseries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Sitcom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Unitario	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Docudrama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:55	0:00	0:00	0:55
Total	8	9	7	10	8	42	540:00	675:00	315:55	564:30	390:20	2485:45

Source: Kantar IBOPE Colombia - OBITEL Colombia

In Colombia, 2024 saw a rebound in the number of new domestic titles released in the country, with eight productions, plus two previously unreleased foreign titles, which counterbalanced the 11 reruns and created a landscape combining reruns with new fiction. Another noteworthy development in 2024 was the re-release of *Yo soy Betty la Fea*, which also achieved significant ratings in prime time.

Table 3. Fiction premieres shown in 2024: countries of origin

Country	Titles	%	Hours	%
NATIONAL (total)	8,00	80	390:20	82
OBITEL (total)	2,00	20	83:20	18
Argentina	0	0	0:00	0
Brasil	0	0	0:00	0
Chile	0	0	0:00	0
Colombia	8	80	390:10	82
Ecuador	0	0	0:00	0
España	0	0	0:00	0
EE.UU. Hispanos	0	0	0:00	0
México	2	20	83:25	18
Perú	0	0	0:00	0
Portugal	0	0	0:00	0
Uruguay	0	0	0:00	0
Venezuela	0	0	0:00	0
COPRODUCTIONS (totals)	0	0	0:00	0
Nacional Coproductions	0	0	0:00	0
Obitel Countries Coproductions	0	0	0:00	0
TOTAL	10,00	100	473:35	100

Source: Kantar IBOPE Colombia - OBITEL Colombia

In terms of new fiction series, it is interesting to note the appearance of two Mexican series that enter into dialogue with the preeminence of the eight new national fiction series.

TABLE 4. National and Ibero-American fiction formats shown in 2024

Format	Titles				Hours			
	Nationals	%	Obitel	%	Nationals	%	Obitel	%
Telenovela	1	14,3	2	50,0	119:30	30,6	83:20	100,0
Series	6	85,7	0	50,0	270:50	69,4	0:00	0,0
Miniseries	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Sitcom	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Unitario	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Docudrama	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Others	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Total	7	100,0	2	100,0	390:20	100,0	83:20	100,0

Source: Kantar IBOPE Colombia - OBITEL Colombia

In terms of format, series dominate national production, while in titles from other countries, soap operas are predominant.

Table 5: Top 10 most viewed titles in 2024

Titles		Channel	Producer (Country)	Format/genre	No. of cap/ep in 2024	Time	Rating	Share
1	Rigo* **	RCN	RCN (COL)	Telenovela/Biográfica	39	Prime time	20,1	27,2
2	Devuélveme la Vida*	Caracol	Caracol (COL)	Serie/Drama	60	Prime time	19,7	26,2
3	Pedro el Escamoso, más Escamoso que Nunca*	Caracol	Caracol (COL)	Serie /Comedia dramática	23	Prime time	19,2	25,6
4	Arelys Henao II*	Caracol	Caracol (COL)	Serie /Biográfica	64	Prime time	17,1	23,6
5	Klass 95*	Caracol	Caracol (COL)	Serie / Drama	45	Prime time	14,3	22,4
6	Escupiré Sobre Sus Tumbas*	Caracol	Caracol (COL)	Serie/Drama	42	Prime time	12,3	21,6
7	Tierra de Esperanza	Caracol	Televisa (MX)	Telenovela/Drama	60	Tarde	10,8	20,9
8	Paraíso Blanco*	Caracol	Caracol (COL)	Serie/Drama	30	Prime time	8,9	20,3
9	Rubi*	Caracol	Televisa (MX)	Telenovela/Drama	115	Tarde	8,4	19,2
10	Rojo Carmesí	RCN	RCN (COL)	Telenovela/Melodrama	81	Prime time	7,4	18,2
Total national productions: 8				Original foreign scripts:2				
80%				20%				

Source: Kantar IBOPE Colombia – OBITEL Colombia

In the case of the 10 most-watched fiction programs, some rather peculiar paradoxes stand out: series predominate, but the most-watched fiction program is a telenovela; the dominant channel is Caracol, although the most-watched program is from RCN. However, there is a clear trend toward productions dominated by humor or nostalgia and, once again, violence and conflict. Soap operas predominate in the afternoon slot, in this case from Mexico, although it is worth noting that Turkish productions also featured prominently in this slot.

Table 6: Audience profile of the 10 most viewed titles:
gender, age, socioeconomic status

Title		Channel	Sex %		GSE%			
			Women	Men	ABC1	C2	C3	D
1	<i>Rigo</i>	RCN	45	55	25	25	28	22
2	<i>Devuelveme la Vida</i>	Caracol	51	49	35	35	20	10
3	<i>Pedro el Escamoso, más Escamoso que Nunca</i>	Caracol	46	54	33	32	20	15
4	<i>Arelys Henao II</i>	Caracol	54	46	34	31	25	10
5	<i>Klass 95</i>	Caracol	60	40	30	25	25	20
6	<i>Escupire Sobre Sus Tumbas</i>	Caracol	56	44	30	29	26	15
7	<i>Tierra de Esperanza</i>	Caracol	65	35	38	33	24	5
8	<i>Paraíso Blanco</i>	Caracol	45	55	30	31	28	10
9	<i>Rubí</i>	Caracol	64	46	35	38	22	5
10	<i>Rojo Carmesí</i>	RCN	56	44	39	36	20	5

Title		Age %						
		04 - 12	13-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65-+
1	<i>Rigo</i>	10	16	14	16	16	14	14
2	<i>Devuelveme la Vida</i>	3	3	4	16	22	28	24
3	<i>Pedro el Escamoso, más Escamoso que Nunca</i>	2	2	10	21	22	22	21
4	<i>Arelys Henao II</i>	2	5	18	20	22	19	14
5	<i>Klass 95</i>	1	3	15	23	24	22	12
6	<i>Escupire Sobre Sus Tumbas</i>	1	2	18	24	26	19	10
7	<i>Tierra de Esperanza</i>	2	2	10	12	20	27	28
8	<i>Paraíso Blanco</i>	1	4	18	19	21	22	15
9	<i>Rubí</i>	1	1	11	12	19	29	27
10	<i>Rojo Carmesí</i>	1	1	12	15	25	24	22

Source: Kantar IBOPE Colombia - OBITEL Colombia

In terms of socioeconomic status, the greatest receptivity to fiction is found among lower socioeconomic groups, while those with greater purchasing power tend to consume more streaming content. In terms of age, it is interesting to note that afternoon fiction programs once again tend to appeal to older viewers. Finally, in the case of *Rigo*, it is noteworthy that it is a fiction that manages to bring together different ages and social conditions in terms of audience.

3. VoD Monitoring 2024

3.1. VoD platform market in 2024

The year 2024 marked an interesting dynamic in terms of the stabilization of VoD systems and the particular inclination of subscriptions towards clear and dominant niche markets, as is the case with Netflix and Prime Video, which brought together the largest number of both national productions and subscriptions. In this context, an interesting question arose: although the abundance of systems available in the country remained unchanged, proposals such as Vix failed to achieve a growing trend, and proposals such as Disney+ did not show significant growth. Additionally,

strategies such as those of Prime Video, offering the possibility of integrating other specific subscriptions by genre or even access to other platforms such as Mubi or Paramount+ for an additional cost to the regular subscription, transformed the landscape of consumption processes. For its part, despite Netflix's increased costs and restrictions, it remained the dominant VoD service in the nation, in line with its broad presence in Latin America with more than 50 million subscriptions in 2024.

To this picture must be added the presence of RTVC Play, the public media streaming service, which, although it does not provide official data in terms of subscriptions as it is a completely free platform, it has shown considerable growth in terms of fiction productions, as well as a deepening of innovative proposals and diverse narratives, including the innovations presented in previous years (transmedia narratives, fiction made with mobile phones, interactive proposals), with projects that touch on topics such as feminism, the central theme of season IV of the series *Las Gestas del Tiempo*. At the public level, there is no other platform with the reach of RTVC Play, although it is worth noting that it manages to strike a certain balance against the clear dominance of Netflix and Prime Video, which rank above other platforms in the country.

3.2. Local VoD platforms in 2024 (national and regional within the country)

About the range of local platforms available in 2024, it is important to highlight the role played by RTC Play as the flagship channel of national public television, which synthesizes and brings together the nation's public media offerings. This platform, apart from being completely free, condenses an interesting range of productions, including both fiction and documentaries that have been classics in the history of Colombian television, as well as a set of innovations that include transmedia experiments, mobile production, and interactive offerings. It is, therefore, a platform with a high volume of content that allows free access to users. It offers more than twenty productions, including fiction from previous years, documentaries, and new releases that showcase creative innovation, with notable productions such as *Las Gestas del Tiempo*, *Paciente*, and *El Inquisidor*, among others. The website allows users to browse films, series, podcasts, specials, live productions, and children's programming. It does not provide subscription data as it is a free system, but since 2023 it has maintained a steady average of around 4 million visits per year.

As for private channels, in 2024, *ditu* was launched, a Caracol app that allows users to consume audiovisual products that have been broadcast on open signal. For its part, RCN usually uploads episodes of its fiction series to its website. However, both private channels, Caracol and RCN, have direct partnerships with streaming platforms such as Netflix, Prime Video, and more recently Disney+, which have

allowed productions such as Darío **Gómez, Pedro el** Escamoso, Más Escamoso que Nunca, and other fiction series to be available on these systems. Regional television does not have direct access to VoD platforms.

3.3. Analysis of VoD in 2024: nationally premiered fiction and co-productions

In 2024, it is important to highlight how VoD became a space with a high impact in terms of both audiences and the exhibition of premiere productions. Thus, compared to a process in which, in the previous year, 2023, titles were first released on free-to-air television and then on platforms, by 2024 the situation, although there were still some cases such as Pedro el Escamoso, más Escamoso que Nunca, and Klass 95, for the first time, the opposite occurred, with the premiere first taking place on the platform and the premiere on free-to-air television being postponed, even until 2025, specifically in the cases of Betty la fea, la historia continúa and Darío Gómez, which were first shown on Prime Video. This transformation of the process is consistent with a changing dynamic in television consumption, which is shifting from free-to-air television to the access conditions typical of VoD systems, which have become a particular feature of viewers' habits in the country.

Within this framework, it is also worth noting how platforms also showed the same fiction on different systems, as happened in 2023, as in the case of La Sustrita, which, although it premiered first on Vix, later became part of Prime Video's catalog of new releases. This also marks an interesting process of multi-screen presence for fiction content, allowing for different consumption mechanisms for viewers who have now also become users who navigate between different VoD systems.

In terms of production logic, it is interesting to note the case of a production that became the most important of the year in the field of VoD: One Hundred Years of Solitude, which was preceded by great expectations, precisely because it was an adaptation of García Márquez's famous novel, as well as the monumental production and investment made in the construction of the episodes corresponding to its first season, which included both a special launch and the construction of a real recreation of the different moments in Macondo. This process, as was the case with Narcos, positioned the national production in line with the demands and requirements of an international audience and the need for impeccable production in terms of photography, narrative, and visual rhythm, without neglecting the power of the script and an important coherence with the social and cultural issues addressed in the work.

Alongside One Hundred Years of Solitude, it is also worth highlighting how mini-series such as Secuestro al Vuelo 601 (Kidnapping Flight 601) also opted for careful production design, reflecting the conditions under which streaming services pose

a tremendous challenge to audiovisual production, being closer to the standards and characteristics of film production than to the technical parameters associated with television production, a fact that is evident even in elements such as cameras, formats, and recording dynamics. However, this change, which is characteristic of the conditions established as standard for audiovisual production on platforms, also contributes to changes in the processes of broadcast television. This is evident in the transition between the VoD system and national channels of titles such as *Pedro el Escamoso*, *Más Escamoso que Nunca*, and *Klass 95*, whose technical production could also be seen on broadcast television and managed to remain in the platform's top 10 for several weeks in each case. Thus, it should also be noted that it appears that new fiction series circulate between VoD systems and the small screen, making it possible to watch them on any screen, even in the case of reruns, which, as well as having 11 productions on broadcast television, also offer more than a dozen titles on different platforms, including, among others, *Yo soy Betty, la Fea* and *Pedro el Escamoso* as productions that ranked in the top 10 on both Prime Video and Netflix in 2024.

However, in terms of new fiction releases, 2024 presents a considerable abundance of titles, with nine original productions and more than twenty reruns, practically surpassing the number of national titles released on free-to-air television. Thus, VoD is positioning itself not only as an alternative form of consumption with an ever-growing subscription audience, but also as an important arena for the country's production, whether through the re-release of productions seen on national channels or through the privilege of premiering before they are shown on RCN or Caracol. Added to this is the original and exclusive production of platforms, such as the aforementioned *Cien Años de Soledad*, but also *La Primera Vez 2*, *La Sustituta*, and *Secuestro al Vuelo 601*, which are productions designed solely for consumption on the VoD system. Something similar occurs in the case of RTVC Play and content designed for this free and public access platform, where, as in previous years, narrative or format innovation is prioritized, as in the case of *Las Gestas del Tiempo*.

Table 7. Domestic fiction and co-productions shown in 2024 on VoD systems

NEW NATIONAL RELEASES	NEW COPRODUCTIONS
Netflix (4)	
01. <i>Cien Años de Soledad</i> (serie)	
02. <i>La Primera Vez 2</i> (serie)	
03. <i>Secuestro al Vuelo 601</i> (miniserie)	
04. <i>Klass 95</i> (serie)	
Prime Video (2)	
05. <i>Darío Gómez</i> (serie)	
06. <i>Betty la Fea, La Historia Continúa</i> (serie)	
Disney + (1)	
07. <i>Pedro el Escamoso, más Escamoso que Nunca</i> (serie)	
Vix (1)	
08. <i>La Sustituta</i> (serie)	
RTVC Play (1)	
09. <i>Las Gestas del Tiempo IV: Revolución Femenina</i> (serie)	
Total: 9	Total: 0

Source: Obitel Colombia

This table highlights the presence of a large number of fiction premieres on VoD systems, surpassing national premieres by one title and thus revealing this change in consumption, but also in the logic and processes of production, in which, in cases such as *La Sustituta*, production companies such as RCN are no longer exclusively focused on free-to-air television, but are moving towards producing for systems such as Vix. Finally, although not included in the table, it is worth noting a production that also occupied an important place in terms of audience ratings, namely *Griselda*, a US title starring Colombian actress Sofia Vergara and featuring a mainly national cast, setting a benchmark in terms of production quality and demonstrating how VoD production can simultaneously achieve global reach and a direct connection with new audiences migrating towards the fiction that populates contemporary platforms.

3.4. Narrative characteristics of VoD in 2024

In terms of narrative, VoD was characterized by a marked emphasis on melodrama, humor, and the logic inherent in the bold rhythm of narrative seriality. Thus, narrative forms were linked to a set of conditions specific to audiovisual mechanisms based on editing speed, the use of saturated color palettes (in the case of products that were more overloaded with either humorous content or a certain relationship with violence), and production designs that combined both elements of cinematography and a return to techniques more closely linked to the pauses typical of soap opera discourse. Consequently, although narrative formats were mainly dominated

by the series format, they showed a complex process of hybridization in terms of rhythm, organization of audiovisual grammars, and the configuration of elements typical of on-screen fiction, such as characters, the atmospheres created in the productions, and the mechanisms used to make the stories told on screen visible.

This heterogeneity is evident in the diversity found in the set of fiction premieres in 2024, but particularly in the narrative distance between two productions located at almost opposite ends of the storytelling spectrum, as is the case with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Pedro el Escamoso, más Escamoso que Nunca*. On the one hand, we have a series with an omniscient narrator, a cinematic format, hour-long episodes, and a pace marked by García Márquez's novel in an almost faithful adaptation of the work that inspired it. and, on the other hand, a short, colorful series, marked by humor as a distinctive feature and with a much more frenetic pace and some melodramatic touches. In the middle of the spectrum between the two productions are proposals such as *Secuestro al Vuelo 601* (Kidnapping Flight 601) or *La Sustituta* (The Substitute), which are framed in a logic close to action and the recreation of events linked to violence. As usual, RTVC Play presents considerable differences, which are expressed in 2024 in *Las Gestas del Tiempo IV: Revolución Femenina*, whose narrative conforms to the canons of historical fiction, thus adding to the distinctive feature offered by the public media system by presenting other narrative processes outside the established norms of the major national channels.

4. Interactivity and audience participation

To analyze interactivity, one of the most important classic literary works in history has been taken as a reference. It transcended its original format to become the most-watched streaming fiction, generating a wave of interactivity and participation in digital environments thanks to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, released on December 11, 2024, by Netflix and produced by DYNAMO. This series, told in eight episodes under the direction of Laura Mora and Alex García López, marked a milestone in the history of audiovisual production in the country, grossing more than 225 billion Colombian pesos and contributing to the country's economy.

Through Netflix's press room and news releases, the audience was continuously informed about the social impact of the production through announcements such as: on March 6, 2019, "Netflix acquires the rights to Gabriel García Márquez's masterpiece *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to develop it into a new original series"; June 23, 2022: "Casting begins for *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and everyone can be a part of it!"; April 17, 2024: "Netflix presents the first images of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*"; October 8, 2024: "*One Hundred Years of Solitude* premieres on December 11"; November 19, 2024: "From Colombia to the world: this is how *One*

Hundred Years of Solitude was brought to the screen”; November 25, 2024: “Netflix reveals the trailer and main artwork for One Hundred Years of Solitude”; and after its premiere on February 11, 2025, following a long six-year wait, it was announced that “The second part of One Hundred Years of Solitude is already in production and confirms a new cast.”

This led to 2,969 comments on YouTube in the 190 countries where it was launched, based on the official trailer alone, with viewers expressing different reactions such as “@DanielMartinezK80 I’m so nervous that a masterpiece of world literature won’t be portrayed accurately. I hope it lives up to expectations, I beg, I pray...” “@deleted.account Finally, something other than drugs or cartels that only reinforce the stigma against Colombians.” On Facebook, there were 1.2 million views with comments such as “@JullyAndreaMon I woke up and the first thing I did was start enjoying this beautiful story by our Gabo,” “@AngieDelaRosa I just finished the first chapter. I started out judging it, from the arrogance of being Gabo’s compatriot and lover of his literature, and without realizing it, I ended up immersed to the point of feeling like I was in Macondo, with a feeling very similar to what I felt with the version I created in my mind. I hope that feeling doesn’t disappear as the chapters go by, but very few series manage to hook me at first, and like the book, this one did. However, I won’t give my verdict yet. I’ll just say, watch it.

On TikTok, the launch did not generate as much audience interaction as on previous social media platforms, as comments such as the following were found among its 1,350 likes: “@amanecer Nothing is like the play, I don’t feel the same emotion I felt when I read it”; “@Freddy Felipe It’s going very well so far, in my imagination everything was darker.” It should be noted that most of the responses focus on emoticons.

In this regard, this media experience highlights two elements. The first refers to recognition not only through awards such as the Platino Awards for best series and best actor, or the India Catalina Awards with thirteen statuettes in the fiction category, but also how audiences received 3.6 million views in its first week and are eagerly awaiting the second season in June 2025. As a result, the governor of Alvarado, Tolima, where the series was filmed, revealed that “Netflix is considering donating the Macondo facilities to the department to turn them into a permanent tourist attraction” (Blu Radio, 2024).

Finally, the adaptation of One Hundred Years of Solitude sparked remarkable interactivity, with people participating in different digital spaces, as evidenced by comments and reactions on YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok. The series was received in different ways, with much enthusiasm and hope that it would stay true to Gabo’s book, with audiences comparing the series to their own interpretations.

5. Highlights of the year

2024 offered a diverse landscape in terms of television fiction, consolidating a set of trends that included both the most-watched productions on free-to-air television and new titles on VoD, ranging from biographical and literary to critical and humorous, with the ever-present trace of violence. Thus, both in the top 10 most-watched programs, including the two foreign productions, and the nine fiction titles on VoD, it is possible to identify common themes and intentions, led by a certain preponderance of melodrama but intersecting with fidelity to either literary works or the lives of national figures, as well as issues related to race, gender, and the indelible presence of drug trafficking and its aesthetics and narratives. This is how the highlights of the year will be grouped into major trends in terms of their narrative orientations and on-screen proposals.

In the first instance, we would then have fiction such as *Rigo* and *Pedro el Escamoso, más Escamoso que Nunca*, in which humor plays a central role as an element that characterizes the protagonists and relieves the tensions that may arise both in connection with the life of the athlete Rigoberto Urán in the first case and with the escapades of the entirely fictional character Pedro Coral Tavera in the second. However, works such as Arelys Henao's demand relative fidelity in the treatment of characters from national life, without neglecting the construction of situations that take the life processes narrated to the melodramatic level. In this way, stories are woven that, while presenting a biographical approach, are still linked to the conditions and rules of melodrama.

Secondly, there is the ever-present theme of violence, for which the definitive example in the case of the most viewed series is *Paraíso Blanco*, which closely recreates the life of Carlos Lehder, one of the most notorious members of the Medellín Cartel who, along with Pablo Escobar, was one of the drug traffickers who played a leading role in the nation's violent history in the 1980s. This process of violence is also found in fiction such as *Escupiré sobre sus tumbas* (I Will Spit on Their Graves), set against a backdrop of revenge and power games, from which the production *Klass 95* is also not exempt. Although set in the world of modeling, it still reflects conflicts associated with a hostile environment and transfers that kind of aesthetic and ethic of threat and persecution from the streets to the catwalks.

A third element to consider refers to melodrama itself, and particularly to a certain narrative nostalgia rooted in archetypes that dominated screens in decades even before the end of the last century. This is reflected in the ratings of the two foreign productions in the top ten, *Tierra de Esperanza* and *Rubí*, which were widely watched in the afternoon slot, where Turkish productions are also located and which have as a common denominator the use of melodramatic structures and a

certain closeness to the narrative modes or character construction typical of other decades in the past. It is also necessary to highlight the predominance of an audience inclined towards older adults as viewers of this type of production.

Finally, both in the VoD adaptation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and in the broadcast adaptation of *Devuélveme la Vida*, the tendency toward a critical approach to national sociocultural reality—or, in the case of the literary adaptation, global reality—is very interesting and revealing. In the first case, the fiction draws on key elements from García Márquez's novel and highlights the tension and criticism of deeply political issues such as the two-party system, even opening the door to debates about beauty by presenting characters such as Rebeca with her indigenous and African features. For its part, the broadcast fiction *Devuélveme la vida*, rather than presenting a portrait of the last decades of the 20th century, focuses on highlighting problems related to violence, but particularly the possible racism of the time and the ways in which critical and inclusive options could be established in conservative societies such as the one portrayed on screen. This last element of fiction could serve as a roadmap for thinking about television fiction that is capable of both questioning and engaging viewers and audiences in conversation and reflection.

6. Theme of the year: Race and Intersectionality in Representations of Ibero-American Television Fiction

The configuration of television fiction narratives in Colombia has opened the door to a historical and dynamic exercise in intercultural communication, which has allowed a shift from official discourse to everyday storytelling on screen, giving some substance to the idea of being a multicultural and multilingual nation. Thus, beyond the constitutional principles that, since the 1991 constitution, have led to the recognition of the diversity of a linguistic atlas in which there are more than a hundred languages and the presence of a broad conglomerate of ethnic groups, it has been in the ways of telling stories, both in literature and on the small screen, that have allowed for a long process of self-reflection that embraces the complexity inherent in a heterogeneous, mestizo nation marked by both armed conflict and hope. Consequently, fictional representations have made it possible to rescue historical voices lost in time and to highlight the polyphony that characterizes the nation, both in its rich biodiversity and in the sound of its music, its traditions, and that particular blend of the melodramatic, the tragic, the comic, and the festive that is synthesized through carnival, humor, and the multiplicity of tones and accents recorded in the nation's audiovisual works.

Colombia, “recognized as multicultural and multilingual, given the existence of 87 indigenous ethnic groups, three distinct groups of Afro-Colombian population, and the Roma or Gypsy people” (DANE, 2007, p. 9), thus encompasses a kaleidoscope of visions, accents, and georeferential conditions in which multiple ways of understanding and shaping reality are presented, making this panorama visible in its music, clothing, food, and ways of building culture from the everyday and the traditional. This allows the nation to be, *per se*, a space of conjunction in which the sounds of the Caribbean, the magic of the Pacific, the heat of the Llanos, the cold of the mountains in Nariño, the incessant rhythm of the Valle del Cauca, the magnetic humidity of the Amazon, the unmistakable aroma of the coffee region, the drive of the Antioquia region, the strength of character of the people of the Santander region, the special cadence of Huila, the vigor of Boyacá, and that kind of cross between the urban and the rural that is characteristic of its capital, Bogotá, without neglecting a panorama that mixes skin tones, accents, landscapes, and ways of making reality a stage where ancestral knowledge, Afro heritage, the power of indigenous knowledge, and the mark of the Romani people are also present. Colombia is therefore a nation of many, but one that has begun to question itself through its fictional representation, through the imaginative power that has been woven onto the screen.

In this sense, productions such as *Café, con Aroma de Mujer*, in the case of national open television, have not only allowed the country to open up to the international market in the historical sphere, but have also continued to reaffirm a creative path in which a voice is given to the countryside, to local colors, and to the multiple voices that make up the nation and that were also present previously in productions such as *San Tropol* and *Gallito Ramírez*, which, in addition to achieving high ratings in the 1980s, also had that accent and intention of making visible the life of the territories with their own dynamics, colors, and flavors. In this same sense, in the course of history on national television, productions also accumulated over time in which, along with making the presence of the local and diverse voices of the nation central, the remembrance of its heroes and popular figures, from singers to athletes, journalists, and other figures whose stories allowed viewers to encounter the complexity of the dynamics of a nation in which diversity is explored when the heterogeneity is contemplated on screen in productions such as *Rigo*, *Diomedes*, *El Cacique de la Junta*, and even fiction in which, although the narrative axis revolved around violence and drug trafficking, the diversity of accents characteristic of the nation was also visible, as in cases such as *Escobar, el Patrón del Mal*, *El Capo*, or the series *Pandillas*, *Guerra y Paz*.

On the other hand, the presence of the multiplicity of voices and tones characteristic of Colombia and its diversity has also given rise to humor and self-confidence, music as a common thread, and a rapprochement with the identities of foreigners, not only as actors from other latitudes participating in national productions, but also as part of the ways in which the screens recreated life and its diversity, as occurred in co-productions such as *Valentino, el Argentino*, or in the representation of the American son-in-law in the series *Dejémonos de Vainas*. This constitutes a thematic kaleidoscope of violence, melodrama, humor, and music, but also a range of races, customs, and voices. And in all of them, there was a certain possibility of understanding the nature of the nation as a hybrid culture (García Canclini, 1990) which, as in the hyperbolic action of violence and the musical cadence of vallenato, presented a nation of heteroglossia (Bajtin, 1986).

However, this dynamic, constant in the nation's productions, of representing voices, flavors, and accents in their constitutive diversity, could not only be seen as a tremendous representational effort, but also, in the same historical dynamic that has characterized it, as a profound exercise in questioning, carried out with precision from the ever-rich plane of the nation's literature. From this perspective, and in accordance with Martí's (1891) ever-wise premise that "the peoples stand up and greet each other. 'How are we?' they ask themselves; and they tell each other how they are" (p. 137), it is interesting to see how, in the same way that in literature, not only Colombian but also Latin American, the question of what we are becoming was contemplated (Sources, 2004), a complex process of questioning became visible on the screens, a kind of transition from representation understood as a simple appearance on screen to a reflection on what has happened to us as a nation and what marks it has left on our history, not only from the necessary perspective of the violence that has accompanied the country, but also in those everyday spaces where an increasingly strong transition towards the recognition of others in their proximity and complexity has been noted.

This step, of reflection and action, or in other words, of praxis, understood as Dussel said as "acting towards the other as other... an action or actuality that is directed towards proximity... an approaching of proximity." (Dussel, 1996, p. 31), has not only been a characteristic of Colombian literature expressed in works such as those of Manuel Zapata Olivella, José Félix Fuenmayor, or the ever-universal Gabriel García Márquez, but also, in the case of television fiction, has been seen in the appearance of characters who have moved to embody both intersectionality and the inclusion of diversity, such as Laisa Reyes in the series *Los Reyes*, embodying the trans community, to becoming a fundamental source of reflection, as in the case of Jair and Joel in *Devuélveme la Vida*, who present an Afro-descendant community

facing discrimination at the end of the last century. Thus, in the case of Colombian fiction, the process has allowed for both representation and critical analysis of its worldview and its own conditions of existence. From there, it has been possible to enhance critical analysis of the history of a nation that, paradoxically, despite its natural diversity, has historically been marked by processes of exclusion and denial of the other.

In this regard, it is necessary to highlight the paradox inherent in the visibility found both on national television and in the powerful influence of the country's regional channels, which contrasts with the mixed reactions to the portrayal of diversity in *streaming* series, as was the case with the choice of actress Rebeca in the Netflix adaptation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Thus, while even with the support of government incentives and state regulations, it has been possible to strengthen local production on channels such as TeleAntioquia, TeleCaribe, and TelePacífico, on the national scene, a certain level of debate was reached regarding beauty outside certain canons in the choice of actress and model Akima to play Rebeca, given her indigenous and Afro-Colombian origins and features. This contrast clearly marks a turning point and a necessary questioning in the context of the question of who we are in the context of a diverse, multi-ethnic, and multicultural country, but it also requires a profound transformation in the ways we embrace others in our proximity, not only through their presence on screen, but also through the real possibility of approaching them, as marked by literature and now by television fiction when it puts the diverse faces of the country in front of the cameras in central, questioning, and challenging roles.

Productions such as *Las Gestas del Tiempo IV Revolución Femenina* (*The Deeds of Time IV: Feminine Revolution*) or *Quibdó Baila* (*Quibdó Dances*), on RTVCPlay, a public streaming system, *La Sociedad de la Cumbia* (*The Cumbia Society*), on TeleAntioquia, *Érase una Vez en el Caribe* (*Once Upon a Time in the Caribbean*) on TeleCaribe, reaffirm the need not only for representation in terms of visibility but also, as in the case of Akima, raise a powerful question about intercultural communication, which “comes into play when two or more cultures risk a part of themselves and transform it with the other to build a dialogical exchange” (Martin-Barbero and Corona, 2017, pp. 72 and 73). And that exchange is enhanced when, as happened on paper in literature, it now happens on screen when the world's greatest beauty shines with Akima's face to embody Rebeca, with Afro and indigenous features. This becomes strikingly clear when her response to criticism is precisely to say with pride: “I am very happy to generate this discomfort because I know that it opens the doors to a whole conversation and also sheds light on what Colombian women are like” (Rabanal, 2024, paragraph 7). Thus, the landscape of television

fiction in Colombia clearly demonstrates the potential for a new task: to move from being to inhabiting, to achieve real and compelling proximity, because although diversity has been a constant presence in national production, both historically and in recent years, the question now is how to establish communicating vessels with those everyday realities in which cultural matrices can forcefully recognize the multiplicity of a biodiverse country that is also home to multiple voices, knowledge, traditions, and cultures.

Colombia has been constitutionally defined as a multiethnic and multicultural nation, whose diversity inhabits not only its streets and the geographical variety of its territory, but also the polyphony of its literature and the heterogeneity of its television fiction. However, the tremendous challenge that underlies not only intercultural communication but also a transformation towards inclusion and dialogical exchange in everyday life and social and cultural contexts remains. This involves the need to build paths towards synthesis, to generate dialogues that allow the nation to reaffirm its multiplicity, not only in the parchments of the law or in screen representations, but also in the discourses of audiences and in the ways that allow us to raise, together with the hopes of reconciliation characteristic of a nation that has faced centuries of violence, the potential to unite and create together a country that becomes aware of the strength that underlies the richness of integrating languages, voices, races, and ways of seeing life that require a bridge that reaffirms a humanity that is critical, creative, and imaginative because it dreams through diversity and multiplicity rather than through the one-dimensional and normative.

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