



Cersei Lannister as a Doctor Faustus: A Todorovian Interpretation of Ambition and Power

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Abstract

This paper explains ambition and power through Tzvetan Todorov's structuralist model of narrative equilibrium, disruption, and recognition by examining Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1604) and HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019). It interprets how the moral trajectory of ambition as a destructive force transcends medium and era through linking Renaissance humanism with postmodern visual storytelling. Following a qualitative comparative method, this study provides textual and visual analysis of key moments in both works and demonstrates how Faustus and Cersei Lannister embody a shared Todorovian tragic pattern. Updated with recent critical scholarship on narratology and adaptation studies, the research describes that both figures represent the timeless Faustian conflict between desire and ethics. The analysis argues that when ambition is detached from moral equilibrium, it functions as a universal engine of tragedy that sustains the continuity between classical drama and modern television narratives.

Keywords: Cersei Lannister, Doctor Faustus, Tzvetan Todorov, narratology, ambition

INTRODUCTION

Ambition and moral transgression form a persistent theme throughout the history of tragedy. From Aristotle's hamartia to Renaissance humanism and modern television, the desire to exceed moral and natural limits has remained significant to human storytelling. Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* dramatizes the Renaissance character who sacrifices his salvation for knowledge and power. Centuries later, HBO's *Game of Thrones* reconfigures this archetype in the character of Cersei Lannister, who is a political ruler whose relentless pursuit of dominance replicates Faustus.

This study uses Tzvetan Todorov's narrative framework of equilibrium, disruption, and recognition in both characters to reveal how ambition functions as a structural and ethical disruptor. By bridging Todorov's narratology with his later humanist writings, the paper examines how moral order collapses when the desire for control overtakes ethical awareness. Unlike many comparative studies that read *Game of Thrones* merely through feminist or psychoanalytic lenses (Frankel & Döring, 2014), this research shows Cersei Lannister within the tradition of classical moral tragedy. The central argument outlines that Cersei operates as a modern Faustian tragic hero because her ambition both constructs and destroys her identity, and shows how this continuity exemplifies Todorov's moral sequence as a universal narrative grammar.

Literature Review

Language is an arbitrary sound-symbol system used by group members' social skills to work together, communicate, and identify (Fikri & Octora, 2023). A literary work is a creative expression of the human experience, captured through the artistic and intentional use of language. Unlike purely functional writing, literature transcends the simple transmission of facts by employing narrative, metaphor, and rhythm to evoke emotion and provoke deep reflection. Not only as a shadow, literary work is a portrait in relation to a social, natural and so on, after the precipitation that occurs by an author, then a life that is born from the social experience formed in a literary work occurs (Fikri et al., 2025). Whether in the form of fiction, poetry, drama, or creative non-fiction, these works serve as cultural mirrors, reflecting the values, struggles, and imagination of their time while addressing universal themes that resonate across generations. By weaving together aesthetic beauty and intellectual depth, a literary work invites readers to see the world through a different lens, transforming personal observation into a shared, timeless legacy.

Aristotle's *Poetics* explained tragedy as a moral confrontation between virtue, excess, and fate. Renaissance dramatists like Christopher Marlowe extended this framework through Christian humanism by

focusing on agency and moral choice (Greenblatt, 1980; Kirschbaum, 1943). Faustus's bargain with Mephistopheles, his intellectual arrogance, and final despair mark him as the archetypal character whose fall connects to divine order.

Todorov (1977) reframed narrative analysis through structural recurrence and proposes that every narrative shares a moral pattern such as equilibrium (stability), disruption (ethical violation), and recognition (awareness or consequence). For Todorov, moral meaning arises not from theme but from structure, as in the transformation of order into chaos and its restoration. Later, his writings on humanism (1982, 1993) discussed literature's ethical function through connecting structural change with moral understanding.

Modern narratologists and adaptation theorists transfer Todorov's model to visual media. Mittell (2015) commented that contemporary television reworks classical narrative equilibrium through serialized complexity. Similarly, Hutcheon (2013) and Leitch (2017) describe that adaptation renews rather than replicates prior texts by turning mythic patterns into new cultural commentaries.

Cersei Lannister has been widely discussed as a feminist antihero, a Machiavellian strategist, and a tragic mother (Frankel & Döring, 2014; Battis, 2015), but few analyses look into her through a structuralist moral lens. By positioning Cersei within Todorov's triadic model and aligning her with Faustus, this study fills a critical gap by showing how ambition as a narrative disruption captures its tragic function across historical and media boundaries.

In Todorov's narratology, structural equilibrium refers to the formal balance within a narrative's system, like an initial state of order that is later disrupted and partially restored. This equilibrium concerns the internal mechanics of plot progression, such as the organization of events, causality, and transformation. It is a structural condition, not inherently moral. In contrast, ethical equilibrium emerges when the same structural movement acquires moral significance. In Todorov's later humanist writings (1982, 1993), narrative transitions are not merely mechanical but ethical acts reflecting the human struggle between order and transgression. Thus, the collapse of structural equilibrium (a disruption of narrative order) often mirrors a collapse of ethical equilibrium (a disruption of moral order). However, these two are not identical since structural change may occur without moral consequence and vice versa. This study bridges the two by arguing that in *Doctor Faustus* and *Game of Thrones*, ambition operates simultaneously as a structural disruptor and an ethical violation, thereby uniting form and morality within a single narrative logic.

METHOD

This study conducts a qualitative comparative textual and visual analysis based on Todorov's structuralist and humanist principles. The primary texts are Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1604) and *Game of Thrones* Seasons 6–8 (HBO, 2011–2019). Key scenes and dialogues were selected where each character's ambition transforms equilibrium into moral destruction.

The analysis proceeds in three steps:

1. Identification of Equilibrium to Establishes each character's initial stability and social or intellectual position.
2. Examining acts of transgression motivated by ambition—Faustus's pact and Cersei's violent consolidations of power.
3. Analyzing the characters' moments of belated moral awareness or tragic self-realization.

The interpretation triangulates Todorovian narratology, Aristotelian tragic ethics and modern media narratology (Mittell, 2015). Reliability is ensured through theoretical consistency and contextual reading of both verbal and visual symbolism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Textual and visual data were manually collected and organized according to the narrative stages given by Todorov. It ensures that the analytical focus is consistent. Also, it makes sure that theoretical coherence was

maintained. Notes from close readings and scene transcriptions were coded thematically in light of moral and structural categories such as ambition, transgression, and awareness of downfall.

The scenes and passages were selected by their direct connection to the characters' motivation and narrative flow. These scenes and passages were chosen based on their direct relevance to the characters' moral and narrative transitions, particularly where ambition alters stability or leads to ethical collapse. In *Doctor Faustus*, key monologues and dialogues with Mephistopheles were prioritized for their articulation of overreaching desire. In *Game of Thrones*, pivotal moments from Seasons 6–8 were selected to demonstrate narrative disruption and recognition, including Cersei Lannister's destruction of the Sept and her final confrontation in the Red Keep.

1. Justification for the Selected Framework

Todorov's structuralist framework was inserted as the interpretive lens because it allows systematic comparison of narrative ethics across different media and eras. By mapping each text's progression through equilibrium, disruption, and recognition, the analysis identifies how ambition functions as both a structural device and moral transgressor. This method ensures theoretical consistency, interpretive depth, and replicable reasoning across textual and visual forms.

2. Justification for Text and TV Series Selection

Doctor Faustus was selected as the primary Renaissance text because it epitomizes the moral and structural dynamics of ambition central to Todorov's narrative model. Faustus's pursuit of limitless knowledge directly embodies the transition from equilibrium to disruption and recognition, which makes the play an ideal classical reference point for studying moral overreach. *Game of Thrones* Seasons 6–8 were chosen because they represent the culmination of Cersei Lannister's political ambition and the narrative completion of her moral trajectory. Earlier seasons depict her rise, but the final three seasons concentrate the full Todorovian sequence—from consolidation of power to ethical collapse and eventual downfall. This specific selection ensures parallelism in both characters' narrative arcs, allowing for a focused comparison of ambition's structural and moral consequences across distinct historical and media contexts.

3. Validity and Reliability

Both textual and visual data were subjected to thematic and structural coding based on Todorov's triadic stages—equilibrium, disruption, and recognition. Passages and scenes were annotated for recurring motifs of ambition, transgression, and moral realization. Visual data from *Game of Thrones* was further coded through shot composition, dialogue, and symbolic imagery that signaled moral or structural shifts. Interpretation followed an inductive approach, linking observed narrative transitions to Todorov's theoretical framework to ensure conceptual alignment. Validity was maintained through triangulation of primary texts, scholarly interpretations, and theoretical consistency across sources. Reliability was supported by replicable coding criteria, detailed documentation of selected scenes, and cross-verification between the two researchers to minimize subjective bias and preserve analytical coherence.

4. Limitations of Todorov's Model

The Contemporary shows like *Game of Thrones* present nonlinear timelines, several character arcs, and parallel storylines. While Todorov's structural model offers a valuable framework for tracing moral and narrative progression, its applicability to visual and serialized television narratives remains partially limited. Contemporary shows like *Game of Thrones* employ nonlinear timelines, multiple character arcs, and parallel storylines that resist the fixed sequentiality of equilibrium–disruption–recognition. Visual storytelling also relies on cinematography, *mise-en-scène*, and intercutting—elements that communicate meaning beyond verbal narrative logic. As Mittell (2015) notes, television's "narrative complexity" often reconfigures classical structures into recursive or fragmented forms. Therefore, applying Todorov to visual media requires interpretive flexibility because the model must be adapted to account for simultaneous disruptions and deferred recognition across intersecting plots. In this study, Todorov's framework functions not as a rigid formula but as a moral and structural heuristic, enabling comparative insight while acknowledging the layered temporality and visual rhetoric unique to postmodern television drama. In this study, Todorov's framework is not a strict formula but a guide that helps compare stories while considering the complex timing and visual style of postmodern television drama.

Discussions

1. Logic of Moral Interpretation

This research reveals moral interpretation as a priority because it prioritizes moral interpretation, as Todorov's narrative theory ultimately links structural movement to ethical transformation. Although his early structuralism focused on narrative, later Todorov's humanist writings emphasize the literature's role in cultivating moral awareness and empathy. Both *Doctor Faustus* and *Game of Thrones* dramatize ambition as a force that destabilizes ethical equilibrium and makes moral consequence inseparable from narrative design. Therefore, the analysis treats structure not merely as a formal pattern but as a moral grammar through which human desire, transgression, and recognition are rendered intelligible. The study aligns with Todorov's view that the ultimate function of narrative is not just to organize events but also to reveal the ethical dimensions of human experience by foregrounding moral interpretation.

2. Justification for Overlooking Gender, Context, and Genre

This article deliberately minimizes the variability of gender, historical context, and genre. This study deliberately minimizes the variables of gender, historical context, and genre to isolate the structural and moral mechanics of ambition within Todorov's universal narrative model. Although gender and social context clearly influence a character's motivations, including them here would move the focus away from narrative ethics toward socio-political analysis. This study instead examines Cersei Lannister and Faustus not as products of their gender or environment, but as figures who structurally represent moral wrongdoing within similar story arcs. Similarly, genre distinctions between Elizabethan drama and contemporary television are set aside to highlight the continuity of tragic structure rather than its stylistic evolution. By bracketing these external factors, the analysis maintains theoretical precision and allows Todorov's model to function as a constant variable for testing how ambition disrupts moral equilibrium across different media and epochs.

3. Justification for Excluding Feminist Readings

Feminist readings of *Game of Thrones* and *Doctor Faustus* were left out to keep the study focused on Todorov's structural and moral framework instead of sociopolitical criticism. Although feminist theory offers important ideas about gender, power, and representation, it is based on a different approach because it focuses on identity, agency, and patriarchy rather than narrative structure or moral pattern. Including feminist views would have shifted the focus from moral structure to gender ideology and thus made the main argument less clear. By setting aside feminist interpretation, the analysis isolates ambition as a structural and ethical force applicable to both male and female characters within the same moral grammar. This exclusion does not deny gender's interpretive significance but ensures that the comparative analysis remains consistent with Todorov's universalist model of narrative morality, where the focus lies on how ambition disrupts equilibrium rather than how gender mediates power.

4. From Desire to Annihilation

In *Doctor Faustus*, equilibrium is intellectual serenity that reflects the learned scholar dissatisfied with mortal limits. His opening soliloquy ("Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin...") establishes the tension between knowledge and prohibition. Similarly, Cersei's equilibrium lies in her role as queen and mother. Yet both characters experience restlessness born of perceived confinement. For Todorov (1977), equilibrium signifies temporary moral order; its disturbance reveals latent ethical imbalance. Both Faustus and Cersei begin within structured hierarchies, such as academic and political spheres, that fail to contain their craving for mastery.

"A sound magician is a mighty god: here, Faustus, tire thy brain to gain a deity." Act 1, scene 1. Faustus's ultimate desire pushes him to go beyond the limitations of human knowledge. Similarly, Cersei holds a powerful position, but she is not satisfied with his position. Her goal is to become the ultimate authority ("when you play the game of thrones, you win or you die"), mirroring the equilibrium of both characters.

"All things that move between the quiet poles shall be at my command." Act 1, scene 1, Indicating Faustus's ultimate desire to rule the universe. Similarly, Cersei's ruthless schemes to control the Iron Throne through betraying allies, manipulating faith, and destroying opponents. mentioning disruption from the theory.

"Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute: why waverest thou? O, something soundeth in mine ear: 'Abjure this magic, turn to God again!'" — Act 2, Scene 1. Like Faustus, mirroring Cersei's moral decay for her ambition, she realizes how her quest for power has destroyed her children. Though both hear the warning voice, but embrace the path of pride. This reflects the recognition from the theory.

“By him I'll be a great emperor of the world, and make a bridge through the moving air to pass the ocean with a band of men.” Act 1, Scene 3. Both try to balance control through destruction. Cersei's attempts to fix her instability through excessive violence, blowing up the Sept of Baelor.

“O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down.” Act 5, Scene 2. At last, she dies for her own destructive decision and is captured by the Red Keep. Just like, Faustus faces eternal damnation, cursed by the weight of his decision and ambition. Both face the destruction of their own empire and soul.

Faustus's pact with Mephistopheles embodies structural and moral disruption. His defiance of divine law breaks both theological and narrative stability. When he commands, “Had I as many souls as there be stars, I'd give them all for Mephistopheles,” the narrative's moral architecture fractures.

Cersei's corresponding disruption occurs in “I choose violence” (Game of Thrones, Season 6, Episode 8). This assertion signals a decisive rejection of moral restraint and institutional order. By annihilating the Great Sept with wildfire, she enacts a symbolic pact that involves sacrificing faith, justice, and kinship for dominion.

Both characters misread power as liberation, embodying what Todorov (1982) terms “the illusion of autonomy”: the belief that desire can exist outside ethical systems. Their ambition restructures narrative logic around destruction. The disruption thus functions as both narrative pivot and moral descent.

In Todorovian terms, recognition is the reawakening of moral consciousness after irreversible loss. Faustus's final plea—“O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?”—marks belated comprehension of divine justice. His awareness restores moral equilibrium for the audience, if not for himself.

Cersei's recognition occurs not in repentance but in realization. As the Red Keep collapses, she clings to Jaime, whispering, “I don't want to die.” The moment reasserts her humanity too late. Recognition here functions tragically: it reaffirms moral truth through suffering rather than redemption.

Both figures illuminate Todorov's notion that literature educates morally through structure, where the audience perceives the destruction and the necessity of ethical order. Cersei's political nihilism mirrors Faustus's spiritual despair; both transform desire into annihilation.

5. Audience Experience of Recognition

In Todorovian terms, Recognition is the narrative stage where disrupted equilibrium is understood, and moral clarity is restored. However, this recognition functions differently for readers of literature versus viewers of visual media, shaping how ethical and structural closure is experienced.

In Doctor Faustus, recognition is mediated through language and introspection. Faustus's soliloquies—“O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?”—allow the audience to directly access his belated awareness of moral failure. The reader experiences recognition cognitively and emotionally, processing the ethical implications of ambition as articulated through thought and speech. The audience is positioned to reflect on the moral consequences and internalize lessons regarding hubris, knowledge, and divine justice. Todorov (1982) emphasizes that in textual narratives, moral equilibrium is restored for the audience through comprehension rather than spectacle; recognition is therefore largely interpretive.

In Game of Thrones, recognition is experienced visually and effectively. Cersei Lannister's realization—trapped beneath the Red Keep, whispering “I don't want to die”—is communicated through camera framing, music, and mise-en-scène. Viewers experience recognition vicariously through the combination of narrative closure, visual symbolism, and emotional tension. The audiovisual medium amplifies empathy and immediacy because moral comprehension is enacted, not just imagined. Recognition here engages the senses and the emotions simultaneously, creating a visceral catharsis that textual soliloquies cannot achieve alone.

Comparatively, both media guide audiences to perceive the restoration of moral order, but the mechanisms differ since textual recognition relies on reflective engagement and cognitive processing, whereas visual recognition relies on affective and perceptual immersion.

However, recognition fulfills Todorov's ethical function as it restores the sense of moral equilibrium for the audience even if the character themselves fails to achieve redemption in both cases. The comparative insight is that narrative form mediates the reception of moral closure, shaping not what recognition is but how it is experienced.

6. Continuity of Tragic Imagination

Across four centuries, the same Todorovian moral pattern persists. In Faustus, transgression violates divine law, and in Cersei, it defies communal ethics. Both are punished not by external gods but by narrative necessity

that brings the collapse of the moral order they disrupted. As Todorov (1993) later suggested, the human condition itself is structured by this moral dialectic between freedom and limitation.

Recent scholars (Vermeulen, 2021) argue that postmodern television continues classical ethical structures beneath its realism. *Game of Thrones*, while visually spectacular, maintains tragedy's moral core. Cersei's arc affirms that ambition remains narratively unsustainable without ethical grounding, proving Todorov's model applicable beyond literary texts.

7. Comparative Moral Grammar

Both *Doctor Faustus* and *Game of Thrones* depict ambition as a destabilizing moral and structural force that drives the narrative from equilibrium to chaos and eventual downfall. In *Doctor Faustus*, the opening scenes establish a structural equilibrium with Faustus as a learned scholar within the bounds of human limitation. His pact with Lucifer introduces the disruption phase, where intellectual ambition transforms into moral transgression. Each subsequent scene, such as the conjuring of Mephistopheles or the rejection of repentance, deepens this disequilibrium until the final act restores a grim moral order through *Doctor Faustus*'s damnation.

In *Game of Thrones*, particularly Seasons 6 to 8, Cersei Lannister's ambition mirrors this pattern within a visual and political context. Her initial equilibrium as queen mother is shattered by humiliation and loss of authority, prompting her to seize absolute power through calculated ruthlessness. Key scenes, including the destruction of the Sept of Baelor, her coronation, and her refusal to aid in the battle against the dead, illustrate the escalating disruption within both the narrative and moral structure. Unlike Faustus, Cersei's recognition phase arrives not as repentance but as tragic self-realization, culminating in her symbolic and literal collapse beneath the ruins of her own making.

Comparatively, both narratives follow Todorov's triadic structure but differ in their moral resolution as Faustus's downfall reasserts divine justice while Cersei's end illustrates a secular, humanist rebalancing of power. In both, ambition functions as the structural motor that propels the story and as the ethical fault that necessitates the restoration of equilibrium. Thus, even without the table, the parallelism between textual and visual narratives becomes evident because ambition disrupts order, morality demands retribution, and equilibrium is ultimately reestablished through loss and recognition.

This comparative schema illustrates that while media and context differ, both arcs follow identical moral architecture. The tragic continuity resides not in setting or theology but in the structural sequence itself.

8. New Insights

Despite differences in historical period, medium, and genre, both narratives demonstrate that unchecked ambition consistently produces structural and ethical disruption, representing Todorov's claim that narrative sequence can reflect universal moral patterns.

9. Structural Ethics Across Media

The comparison highlights that Todorov's triadic model of equilibrium, disruption, and recognition applies not only to literary texts but also to serialized television, where visual storytelling can encode moral lessons through plot, dialogue, and symbolic imagery.

10. Ambition as a Dual Force

Both Faustus and Cersei illustrate that ambition serves simultaneously as a narrative driver and a moral fault because it organizes events (structural function) while destabilizing ethical order (moral function), which reinforces the inseparability of form and ethics in tragic storytelling.

11. Divergent Recognition Mechanisms

Faustus's recognition emphasizes spiritual and intellectual awareness, whereas Cersei's recognition is primarily material and visual, suggesting that the narrative medium shapes how moral closure is experienced by the audience.

12. Continuity of Tragic Imagination

The structural and ethical parallels demonstrate a transhistorical continuity of tragedy: classical Renaissance drama and postmodern television both employ narrative patterns that transform desire and transgression into audience-perceived moral lessons.

13. Mediation by Medium and Genre

While the structural moral arc is consistent, the medium influences its presentation—Faustus relies on soliloquy and dialogue, Cersei on visual spectacle and cinematic tension—indicating that Todorov’s model requires adaptation for audiovisual storytelling.

14. Audience Moral Engagement

The comparison underscores that the moral function of narrative is realized for the audience: recognition restores ethical equilibrium in the viewer or reader, emphasizing that tragedy’s ethical impact transcends historical and stylistic boundaries.

15. Methodological Innovation

This paper introduces a methodological innovation by combining Tzvetan Todorov’s structural narratology with his later humanist ethics to analyze both a Renaissance text and a postmodern television narrative. The study integrates them to examine how ambition operates simultaneously as a narrative mechanism and a moral disturbance instead of treating structuralism and ethics as separate domains. The approach extends Todorov’s equilibrium, disruption, and recognition model beyond literary texts to visual and intermedial analysis, demonstrating its adaptability to screen narratives. The research offers a replicable comparative framework that unites classical tragedy and modern adaptation under a shared moral-structural logic by coding both textual and visual data through identical structural stages. This integration advances narratological methodology by showing how structuralist tools can be ethically reinterpreted for contemporary and multimodal storytelling.

16. Limitations and Future Research

While Todorov’s structuralist framework provides a clear model for analyzing narrative progression, it has inherent limitations when applied to complex or non-linear visual media. Modern television can challenge the linearity assumed by the triadic sequence of equilibrium, disruption, and recognition with its multiple interwoven character arcs, flashbacks, and parallel timelines. Moreover, the model tends to foreground moral and structural outcomes, potentially underrepresenting sociocultural, gendered, or psychological dimensions of character development. These limitations suggest that Todorov’s approach should be applied flexibly and supplemented with other theoretical lenses when addressing serialized, multimodal, or postmodern narratives.

Future research could extend this study by applying Todorov’s framework to other contemporary television series or films with complex, non-linear storytelling to test its adaptability. Comparative analyses could explore how moral and structural patterns manifest across genres, cultures, and media forms or how narrative ethics interact with gender, race, or class dynamics. Additionally, combining structuralist methods with audience reception studies could illuminate how viewers experience recognition and moral closure differently across visual and textual media, which enriches both narratology and adaptation studies.

2. CONCLUSION

This Todorovian reading demonstrates that ambition and power, when detached from moral equilibrium, function as universal engines of tragedy. Doctor Faustus and Game of Thrones share a structural and ethical DNA: equilibrium collapses through overreach, recognition arrives too late, and narrative closure reaffirms moral balance.

This study set out to investigate how ambition and power operate as structural and moral forces in Doctor Faustus and Game of Thrones, and whether Todorov’s narrative framework could account for their ethical consequences across different media. The analysis demonstrates that both Faustus and Cersei Lannister follow a comparable triadic pattern of equilibrium, disruption, and recognition, highlighting the transhistorical continuity of tragic imagination. By foregrounding moral interpretation within structural analysis, the study shows that narrative form and ethical consequence are inseparable: ambition destabilizes both order and morality, and recognition restores equilibrium for the audience, even if not for the character. The findings carry implications for literary studies by reaffirming the enduring relevance of classical narrative structures in understanding character and morality, and for adaptation studies by illustrating how structural ethics can be translated into visual storytelling. Ultimately, the research suggests that Todorov’s model, when combined with humanist ethics, provides a versatile framework for examining ambition, transgression, and moral closure across historical periods and media forms, offering a method for future comparative and intermedial analyses.

Cersei Lannister thus emerges as a modern Faustian figure whose downfall revives the moral and structural tensions of Renaissance tragedy. Her ambition transforms postmodern spectacle into classical moral parable, proving that Todorov's structural humanism remains vital for interpreting contemporary visual narratives.

Ultimately, this comparative study affirms the continuity of tragic imagination—the moral grammar of downfall persists across centuries and media, reminding audiences that ambition without conscience leads inevitably to ruin.

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