



IIRIS RUOHO

# Utility Drama

Making of and Talking about the Serial Drama in Finland



## ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Iris Ruoho

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To memory of my mother, Maire Ruoho

# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	9
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## Part One: Introduction

1. THE RESEARCH TASK .....	13
1.1. Utility Drama .....	15
1.2. The Research Questions and Material .....	17
1.3. The Composition of the Book .....	21
2. MAKING PUBLIC SERVICE .....	23
2.1. The Cultural Specificity of the Finnish TV .....	24
2.2. Finnish Broadcasting Company and TV 2 .....	31
2.3. TV 2 as a Producer of Series and Serials .....	34
2.4. European vs. American television .....	35
2.5. Normative Criticism .....	37
3. STUDIES ON TV PRODUCTION .....	41
3.1. A Selection of the Studies .....	42
3.2. Convergence in Theory .....	45
3.3. Connecting Practices and Effects .....	47
3.4. Text-Context Relationship .....	51
3.5. Conjunctural Reading .....	53

## Part Two: Family Drama in TV2

4. EPISODIC TELEVISION .....	57
4.1. Dominant and Emerging Narratives .....	58
4.2. Intimate Television .....	61
4.3. Journalistic Television .....	66
4.4. Consensual Television .....	69
4.5. Paradigms of the Informational Program Policy .....	76
4.6. The Episodic Presentation .....	79
5. COMIC EFFECT .....	83
5.1. Situation Comedy .....	85
5.2. The Feminist Contributions .....	88

5.3. Comical Television 1978-1986 .....	90
5.4. Lack of Concern: A Critical Reading .....	93
5.5. Spin-offs and Irony .....	96
6. SERIAL TELEVISION .....	101
6.1. Building an Apparatus .....	103
6.2. The Production of Long Serials .....	106
6.3. Sociological Television .....	109
6.4. Nostalgic Television .....	113
6.5. Toward Format Television: <i>Elämän suola</i> .....	118
6.6. Re-articulating the Informational Program Policy .....	124
7. UTOPIAN SENSITIVITY .....	127
7.1. Metsolat .....	129
7.2. In Light of the Nostalgic Past .....	133
7.3. New Episodes — the Post-Soviet Era .....	135
7.4. An Attempt to Save Male Identity .....	139
7.5. The Mapping of Social Relations .....	143

### Part Three: Critique of the Family Genre

8. PERHESARJA AS GENRE .....	149
8.1. Critical and Positive Definitions .....	150
8.2. Taxonomy and Formats .....	152
8.3. Genre as Cultural System .....	156
8.4. Generic and Cultural Expectations .....	159
8.5. The Finnish Family Stories .....	162
9. FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF THE 1990s FAMILY SERIES .....	167
9.1. Re-articulation of Family and Gender .....	169
9.2. The Limits of <i>Perhesarja</i> as Genre .....	172
9.3. The Role of Educated Women .....	174
9.4. A Room of One's Own .....	177
9.5. The “Brilliant” Father and the Unrylu Woman .....	180
9.6. The Thief fo the Phallus .....	181

### Part Four: Public Culture

10. REALISM DISCOURSE .....	189
10.1. Definitions .....	189

10.2. Academic Discourses .....	193
10.3. From the ‘What’ of Realism to the ‘How’ of Realism .....	198
10.4. Journalistic Discourses .....	201
10.5. Signifying Realism: The Authorship .....	204
<b>11. DOUBLE STANDARDS IN EVALUATING TELEVISION .....</b>	<b>209</b>
11.1. Against Americanism? .....	210
11.2. Activating versus Escapist TV .....	211
11.3. Segment Form versus Flow .....	214
11.4. High Culture versus Popular Culture .....	215
11.5. An Aesthetic versus a Naive Gaze .....	217
11.6. Regulatory Policy versus Free Market .....	220
11.7. From the Enlightenment to the Cultural Forum .....	222
<b>12. ‘REALISM’ IN FINNISH TV CRITICISM .....</b>	<b>227</b>
12.1. Discursive Practices .....	228
12.2. Journalistic Writing on Television .....	229
12.3. From Combined Reviews to Puffs .....	231
12.4. An Everyday Drama .....	234
12.5. Journalistic Drama .....	238
12.6. In the Middle of Politics .....	242
12.7. Flexibility of Convention .....	247

## Part Five: Authors and Their Work

<b>13. COLLECTIVE OR LYRIC TELEVISION? .....</b>	<b>255</b>
13.1. Choric Television .....	256
13.2. The Mass vs. the Literary Public .....	259
13.3. Craft vs. Art .....	261
13.4. Director vs. Producer-based TV .....	263
<b>14. THE MAKERS OF TELEVISION SERIES AND ‘REALISM’ .....</b>	<b>267</b>
14.1. Fact and Fiction — Serious and Entertaining .....	267
14.2. Negotiating the Images of Reality in Different Genres .....	269
14.3. From Documentary into Fiction .....	271
14.4. ‘Finnish Reality’ in Situational Comedy .....	274
14.5. Stylized Realism .....	275
14.5. Genderized Emotions? .....	278

## Part Six: Conclusion

15. FORTY YEARS OF TV 2 UTILITY DRAMA .....	283
15.1. The Production of <i>Perhesarja</i> .....	284
15.2. Most Important Artistic Goals .....	287
15.3. Culturalization of Everyday Life .....	289
15.4. From Intimate to Nostalgic Television .....	290
15.5. Referential Criticism .....	294
15.6. The Practitioners Views .....	299
15.7. Drama of the Future? .....	302
 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	 305
 APPENDIX 1. TV 2 Serial Drama from the 1960s to the 1990s .....	 329
 APPENDIX 2. The Question Frame .....	 341

## The List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: The Dominant Narrative Patterns of the Episodic and Serial Television of TV 2 and their ‘Prototypes’

Figure 2: Studies on Television Production

Figure 3: Episodic TV and its Dominant Narrative Elements

Figure 4: Serial TV and its Dominant Narrative Elements

Figure 5: The Gendered Problem Solving Mechanism in the *Perhesarja* of the 1990s

Figure 6: Reading Reality in Fiction

Figure 7: Double Standard in Evaluating TV

Table: The Television Critique Written about the Series and Serials



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# **Part One: Introduction**



# 1. THE RESEARCH TASK

In the middle of 1990s over 1,3 million viewers watched *The Bold and Beautiful* in Finland. Trying to understand and capitalize on the huge popularity of the American daytime soap opera, the Finnish tabloids and women's magazines published numerous articles. Critics eagerly regarded the soap opera with their universal aesthetics standards. I began to get interested in the soap criticism, as I had studied the Finnish family series (*perhesarja*), a genre using the serial conventions of the soap opera. Among the series I had studied was *Ruusun aika (Time of the Rose)*, a program produced by the commercial television (MTV). As a sort of authority I participated in the public discussion on both imported and domestic serials. Although I was a participant in the discussion, I became gradually critical of my own analyses and the terms I was using (Ruoho 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994a, and 1994b).

My sympathetic statements about the fans and viewers of domestic productions were published in newspapers and periodicals. When entering the public discussion I was — as I can see it now — worried about the fact that the soap opera had been underestimated in public discourse, mostly because the genre was originally created for a female audience. For me, the serials, unlike the news, seemed to offer pleasure to their viewers, which made the genre and its audience worth analyzing. Besides, the soap opera genre utilized the figure of a strong woman that was familiar to the Finnish television audience from the domestic family series. In public culture, the aesthetics of commercial television was regarded strongly bound to entertainment and serialization, and was considered to be more familiar to female viewers than the informational nature of the public service television. This attitude also received support from the television study. For example, John Fiske quite simply articulates the “soap opera as a feminine narrative” (Fiske 1987, 179).

Gradually, however, I began to feel the contradictions in a role that forced me to speak within ‘the logic of commercial television’. This sense grew stronger during the late 1990s with the increasing competition between the commercial and public service systems — the latter known as YLE. The intense competition led to a situation in which the Finnish television industry simply made use of academic television study and its rising interest in popular culture in order to promote format-based, competitive drama production. It seemed to me like many of the factors familiar to the Finnish television culture were disappearing. Furthermore, the lack of research of Finnish serial drama had

led to a situation in which comments on domestic family series were based on the American or British studies, more or less totally ignoring the question of cultural specificity.

The popular television magazines in particular, which were primarily established to promote television programs, were not eager to publish critical commentaries on the institutions, the programming policies or single programs. Many newspaper journalists seemed to toe the line as well. Moreover, the younger journalists were highly specialized as 'genre-experts' on popular, audience-oriented television. This, from my perspective, ultimately seemed to fix the limits for a more social-oriented criticism of media culture. It seemed to me that by the 1990s hardly anyone was asking questions about the cultural specificity or commercialization of television. In contrast the period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s was filled with criticism directed toward the melodramatic and imported contents of tv-series. It seems to me that critics of those days were not as blind to cultural specificity of commercial television aesthetics as from the early 1990s onwards.

On the one hand, this situation drew my attention to television reviews and articles on television. On the other hand, it left me asking, which features are characteristic of the *Finnish* television series, produced under the strong tradition of the public service broadcasting? There had been hardly any studies on television production in Finland, let alone on the extensive program history of the family series, despite the fact that the family series has been a dominant form of serial drama for forty years and critics (and viewers) have always been interested in the domestic television drama. Therefore, I thought that a study on the family drama could offer a contribution to the discussion about the specific production culture, genres and public receptions of television in Finland.

During the debate, it came as a surprise to me that series as a form was such a problematic one. Given this insight, the analysis of the issue became one of the central lines of my work. In the YLE archives, I found separately filed debates concerning the arrival of two paradigmatic American television melodramas in Finland: *Peyton Place* (1969-1973) and *Dallas* (1981-1985). The debates gave me a point of comparison in terms of standards of criticism, that is, the different aesthetic principles for evaluating the Finnish and American television, the public service and commercial broadcasting.

The family series has been a dominating form in the domestic television series in Finland. It simply deserves a study of its own. Furthermore, my work concerns family drama of YLE because the ideology of public service has had a strong influence in the formation of Finnish television aesthetics and the public discussion on television also concerning the fictional programs.

Finally, the study focuses on Channel 2 (TV 2), which has experience of forty years in producing family series. Mainly series by TV 2 have gained public attention throughout the years.

The present dissertation examines the making of and talking about serial drama in Finland. I discuss these themes basing my own argument on a critical reading and analyses of the following empirical materials: 25 family series (product), their criticism in newspapers (public reception) and interviews of producers (insight into professional culture). The material covers the years from 1961 to 1998.

## 1.1. Utility Drama

The long lasting duopoly between public service and commercial television in Finland means that there has never been the kind of monolithic television apparatus that most American cultural studies assume. The Finnish public service television (two channels without advertising, and with about 40 % audience share) contrasts sharply with both US commercial and public television. The historical and ideological formation of institutions must therefore be regarded as a constitutive element both to medium itself and its particular aesthetics.

In YLE, TV 2 had from the beginning of its history as an YLE channel a mandate to broadcast more provincial events and subjects while TV 1 has been supposed to offer viewers an all-around perspective on Finnish life. This has been obvious in the drama production too. Due to this historical division of labor between the two YLE channels, the drama production of the TV 1 has been concentrated on single plays, whereas the TV 2 still produces both mini-series and family series. TV 2 — and its commercial predecessor, *Tamvisio* — has thus specialized in serial productions during its forty years of history. These productions are known by their strong investments in ‘realism’ and their *utility* value in portraying social life.

Nowadays, along with the raising seriality in drama, both TV 2 and TV 1 have adopted a format-based production ideology. The format orientation started in the turn of the 1990s in TV 2, and it was adapted in a comparatively short period led by the formation of the new expanded theater department. Today, the format-based television is firmly rooted in the domestic market, television practitioners are put through the hoops; their position as an individual ‘artist’ is changing and has changed. These changes make it interesting to study the production culture(s) of television.

I think it is particularly important to study these things empirically in order to seek answers to questions about how television series and serial are actually made, what kind of factors influence the choice of themes and narrative styles, as well as which professional groups take part in the production process. Only through empirical analysis we can begin to understand how the ‘surrounding’ society is written into the television, as well as to what degree the signification process is intentional or unintentional in regard to an individual program maker.

In the public debate, the prevailing Finnish genre of the family series has been sharply juxtaposed with the general contempt towards soap operas as a so-called women’s genre. In the interviews the aesthetics of the family series was also referred to with the label of utility drama. It is this notion of ‘utility drama’, the idea of publicly useful fiction, of public service series or serials that captures a lot of the specificity of Finnish television, of YLE and particularly of TV 2 drama production.

In comparison to soap opera the utility drama is different in the sense that it has never been an industrial format in which the narrative style, the packaging of the product, and the treatment of content is more important than content itself. On the contrary, utility drama has been a tradition with varied narrative styles yet strongly anchored to a kind of social realism. As a speciality of TV 2, utility drama has been operated on the one hand by the demands of the YLE program policy, and, on the other hand, by the demands of ‘artistic’ drama tradition. The tradition of utility drama has been compatible with YLE’s informational program policy<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, for TV 2 practitioners it has been important to show that serial drama, if not so ambitious in artistic terms, could instead serve social ends by bringing forward, for example, further details on social security and social problems.

Despite my desire to give a historical picture of the ‘popular’ television drama, I am not a historian. The approach is of cultural research, and my interests lay in tendencies, hegemonic and marginal discourses, dominant and emergent cultural meanings, deviations and crevices in the mainstream. I rather *build* the contexts than search for them. Moreover, my research interest is an emancipative one: I wish to bring forth the structures of serial production and thus raise debate about whether public service nevertheless has a future precisely as the blender of the boundaries between entertainment and information.

The contents and the substance of the utility drama are and have been constructed in different sites: firstly, the programs themselves define the genre; secondly, and at least as importantly, the public criticism of the programs

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1 Informational program policy is discussed extensively in Chapter 2.



distributes particular interpretations; thirdly, the practitioners themselves — in discussing their work — reproduce this key concept. And, finally, of course, there is my own analysis and interpretation that hopefully brings further, clarifies and strengthens this notion.

## **1.2. The Research Questions and Material**

The empirical material of this study consist of three separate documents: (1) the series and serials themselves, (2) newspaper coverage, basically previews and reviews of the studied dramas, and finally (3) interviews with writers, directors, producers, and departmental heads in TV 2. A cross-section of the family drama illustrates variations in the making of ‘utility drama’ and its realistic conventions; it also reveals the gendered nature of the family series. The newspaper materials spotlight the strong position of ‘realism’ adopted by television criticism in its different forms. Moreover, it brings out the double standards in evaluating commercial and public service television. Interviews illustrate the practitioners’ discourses upon serial(ized) productions and ‘realism’. They also show the ways practitioners explain their ways of pre-producing and producing drama series and serials.

The study at hand is, then, founded upon three separate fields, the production, the public criticism, and the authorship of serial drama. I have analyzed the fields by using some basic terms, such as: ‘utility drama’, ‘realism’, and ‘seriality’. Although the research bases on separate fields, it also unites them by reading the empirical material in a way that intersects the three. I ask, for instance, how the programs and discussions on television articulate the convergence of cultural, aesthetic, and political traditions toward the use of realism and seriality as terms. Both terms are taken as two of the self-explanatory norms strongly rooted in the traditions of the Finnish television criticism. This picture will be more comprehensive and contradictory when the visible and latent views and attitudes of the makers are taken into account.

To sum up, the main questions of my study in each of the three fields are as follows:

1. What kind of television aesthetics does the Finnish serial drama production construct as its generic constitution in public service television?
2. In what ways has journalistic television critique been connected to articulations of serial drama and especially in relation to ‘realism’?

3. How do the writers, directors, and producers comprehend their role as authors in the changing production culture?

These questions correspond loosely to three main dilemmas: The first refers to the media policy, the dilemma of *public service vs. commercialism*. The second aspect is related to realism, the dilemma of *didactic vs. entertaining programs*. The question of seriality, imported serial formats and the effectiveness of the production culture implies the third aspect, dilemma of the *non-format vs. format-based* mode of productions.

*The series and serials.* The actual program material I have studied consists of twenty five television series and serials with at least eight episodes in which the family — in the broadest sense of the word — is, in one way or another, the central theme of the narrative.<sup>2</sup> As a context to this primary material the study makes comments on all of the mentioned prototypes as well as some noteworthy television series on TV 2 up to the year 2000. These, mostly mini-series and seasonal serials, include also dramatizations and experiments, which as productions inform of changes in production culture.

I divide the productions into two main periods: *Episodic Television* (1961-1986) and *Serial Television* (1987-1998). I prefer to use categories based on the analysis of production circumstances, forms (genres), the public critique and different production cultures as practitioners have used them. The generic constitution of serial drama is then categorized according to the dominant cultural texts on serial drama to four main groups of aesthetics<sup>3</sup>: *Intimate*, *Journalistic*, *Consensual* and *Comical*. Serial Television, that is, the most recent period, I have researched up to 1996 in particular, and it is categorized into two main aesthetic groups: *Sociological* and *Nostalgic*. A detailed study of the family series ends with the series *Elämän suola*, the last episodes of which were broadcasted in 1998. Figure 1 shows six prototypes divided into two main periods and six narrative patterns according to the generic constitution of family series/serials.

These divisions correspond to different narrative patterns as they are articulated in the content and form of these programs, in the television criticism and modes of production. However, the narrative patterns do not necessarily represent the linear history of the single projects. As a diachronic variation, cultural meanings can be best described with Williams' concepts of dominant,

<sup>2</sup> The list of series and serials in Appendix 1.

<sup>3</sup> By aesthetics I mean not only those textual elements, which are characteristic for the Finnish family series and serials at a particular time, but also those judgements of serial narratives, demands of realism, limits of genre which have been evident in making of and talking about the serial drama.

emergent, and residual (1977, *ibid.* 121-127) whereas as a synchronic divergence they refer, for instance, to different use of ‘utility drama’ at a certain point in time. When referred to as ‘prototypical’ in its time, the family drama, however, has elements of narrative patterns typical for other periods as well. There can be sings of old, residual and new, emergent elements.

**Figure 1:** The Dominant Narrative Patterns of the Episodic and Serial Television of TV 2 and their ‘Prototypes’.

### EPISODIC TELEVISION

#### NARRATIVE PATTERNS

*Intimate TV 1961-*  
*Journalistic TV 1968-*  
*Consensual TV 1970-*  
*Comical TV 1978-*

#### PROTOTYPES

*Heikki ja Kaija*  
*Kiurunkulma*  
*Pääluottamusmies*  
*Tankki täyteen*

### SERIAL TELEVISION

#### NARRATIVE PATTERNS

*Sociological TV 1987-*  
*Nostalgic TV 1993-*

#### PROTOTYPES

*Kotirappu*  
*Metsolat*

Dominant, emergent and residual elements of serial drama have further been deduced by distinguishing between three different dimensions of the shows<sup>4</sup>: the story, the text, and the narrative. For instance, in the case of episodic television, the *story* elements include settings, such as home, workplace, and community as well as characters in their relations to society. In this study, I ask whether characters have been described as individuals, family members, citizens, or consumers. The *text* elements contain issues such as the time (present, past, and future) and focalizations into private, semi-public, or public sphere. The *narrative* elements, in turn, are built upon so called narrative attitudes, which for instance, in the case of episodic television, are expressive, reactive, normative, and reformist attitudes. And finally, narrative attitudes have been analyzed as ‘realism’ effects on the narration, i.e. the realism effect

4 In this, I follow Shlomith Rimmon-Keenan (1983).

can offer to viewers either a peephole effect, a documentary effect, a descriptive effect, or a comic effect. ‘Realism’ in this context depends on how the series represents its relations to the ‘real’.

*Interviews.* The research material contains 40 interviews with a total of 43 interviewees participating (at the request of the drama makers, some interviews were conducted in the presence of two or more persons). The interviews are used for drawing an image of the developmental lines of production and the role of makers.

Because the interviewees were professionals in different fields and also represented different drama conventions and positions in the organization, the interviews were, in the end, rather personal. Therefore, I was not able to use a similar theme interview framework with all of them. The themes were following:

1. The formation of the original program idea
2. The production organization and the development of the series
3. Assessment of the end product

In the interview situation, under each theme there were 3-6 detailed questions, which directed me to deepen the interview.<sup>5</sup> The questions were connected, for instance, to the origin of the idea, the scriptwriting process, the job description of producer, and the production culture of the YLE.

*Newspaper criticism.* The empirical material includes about 500 newspaper articles of television criticism that concern the programs of TV 2 as well as of MTV’s *Peyton Place* and *Dallas*. This material is divided into case studies.

The first qualitative analysis takes under scrutiny the two debates on North American television melodrama. Through both newspaper reviews and columns, I have particularly analyzed the public reception of *Peyton Place* and *Dallas* in Finland. Here I consider particularly the different standards in evaluating television aesthetics. The second analysis concentrates on the ideology of realism and how it works through the journalistic evaluations of television, often hand in hand with the constitution of drama production. The newspaper clippings cover 17 family series and their reviews during the period between 1963-1996.

In both cases the study adopts articulation theory as a method. By using *conjunctural reading* the study constructs the main discourses upon realism

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5 The Question Frame, see Appendix 2.

and serial aesthetics and reconstructs discourses as the cultural context of the Finnish television.

### 1.3. The Composition of the Book

The book is divided into six parts:

**Part One: Introduction** continues with two chapters. Chapter 2 constructs the background of the study. Key contents include TV 2 in relation to YLE, describing the media-ideology of the public service television, and as well as discussing arguments on European contra American television. Chapter 3 gives an overview of international studies on television production and serial drama. It also briefly introduces the articulation theory and the idea of ‘conjunctural reading’, which are methodological principles of the study.

**Part Two: Family Drama in TV 2** consists of Chapters 4, 5 and 6, which present the generic constitution of serial drama in TV 2. These chapters raise questions of utility drama, dominant mode of ‘realisms’, comic effects, and format-based production as they are articulated in the making of family series and serials. The chapters also illustrate single projects that become ‘prototypes’ of the certain television aesthetics of their time. Chapter 7 deals with the utopian sensitiveness in *Metsolat*, the hit serial of the middle of the 1990s.

**Part Three: Perhesarja in the 1990s** offers a case study on family drama of the 1990s. Chapter 8 clarifies the concept of *perhesarja*, the Finnish family series and discuss for its gendered nature. Chapter 9 focuses on the limit of family series as genre by comparing two series both of which took feminism as a narrative element.

**Part Four: Public Culture.** Chapter 10 goes into theoretical notions of realism, whereas the following two chapters deal with the discussion about seriality and realism. Chapter 11 examines the double standards in evaluating public service and commercial television while Chapter 12 focuses on ‘realism’ in Finnish TV criticism.

**Part Five: Authors.** Chapters 13 and 14 illuminate the practitioner’s point of view. In analyzing their discourses on the making of serial drama and explaining the importance of realism in the productions the chapters also make critical comments about the format-based productions and present a question of collective and lyric television.

**Part Six: Conclusion.** Chapter 15 opens up with an overview of the forty years history of serial production in TV 2 summarizing the milestones of the period. Finally this concluding chapter discusses the ‘utility drama’ as a site of modernity.

## 2. MAKING PUBLIC SERVICE

In Finland mostly two channels broadcasted serial drama until the beginning of the 1990s: the commercially funded MTV 3 and TV 2. Later, along with the channel reform, long-term serial production expanded also to TV 1. The specificity of TV 2 production compared with the production of MTV 3 has been the avoiding of Helsinki-centered viewpoint. This is consistent with the status of TV 2 — even today, the channel is to bring the local perspective to program output of YLE. Channel 4, the second commercial channel, which began its broadcasting activities in 1997, rapidly established a schedule that consisted a fair amount of domestic television series. The channel introduced Finnish crime series produced for television. The type of series that portrays the everyday life of an ordinary police officer, familiar from many American series, is still missing from the production of all Finnish channels. Daily Finnish soap operas appeared on the television screen as late as the turn of the millenium (MTV 3).<sup>6</sup>

At first serial drama was broadcast only once a month, and later twice a month in TV 2. Only in the mid-1980s the channel began to broadcast series regularly on a weekly basis. These weekly series were principally domestic comedies. In the 1990s different realistic forms of narrative were returned to, or, was also occasionally attempted to combine different genres, such as comedy, fantasy, and a narration that represented both empirical and emotional realism. The main part of the TV 2 production has consisted of short series of fewer than seven episodes. These series have been historical narratives, comedies of different types, psychological thrillers, picaresque stories, topical satires and stories of individual growth. What has been common to all of them, as well as to those series that in this research are called *perhesarja* (family series or serial), is the lack of format and, therefore, a relative freedom in the choice of forms and expressions. The genre of both short series and series longer than seven episodes has varied from documentarism to comic

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6 From the very beginning the program import has been focusing on American family comedy series and melodramas. Several entertainment series highly successful in the USA have been bought for Finnish television. The buyers have been both the commercial and public service television companies. Along with the imported American series, the television audience has also had the chance to become acquainted with European television series. In addition to long-lasting soap operas, high-quality British mini-series have become familiar. With regard to German programs, particularly police series have been broadcast on different channels. The audience has also been able to follow Swedish prime time soap operas.

narration. Multi-part crime series have been rare on TV 2, and even the few have mainly been principally dramatizations of crime fiction.

This chapter continues to give an introduction to the characteristics of TV 2 serial drama and the Finnish television system. Especially, the chapter takes under close scrutiny the turbulent relationship between ‘bad’ commercial and ‘good’ public service television. The purpose of the following subchapters is to raise questions about the ideology of public service, quality, democracy and criticism in discussing television drama in Finland, and to compare the public service television with American television that has represented and still represents ‘bad’ quality of television in contrast to the indigenous television. In order to understand the cultural and institutional characteristics of the Finnish television and TV 2, the chapter focuses on four elements: the cultural specificity of television, the division of labor between two channels of YLE, TV 1 and TV 2, the discussion of cultural quality of the commercial television, and the tendency to normative criticism in the public culture.

## **2.1. The Cultural Specificity of the Finnish TV**

In the Finnish broadcasting system there has been a long relationship between the public and the private television, which has been exceptional in its division of labor in programming. Historically, the cooperation between the public service television (YLE) and commercial television (Mainos-TV, later MTV3) is a result of particular political, economic and cultural conditions. These have included the small size of the country, the tradition of political coalitions, the rapid growth of the post-war economy, the isolation of the Finnish language and, finally, the bilingual culture (Hellman 1994, 79). In fact, until 1985 there were only two national, public TV channels, which were also used to broadcast Mainos-TV’s commercial programs side by side with the YLE’s public service programs. Currently there are two public service channels (TV 1 and TV 2) and two commercial channels (MTV3 and Nelonen).

The organizational arrangement that conclusively dissolved the dual order of broadcasting took place in 1993 when MTV was granted an operating license of its own, while a law permanently established YLE. A license for an own channel finally emphasized MTV’s position as a competitor of YLE. Earlier the competition aspect was more latent. However, both major commercial operators pay a certain percentage of their revenues to YLE. The commercial operators, in particular MTV, heavily criticize the system.

From the scheduling point of view, YLE’s main challenge in the more competitive situation was to rethink its whole *prime time* programming



strategy. The game over 'shares' began affecting both public and private broadcasters. Since 1993 within YLE there has been a strong perception that a certain amount of audience share is necessary in order to motivate viewers to pay their television fees that cover up to some four fifths of YLE's annual budget.<sup>7</sup>

For YLE, an important aspect of the new competition situation was a new special law that defined the status and position of the company. Since 1994 YLE's operations have been based on this law that adopts the notion of public service. In the law the company's position is formulated as follows: *The function of the company is to offer a full-service broadcasting programming to everyone in equal terms* (Hujanen 2001). For MTV, the channel reform fulfilled its long-term goal to become a full-fledged broadcaster.

Gradually, the body of economic and administrative doctrines in the company has also changed. As part of the organizational reform in 1991, a new profession, executive producer with accountability for production, was adopted inside YLE. Simultaneously, the company entered into a far-reaching training project with its production staff with the intention of adapting new managerial ideas. These were regarded as a lifeline for saving the company from the future financial pressure. All three channels at the time (TV 1, TV 2, and MTV3) were forced to reorganize their schedules and produce programs that would be competitive enough in the media market and popular with viewers.

In the midst of tightening circumstances in the media market, YLE was eager to make use of American experience in rebuilding its production organizations and genre system. This was not easily accomplished in the era of the European Union because U.S. television programs, for instance, have been widely considered as competitors in European television industries. Due to competition and the requirements of the European Union TV directives, all Finnish television companies expanded the production of low cost domestic drama with the help of imported formats and more effective production techniques. In this process, indigenous productions were regarded as a way to protect cultural taste and national identity.

Some barriers toward indigenous productions originate in the fact that imported programs have been, and still are, attractive to broadcasters because of their low price. Even if viewers prefer domestic fiction, it has been cheaper to buy both American and British drama than to invest in indigenous productions, which cost many times more than corresponding imported programs. The latest examples of proportionally low cost indigenous programs

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<sup>7</sup> In 1999, YLE reached the share of 43 per cent (23 for TV 1 and 20 for TV 2) and MTV3 the share of 42 per cent.

are the prime time soap *Salatut Elämät* (Secret Lives, 1999) broadcasted by MTV3, and TV 2's production, *Tammelantori* (The Tammela Marketplace, 2000). The latter exploits the British document soap (docusoap) formula utilizing real people as protagonists and a series of events based on their everyday life as narrative material, whereas the former is based on an international formula produced by an independent production company with contributions by indigenous writers, directors, and actors.

During the survival process of YLE, some cultural variances, important for the public service ideology, may be at risk when adopting the format based production techniques. Yet Heikki Hellman (1999) argues that through increasing economic pragmatism, there has been a growing reliance on public service based conceptualizations that promote the diversity of program output, informative genres, and even quality productions (Hellman 1999, 426).

Based on an empirical study on the program outputs, Hellman finds three tendencies as indicative of diversity. First, channels are clearly aimed at differentiating their profiles and programs. Secondly, the aim to an 'ideal degree' of variety follows the tendency toward differentiation. In short, from the broadcasters' perspective 'variety pays'. The third tendency is found in the standardization in scheduling by fixed weekly schedules and increased share of serialized programs. (Ibid. 427-430.) These findings, however, miss changes and developments within program types, thus giving a one-sided view on diversity.

Despite the strong influence of American drama production, the Finnish television has an aesthetically specific nature. In the U.S., the premise of the commercial system is grounded in a radically different relationship between the form of the television text and the processes of economy and culture than in a non-commercial television system (Browne 1984, 175). Thus the soap opera is not a paradigmatic form of television in general, but rather of commercial programming and television experience, which corresponds with the concept of flow (Williams 1974, 94-95).

In Finland, television has been a medium of miniseries and episodic series, which coincide metaphorically with the concept of 'segment' (Ellis 1992, 117-121<sup>8</sup>). The segmentality has for long been a paradigmatic form of the programming in public service where programs are not constantly interrupted by a block of advertisements. If we consider the different media institutions, models of communication, and program policies, it is evident that television is not a monolithic medium. Ideological articulations, connected to media institutions, modify our conceptions of both communication and television.

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8 John Ellis does not use 'segment' in terms of programming, but in relation to the general composition of television programs.

Television is then the object of discourses itself. Through a variety of positions on the world map, democratic traditions, concepts of information, and modes of drama, television has been given diverse articulations in different societies and cultures. It is impossible to state that a certain television as a medium of visual 'realism' and form of content is universally better than another. In order to grasp the cultural content in which Finnish television has been formed, it is useful to take up two issues: the notions of communication and concepts of democracy.

*Notions of communication.* There have been two alternative conceptions of communication since the term entered common discourse in the nineteenth century. They are the *transmission* view of communication and the *ritual* view of communication. Carey argues that both definitions are derived from religious origins, but the transmission view is the most common in our culture. Its' central idea is the transmission of signals or messages over a distance for the purpose of control. The ritual view of communication, the older of the two views, is not directed towards the extension of messages in space as the transmission view is, but rather towards the maintenance of society in time by the representation of shared beliefs. (Carey 1992, 14-18.)

When immanently dealing with creativity and symbols in relation to the symbolic order, both models could nonetheless potentially have the very same ideological premises.

Due to its convenience for cultural studies, which emphasize the cultural practices of people, the ritual model is receiving an increasing amount of attention nowadays as an alternative to the transmission model of communication. However, when adopting the ritual model of communication as the starting point of analysis one needs to be aware of its inability as such to cover the question of power. One can even say that power in the Foucaultian sense works organically through rituals, precisely because rituals have deep roots in human practices and beliefs. This is in connection with the concept of an 'active' audience. For instance, viewers can be active as subjects but nevertheless inscribe themselves in hegemonic discourses. In other words, women (as well as men) "may be active viewers in the sense of *actively* investing in oppressive ideologies", as Jackie Stacey states (1994, 47). In this way hegemony operates in the Gramscian model of power.

Within the limits of this critique, it is possible to comprehend serial drama production and journalistic TV criticism by using the both conceptions of communication. In the first case, by considering television programs as a product of the mass media ultimately controlled by broadcasters and received by the audience; and in the second case, by expecting the audience to some

extent to ritually share the myths distributed by television. When selecting one or the other conception it is necessary to place the choice under close examination when considering its potential capacity for different articulations.

What political implications of communication do these two concepts have? Metaphorically, the transmission model easily alludes to the ‘from above’ situation, whereas the ritual model merely refers to the ‘from below’ situation in communication. It is possible to argue that the transmission model characterizes paternal, state democratic attitudes towards art within a certain (official) institutional field. The ritual model is, however, merely directed toward the democratization of culture beyond the institution, leaving representative democracy as a secondary matter. Traditionally YLE is thought to represent the state democratic, ‘from above’ situation in communication, whereas the US commercial television is considered to be its opponent. However, the picture is more complicated if we consider different conceptions of democracy.

In the history of YLE, freedom of speech has been articulated in a variety of ways depending on the particular political hegemony and its opposition, between the cultural elite and so-called ordinary citizens. A landmark in this history is the *informational program policy* introduced in the late 1960s. Kaarle Nordenstreng (1972) translates the document that demonstrates the spirit of the program policy as follows:

(T)he main general objective of broadcasting activity is “to offer a view of the world which is based on correct information and on facts, which changes as the world changes and as our knowledge of it increases, changes or becomes more perfect. The Broadcasting Company should not aim at implanting some particular world view in its audience, but rather at making available the building blocks necessary in the construction of a personal world view”. (Ibid. 1972, 397, orig. Repo et.al. 1967; see Nordenstreng 1973)

The quotation displays both the transmission view of communication and classic epistemological notion of realism. Taisto Hujanen (1995), among others, sees that the spirit of informational program policy has, in fact, never disappeared, although it has had re-articulations.

I move on to show how the communication models are discursive formations, not pure concepts as such, in studying YLE and other television institutions. Especially I examine how these models can be seen in relation to democracy as a state of society characterized by formal equality of rights and privileges. The Finnish conception of democracy unites two concepts of political theory. Both the model of communication and perception of

democracy influence the ways, in which serial drama is supposed to represent the 'reality'.

*Conception of democracy.* In modern political theory, when searching for an object of political agency it has been typical to make a distinction between two ideal types, the liberal and the Hegelian tradition. These are described briefly below by using Tuija Pulkkinen's work, *The Postmodern and Political Agency* (1996). 'Liberal' is a term of maximum individual freedom guaranteed by law and secured by governmental protection of civil liberties. According to Pulkkinen, in the liberal tradition, based on Anglo-American political thought, the basic units are called transcendently singular, individual agents — in short, individual persons who act. Characteristic to these agents is their individual interest. They also seek and have the capacity to choose between different political options. In the Hegelian tradition, instead, based on German political thought and the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology, the basic element for these agents is a community, understood as a political entity. (Pulkkinen 1996, 2.)

Consequently, the two ideal types of traditions are connected to different models of democracy. Modern theory is thus divided into two utopian ideas of political agency, the liberal concept of the civil society and the Hegelian concept of state. Civil society is based on the idea of free-floating, anti-governmental individuality whereas the ideal of the totally controlled state power postulates the community as a unified agent achieving a general will. (Ibid. 80-82.) Despite their difference, the concept of the transcendental state and the liberal concept of civil society work together when discussing YLE as a democratically operating media institution.

The Finnish perception of freedom of speech gives a productive ground for grasping the specific discussion. Someone can say that even though there are no administrative limits for freedom of speech in civil society, it has not been used as extensively in Finland than, for example, in the countries with a strong liberal democratic tradition (Pulkkinen 1996, 194). In a way the orientation towards a consensus of opinion has been more acceptable than criticism, and the latter one is indeed considered to be an unfavorable attitude (ibid. 195).

Among other issues, the reason for an assumed self-censorship is a constant question in dispute, theories shift from arguments concerning the bureaucratic manners during the Russian Tsardom to arguments about political legacy of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the national spirit was forcefully rising. Less attention is paid to the still existing post-colonial context. Swedish rule lasted for 600 years and since then the language was for long a strong factor in

consolidating authoritative relations between the common people and the Swedish-speaking administration. When language made a dramatic distinction, it was nearly impossible for the lower classes to identify with the master. Furthermore, an agrarian tradition with permanent class positions and strict control took space from a critique characteristic to liberal civil society. (Ibid. 205-207.)

Information has always had a privileged role in Finnish drama productions and when it diverged from the conventional political or historical explanations, politics and historians have very quickly snarled at it. Moreover, in small countries, the development of television drama has also been connected with the concept of cultural democracy, that is, in the circumstances in which people can express themselves through cultural institutions. In Finland, where the public regulation of broadcasting and funding of art is still a necessary part of the cultural policy in general and television in particular, the political importance of quality and freedom of doing artistic work in contrast to purely commercial criteria can hardly be overrated. (Cf. Gripsrud 1991, 229.)

In the domestic serial drama, the concept of democracy is widened from public life towards private one, from recognized empirical world towards recognized emotions. Accordingly 'realism' is associated not only with the carefully shot milieus but also with the psychological credibility of the characters and ever increasingly the mythical images connected with Finnishness (such as the internal morals of small communities or groups and the internal loyalty, hatred of the gentry and nature mysticism). Especially in the 1990's television drama has started to include melodramatic undertones which in this connection means that questions that have to do with the morals of the individual and the community have come up; how does "the good" differ from "the bad", what kinds of solutions can the individual find, is money followed by happiness etc.

It can be said that in the production of TV 2 serial drama the state democratic, 'from above' situation was a dominant principle in constructing themes and motifs of characters until the early 1980s. Although not visible in the *official* program policy of YLE, the liberal democratic, 'from below' ideas were strengthened in the storytelling. Especially the comedy series of the early 1980s opened an outlook for private individuality, persons, who had hardly any recognized connections to the state apparatus, but cultural life of their own.

In the middle of 1980s, the 'cultural turn' in YLE's program policy shifted the old way of studying communication research by dealing with program contents, patterns of viewing, and media policy towards focusing on the way of life and cultural change as experienced by viewers (See Chapter 6). At that

time the most essential ‘failure’ of the informational program policy seemed to be its limitation of tasks with a narrowly understood scientific enlightenment and its derivatives, such as education from above, instead of orienting itself to people’s everyday world and life-style (Volanen 1985, 12)<sup>9</sup>. The aim of the new turn was to offer an alternative to both the informational program policy, which emphasizes information, *and* to the American style commercial policy. The strategy makers of YLE relied on the idea on ‘culture’ where the dynamics of history are found in the Finnish people’s wish to make themselves and their environment more complete (Volanen 1985, 14-15).

These changes in the strategy and research policy seem to have meaningful relations to the de-regulation process at the time. In a way the ‘cultural turn’ finally legitimated the de-regulation in which the old notions of communication and democracy were re-articulated. In the program strategy the de-regulation then meant the stories about free-floating, anti-governmental characters, which depended upon their own cultural interpretations instead of accepting an air of patronage. Although the transmission model still dominates the policy making, the ritualistic model of communication has gained a footing in YLE’s production strategy, especially in serial drama productions. The central starting point has become to develop program strategy that would satisfy the public and group specific needs, and this has meant, among other things, an increase in the share of serial expression in the company’s programs.

## **2.2. Finnish Broadcasting Company and TV 2**

It is possible to analyze the tradition of the TV 2 serial drama from different points of view. One of them is institutional and organizational. Another view is based on a more general cultural change. The division into eras of moral, planning and competition economy made by Pertti Alasuutari (1996, 104-115) offers a general interpretive frame for the development of serial drama. The term ‘economy’ here refers to an organized system of ideologies and practices, which dominated a certain cultural phase in the postwar Finland.

The division into moral, planning and competition economies illustrates the very same development of television that can be found in Ismo Silvo’s (1988) study. Silvo uses phases which describe the different production policies of YLE as follows: in the beginning of 1960s television followed the aesthetics of ‘visual radio’, by the turn of the 1960s and 1970s television’s program policy was ‘normative’, and finally at the beginning of 1980s began the phase

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<sup>9</sup> At this point YLE launched the studies of television and everyday life: Heikkinen 1986 and 1989, Kytömäki 1991.

of ‘competition’. Raimo Salokangas (1996), in turn, deals with a parallel institutional history and the role of YLE in relation to society by characterizing the periods as 1949-64 (an outsider), 1965-69 (a trendsetter), 1970-81 (a prison of politics), and from 1982 (the era of big changes).

In this subchapter I continue to examine closely the specific history of TV 2 in relation to YLE. As a part of this relation there are factors, which have created TV 2’s ‘house style’ in the drama production: regionalism and seriality. Then the next subchapter moves on by considering TV 2 as producer of television series and serials. As we will see these factors illustrate also the relationship between the two YLE channels, TV 1 and TV 2.

The birth of TV 2 as YLE’s second network signified the ideology of planned economy and a farewell to the moral economy that dominated the first years of television activity in Finland. The moral economy ideology was reflected in the Director-general Einar Sundström’s policy of staying in “slow haste” in the television business, as a reluctant bystander, with the result that private experiments were soon more advanced than those carried out by the state (e.g. Salmi 1997, 284).

From the point of view of producing serial drama, important years were 1961 when the Tampere-based tv-channel *Tamvisio* was founded and 1964 when YLE bought Tesvisio, the independent commercial tv-channel.<sup>10</sup> In the transaction *Tamvisio* also became YLE’s property. With the merger the commercially funded programming, which has mainly begun as a sideline and volunteer activity in *Tamvisio*, was obligated to follow the regulations of the public service program policy. Furthermore, the early serial drama of *Tamvisio*/TV 2 was rooted in an oppositional attitude towards the capital, Helsinki, and its supposed in elite culture. The relatively long period of uncertainty of the channel forced it to focus its production toward regions and their problems instead of the capital. The sense of region as a place (see Newcomb 1990, 32-33) has therefore been an important factor for the storyline of TV 2 drama series and serials.

The next important years following YLE’s monopoly status were those of the so called *Reporadio* in 1965-1970 and the organizational change that followed in 1970 when Eino S. Repo became the director of radio and Erkki Raatikainen became the new Director-general. Repo, who was the Director-general of YLE, had an open mind to reforms — among other things towards the informational program policy — and along with his policy both liberal

<sup>10</sup> *Tamvisio* was a local television channel build by radio amateurs and later supported by Tesvisio (TES = Tekniikan edistämissäätiö/Technician Foundation). The history of television in Finland originates in the late 1950s when a group of radio amateurs started the first experiments with ‘näköradio’ (visual radio) in the two big cities, Helsinki and Turku (TES-TV).



humanistic and radical ideas overflowed in YLE. The changes after Reporadio were followed by an increasingly open party political stance and an emphasis on balance (and political impartiality) in treating public opinions, values, ideologies, and social events (YLE 1972, 2-3).

There have been particular conditions characteristic of the relationship between TV 2 and other TV channels. In the early years TV 1's signal had a large coverage while TV 2 slowly increased its own coverage area. Besides, TV 2 practitioners felt they had been forced to struggle of existence as an independent channel. The position of TV 2 as a broadcasting unit has been threatened several times by, for example, the *network* idea; in the first years the channel's task was to be a "complementary" unit and a subcontractor for TV 1 thus developing an image of a broadcasting channel was difficult in these conditions. From the point of view of programming of TV 2 and its independence it was most important that a separate television center was founded with the aid of City of Tampere in 1974. However, the coming years meant an ongoing struggle over the channel's existence.

The profiles of a regular broadcasting channel and a program production unit were confused in the beginning of the 1980's. The channel's coverage area was still under construction and although numbers showed that the visibility was nearly complete, there were large areas of the sparsely populated Northern and Eastern Finland that the channel did not reach. This meant that TV 1 broadcast the most popular programs, such as serial drama. (YLE 79-80, 16-17.)

By the early 1980s the commercial MTV begun its own news castings and later in 1987 — originally launched as a joint venture between YLE, the MTV and the Nokia Corporation — MTV designed for grounding a third television channel in Finland. At this point YLE entered a new phase in channel competition that required managerial reforms of the company.

The organizational reform that took place in the late 1980s, divided the TV 2 program production into fact and fiction sectors whose purpose was to strengthen the co-operation between the management and the editorial offices. It also heralded the reorganization of the program resources and co-ordination. As a guiding principle increasing the share of programs that serve the general public especially in the area of serial drama was adopted in TV 2. In connection to more extensive changes in YLE, the company gradually started management by results. By this new policy YLE adopted such managerial practices as 'producer choice' and 'commissioning'.

YLE's organizational reform that was completely carried out in 1990 and the channel reform with its profiling that followed a couple of years later brought about the profit centered operation (a segment of the YLE organization

that has a profitable base), the production training and the combination of TV units as one branch. It covered both the co-ordination of programs and the allocation of resources. At the same time the two national channels of YLE were given equal status. After this, the resources have been directly shared out to program areas and further to projects with heightened cost-consciousness and internal enterprise as general aims.

Internationalization also meant new challenges to the company's development strategy. Finland joined the European Union in 1995. The membership in the EU introduced the European TV directives and competition legislation. The policy report for the development strategy of YLE (Mykkänen 1995) also supported initiatives for a fourth television channel, digitalization of radio as well as both TV production and transmission, founding of a national commercial radio channel, and the development of local radio stations into networks. According to the annual report of YLE in 1995 the focus areas of TV 2 were predictably the domestic serial drama, diverse entertainment and the current affairs programs providing background information. In the operational period of 1997 the channel's central values were documented as pluralism, independence, closeness to reality, perceptiveness and Finnishness. There was an attempt to make the image of the channel intimate, homelike and human. The aim was to create a "contact at the level of feelings" with the viewer. (YLE 1997, 59.)

### **2.3. TV 2 as a Producer of Series and Serials**

When TV programs are studied, it is important to explain the birth of productions emphasizes Taisto Hujanen (1993) who has analyzed the TV 2's current affairs programs. It is essential to identify the components that form the starting point for later choices and the possible synthesis in the channel's production culture and programming. (Hujanen 1993, 133.)

The following characteristics have been typical of TV 2 serial drama production. First of all, serial drama has been made until the end of the 1980's in both the theater and the entertainment departments. Secondly, most of the series have been dramatizations and short plays written for television. Only about one third of the series and serials have been medium-long (8-14 episodes) and long (over 14 episodes). Some series have been so called episodic series that have been packaged in certain entities and broadcast over one or more seasons. Some long-term episodic series have been sparsely broadcast such as *Heikki ja Kaija* (1961-1976) and *Rintamäkeläiset* (1972-1978), for instance, once a month. Of the longer serial dramas only some have been sequential serials with weekly broadcasts.

Thirdly, the serial drama convention has been dominated by family drama. Historical or crime-adventure dramas written for television as original manuscripts have clearly been in the minority. The fourth special characteristic of television series and serials is that TV 2 productions, as the Finnish television production in general, were for long been characterized by a lack of format. This does not mean that the production would have been chaotic. Despite of the lack of format, standard formulas can be found especially in the family drama: dramatic and narrative ebbs and flows, movement from harmony to disharmony and back again. The production has quite widely made use of the convention of social realism. As a tradition, the convention of social realism has been selective. Stylistically it has included information and fantasy as well as comedy. The reality basis has often been found in the depiction of social milieu or the characters belonging to the working class or the small-time farming communities.

The fifth characteristic is about regionalism. The constant and strongly profiling feature of serial drama in TV 2, compared with TV 1's programs, has been to avoid the focus on Helsinki. It has been characteristic to TV 2's dramas to expand the cultural horizon especially to the regions. In spite of this, the departments producing serial drama have been able to generate ideas for the content and form of serials fairly freely (within the given budget). It is most often the writer and the director who have found "common ground" according to which the characters and the drama span have been built.

## **2.4. European vs. American television**

Characteristic for the discussion of the Finnish television has been the contradiction between the indigenous and the imported, especially programs made in the USA. Until very recently, the concept of 'good' television in Europe has been connected to the idea of public service. It has been considered as a democratic, socially inclusive platform with a privileged relation to 'the real'. The most important quality criterion seems, however, to have been related to the diversified message values of the programming, such as the relationship between *message and reality* (descriptive quality, Rosengren et al. 1991). Opposite to these quality criteria have been "bad" commercial television, and more specifically, the "American series". (See Brunsdon 1997, 112-113, Silj et al. 1988)

In Finland, the distinction between the 'good' and 'bad' television became clear in the two public debates on the American television melodramas, *Peyton Place* and *Dallas*. Both serials were seen as symbols of 'Americanism', first

in the late 1960s and later in the early 1980s. Opposition to the “Americanism” of media *contents* — not of production techniques — was based on a similar background in many European countries. The common discourse against American melodrama was that it represented a model of American life and values, which were seen negative and unrealistic from the European standpoint.

According to an early comparative analysis in Britain, Germany, Italy, and France, the dispute over the success of American fiction includes the contradictory statements and inferences (Silj et al. 1988, 1-2). American programs are seen to be more successful than European ones because professional standards are higher than in Europe. However, as the comparative analysis suggests, to a certain extent has also been conceivable to improve the quality of the European product by using American production techniques. The latter was the interpretation in the Finnish context when I entered the YLE (TV 2) to undertake the first interviews of the makers of serial drama in 1996.

In Finland, controversy over the American serial drama has been processed during the times when the program political decisions of television have been under specific public scrutiny. The Program Council of YLE took in turn both *Peyton Place* (in 1973) and *Dallas* (in 1981) under its critical consideration. Implicit in the two cases was the pressure toward and against the public service ideology. Because commercial television (Mainos-TV) imported both of the popular serials, the discussions led to a situation where the public service television (YLE), the dominant and politically directed part of duopoly, was confronted by commercial television. The question was not only political. It was also of television melodrama as a specific aesthetic form and seriality as a controversial form as such that emerged in the discussion.

The debates show that the television melodrama was challenged as an art discourse, but the new aesthetics did not receive a name. During the *Peyton Place* debate, those journalists who were adopting the art criterion failed to analyze the unexpected popularity of the serial, and those who were instead trying to understand the ‘escapist’ function of the serial did not remark on the narrative or textual properties of the melodrama. Evidently it was difficult to give attention to the *form* of the TV melodrama and its specificity, and therefore the quality criteria were mainly drawn from the ‘peculiar’ and, from the Finnish perspective, the ‘unrealistic’ content of the serial.

Not only did the peculiarity of the entertainment drama with its suspicious contents raise discussion, but also the seriality itself. Serial melodrama (Newcomb 1997, 1248-1249) had really been an almost unknown form in Finnish television until the late 1960s. Unlike the domestic and the British

'realistic' serial drama, *Peyton Place* was not understandable from the traditional, high culture point of view. Similar reactions to the melodrama and moreover to multi-plot narratives and incredible characters were raised by *Dallas*, which continued the discussion on seriality, consumer orientation, and aesthetic values in the Finnish television.

The debate about *Dallas* emerged in an essentially different situation than *Peyton Place* did. In the early 1980s the Dallas debate crystallized the shift from the program political arguments towards media political arguments in the discussion on television fiction. It was partly caused by rising media competition that also implicated the pressure on public service television. The background of the Dallas debate was not only YLE's political development and its somehow rigid relationship to Mainos-TV but also the general change in western political and cultural conjunctures. Jostein Gripsrud's illustration of the change in the Norwegian context gives some indication of what was happening in the so-called western world at the time. He states that the conjunctural shift, "a widespread 'right turn' after a decade where various 'left' forces had been the offensive, was no doubt tied in various ways to the international recession after the 1973 oil crisis". (Gripsrud 1995, 90.)

The uncertainty of the economy influenced the general discussion on society at the same time that the criticism of the political left — especially on the radical left — was smothered. This happened step by step with the rising commercialization of television. While questioning the power of ratings, journalists have also more openly used *popularity* as an argument for defending pleasurable viewing. The division within arguments implies the difficulty or even impossibility to integrate the two ideologies of evaluating television: the mass culture ideology and popular ideology. (About the terms, see Ang 1985) More accurately, there is no simple distinction between the two modes of criticism, but they express the double standard within media culture (about the term, see Kellner 1995, 33-35).

## 2.5. Normative Criticism

In her article *Banality in Cultural Studies*, Meagan Morris (1990) focused attention on a peculiar form of television critique. She argues, that while criticizing programs, academics tend to "transcode" televisual material into a literary form. By doing so they embed the material in a certain meta-discourses that determine the analysis. (Morris 1990, 22-23.) What this meta-discourse can be in an academic context depends on the theoretical view that criticism has adopted, on whether it uses either the psychoanalytical or ideological

toolbox. The same kind of ‘embedding’ practices can apparently be found also in the non-academic, journalistic television critique.

Evidently television fiction has from the very beginning captured journalistic attention in Finland. As Harry Lewing (1970) has shown, domestic series, and especially light entertainment, have been the focus of the journalistic writings since the very early days of Finnish television. Despite the fact that TV criticism itself is a quite new form of journalism, as Mike Poole (1984) has demonstrated in the British context, journalistic television criticism has been constitutive of the institution of television in a way that academic criticism has not. (Poole 1984, 47-52) As any form of criticism, it has also constituted its own normative patterns. As shown, ‘realism’ has been a most important criterion in evaluating the content and legitimating the production of the indigenous TV series and serials. Journalistic television criticism, has not, however, reached the same high status as film criticism.

Academic television criticism in Finland remained in a marginal position at the point when film culture and film criticism were living their turbulent years from the 1950s to the 1970s. The fleeting discussions on television as a medium and the expectations of television criticism were somehow anchored to a generation gap, which was realized through the discursive conflicts of film as art, and writings about film journalism as a mode of criticism.<sup>11</sup> Mervi Pantti argues that television criticism, as far as it existed, was reminiscent of those political attitudes toward the film industry and aesthetic expectations of film at the period that were crystallized in the conflict between an intellectual and a “fighting” film culture in Finland (Pantti 1998, 33-44).

Pantti’s argument is not based on the analysis of journalistic television criticism, published in newspapers. This criticism has been more versatile in nature than the Finnish film criticism might lead us to suppose. While film criticism operated in the ‘cultural’ field, television criticism, in turn, has mainly been constituted in the field of ‘journalism’. Journalistic television criticism then has been a constitutive element in the formation of television. Simultaneously, journalistic writings about television have tended to be discourses searching for an appropriate object (cf. Poole 1984, 52).

<sup>11</sup> The public evaluation of television is a more complex phenomenon when we consider, for example, the differences between the print media, newspapers and the tabloids, or, television reviews and previews. Moreover, film criticism as the journalism on television, has been a convention-bound activity, surrounded by different interpretative institutions. (See Bordwell 1989, 19-20) Encompassed by the formal and the informal interpretative institutions, including colleges, television companies, and media politics, journalism on television — like film criticism — has employed certain ethical presuppositions, criteria for what they mean by ‘aesthetic’ or ‘quality’ of television and how they comprehend different industries and their audiences (see Ellis 1978).

On the basis of TV criticism on the serial drama, for instance, many different notions of realism can be found during the period from 1963 to 1996. Some methodological notes on the classification process of the notions of these 'realisms' are needed here.

The scanned material soon convinces a researcher that the referential reading of 'realism' has been prevalent up to today in journalistic writings. In other words, critics have willingly compared the fiction and the reality in order to prior the latter one. This leads a researcher to consider more accurately differences within the referential reading. A researcher always has pre-knowledge of academic conceptualizations, which helps to distinguish realism from one another. The guiding light here has been a conventional division between empirical and emotional realism, which however, are not mutually exhaustive, but overlap. The use of textual techniques that might appear under the umbrella of 'empirical' realism does not revert to a singular definition. It follows that some texts reflect modern thinking and its desire to share knowledge and a moral order of community, whereas the others demonstrate the late-modern ambivalence towards knowledge and morality.

The ten analytically constructed categories of TV realism are the following: *transferred*, *corrective*, *emotional*, *thought provoking*, *ethical*, *mythic*, *redemptive*, *generic*, *channel-specific*, and *post-realistic*. Once more, these realisms are discourses, which as such are not found in the material under the study. They are composed of different textual elements in journalistic writings by taking into consideration, in the first place, how the writers recognize the relationship between television fiction and the 'real' world and how they comprehend their object of criticism in relation to the 'real'. Theoretically, the texts can assume either a referential, symbolic, or symptomatic relationship between fiction and reality.

The term of *transferred* realism refers to the possibility of conveying 'real' pictures through the television screen whereas '*corrective*', '*thought-provoking*', and '*redemptive*' realisms emphasize that the 'real' needs changes and is not transmissible as such. As a referential practice the former is more expressive in nature than the latter ones, the relation of which with to the 'real' is understood to have a mediating function. *Emotional* realism points at the elusive elements of the 'real', emotions, which are nonetheless thought to be recognizable. Such things as the cultural subconscious, mythic structures of mind and ethical values and the consequent realisms differ from the former because of their nature as repressive and unrecognized.

Discussion on television realism seems to be more defensive in nature today than earlier, when there was a clear distinction, for instance, between different institutional ideologies of media. A critical concept of television realism was still exceptional when television was a new medium in Finland.

Quite the contrary, television was seen to function with a remarkable capacity in *transmitting* 'real' pictures of the world in actual space and time. In particular, there were many positive expectations towards the ability of the public service television to transmit 'real' pictures of the world to its mass audience. At the same time, commercial television carried the same technological capacity, but was seen as merely the mirror of reality in a non-realistic, picture-sale sort of way, that made it less 'realistic'. The reality principle did not challenge 'aesthetic' articulations of television until the 1980s in the Finnish context, when, for instance the public discussion on television realism extended from the referential to the narrative level. Up to that time, the commercial principle seemed to be the opposite to the principle of the objective information, and American (US) television was thought to demonstrate a paradigmatic cultural form of non-realistic and escapist television.

Along with the criticism there has been a growing understanding of *affective* television realism; already in the *Peyton Place* debate arguments were made against didactic television. Some journalists strongly defended viewers who escaped their hard lives into the world of fiction. Later other affective elements were discovered: the psychological credibility of characters, the enjoyment of the viewer position, the feeling of togetherness of viewer groups, etc. Notwithstanding, television was a part of the modernization of Finland and therefore it was primarily regarded in instrumental terms. Television was expected to participate in constructing a welfare society by offering legislative information and the matrix of modern life by instructing citizens in their civic duties and promoting membership in the nuclear family. The desire to bind television viewers to society that adjusts its conflicts through social regulations answered the purpose of critique to *correct* the world by bringing forward central problems, which required changes.

The constructed categories imply a shift from the empirical, or probably better to say in the Finnish context, from corrective realism (Deming 1988) to *post-realistic* pictures that are marked by the absence of "the unitary moral order, which traditionally undergirds the soap community" (Ang & Stratton 1995, 128). TV realism recognized as a referent of the empirical or emotional experience of the 'real' or 'proper' world is the most obtained mode of realism. Soap opera studies usually make a distinction between empirical and emotional realism (see Ang 1985, 47-50), which has been important as far as soaps were regarded as cheap television genre and its female viewers considered to constitute an unintelligent audience. However, empirical realism has been connected in many ways to a primary understanding of television as a medium and drama as a form. On the level of aesthetic it has meant the use of documentaries, newsreels, social statistics, and experts both as a source and a part of narration.



### 3. STUDIES ON TV PRODUCTION

Historical analyzes of the Finnish television have been rare and when they have occasionally appeared they have concentrated on broadcasting policy (Tulppo 1976, Silvo 1988) rather than on the constitution of programs and productions as practice. Thus far the main history of YLE has been institutionally oriented, attaching primary importance to the differences between the two channels, for example, in the light of the history of television policies and program political regulations. The first historical analysis of YLE as an institution (Salokangas 1996) rarely took single programs under scrutiny.

There are some case studies dealing with drama productions in general or in single cases. (E.g. Steinbock 1988, 1989 and Levo-Henriksson 1991) Moreover, Taisto Hujanen (1993) has studied TV 2's current affairs programs from a historical perspective. Nevertheless, qualitative and historical analyzes of Finnish drama serials are still lacking.

Studies on television production conducted in other parts of the world give a set of examples of different studies. According to Horace Newcomb these studies can be divided into three main types:

- (1) Studies that cross modes of organization, regulation, financing and distribution,
- (2) Studies that are based on interviews with television producers as writers, directors, actors or executives in the television industry, and
- (3) Studies, which become an example of the broader analysis of culture, society and politics.

(Newcomb 1991, 94-96)

Few of television studies focus on cultural specificity. Three works are, however, worth mentioning as examples of analysis that combine studies of production, public reception and/or authorship of serial drama. John Caughie's recent study (2000) on drama realism in the British television is a presentation of drama history analyzing both the body of television dramas and discussion on them in public culture. Caughie's work deals with the same subject as the study at hand: realism. However, it considers mini-series and other artistic dramas leaving the British family series aside. Also Ib Bondebjerg offers a study (1993) about the role and significance of TV fiction in a culture. The book is a historical overview of Danish television culture since 1951.

Moreover, David Buckingham's study (1987) offers a cultural analysis of the British soap opera and its authors' conceptions of the audience.

The next pages update Newcomb's early introduction on the production studies as well as introduce some noteworthy studies on serial drama. In the following review there are several case studies of drama productions. Most of them are studies on single productions or a certain genre (the soap opera) and only minority of them deal with production history. After a short overview, the chapter introduces the methodological and methodic base of this study, i.e. articulation theory and the idea of conjunctural reading.

### **3.1. A Selection of the Studies**

An example of a study that crosses modes of organization, regulation, financing and distribution is Philip Elliott's case study, *The Making of a Television Series* (1972), which gives a detailed analysis of the constitution of a documentary series. It examines program production from the perspective of mass communication research explaining how much the production is constrained by the social and organizational framework in which it takes place.

In the field of drama, Muriel and Joel Cantor (1992), in turn, argue that television dramas (including situation comedies) are, simultaneously, economic commodities and cultural constructs and should be studied as such. The authors explain how producers and US networks adapt the demographic, economic, and political shifts that occur in the viewing audience and how they select program contents to meet those changes.

John Tulloch's book *Television Drama* (1990) goes behind the approach of the active agency of practitioners and an audience. Tulloch's analysis brings out makers' active 'readings' and the myth making of conventional genres and forms. Culture is for him the terrain on which hegemony is struggled for and established, in short, it is the site of "cultural struggles" (ibid. 8). Tulloch's insight into television drama as both the site of myth and resistance is useful in my research context and I will return to it later.

Manuel Alvarado and Edward Buscombe observed every aspect of the production process. They started from the adoption of a producer, through the scripting, scheduling, budgeting, and casting until the final edited drama series was completed. *Hazell: The Making of TV Series* (1978) is a detailed analysis on how this particular British television program was made. It also deals with the problems and difficulties that academic researchers face in gaining access to television production that was little known before. Alvarado and Buscombe offer interesting angles on the production process of the

fictional series. Among them is the description of tensions between the format and writers' own inclinations as well as the script editor's tendency to minimize or manage these tensions.

Another noteworthy work on drama production is *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text* (1983) by John Tulloch and Manuel Alvarado. The work is based on interviews with artists and production staff who have been involved with the program since 1963. The study of this British science fiction investigates how industrial, institutional, narrative, professional and other forces that partly existed outside the text operated to shape the series. The authors explain how the series became a BBC institution and how it was connected to the educational ideology of the BBC. Especially in their chapter on authorship and organization Tulloch and Alvarado discuss the professional ideology of the program, for example, how the program was tailored to an implied audience by using parody and realism, and articulating 'authorship' in relation to creativity and mass entertainment.

David Buckingham's *Public Secrets* (1987), a most interesting work from my perspective, shows how television production involves the creation of an audience. *Public Secrets* identifies those ideas and assumptions about the audience, which have informed the planning and production of television serial, *EastEnders*. Buckingham finds that the program-makers' conceptions of the audience are at the same time ambiguous and to a great extent impressionistic. According to Buckingham, viewers are invited to engage in many different types of activity. These are related to the *narrative* working throughout intra-diegetic and extra-diegetic events, *characters* in the ways they talk, behave, or what other characters say about them, and finally *discourses* not mentioned directly and which usually remain as a kind of 'background' (ibid. 49-53).

Dorothy Hobson's *Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera* (1982) also gives a detailed analysis on a single program, the long-running British soap opera, and interviews of its production staff and female audience. Hobson's study represents a redemptive reading of the soap opera. It is an example of a rising feminist interest in the genre in progress. Moreover, Ib Bondebjerg's *Elektroniske Fiktioner* (1993) offers a theoretically driven work about the role and significance of TV fiction in a culture. The author goes through the cultural debates (paternalism and commercialism) on television from the 1950s to the 1990s. Furthermore, by using the idea of 'contract' Bondebjerg is illuminating, from the genre historic perspective, the development of the realistic Danish 'foljetong' (serials). I found Bondebjerg's study a great impulse when starting my work.

Another important influence has been Jostein Gripsrud's study, *Dynasty Years* (1995), which was published at a favorable stage considering this work. With its multi-perspectival methodology, Gripsrud's study is a serious attempt to encompass not only the moment(s) of production but also of reception and the cultural debates of the times, as well as televisual contexts and secondary texts. The author makes his arguments in relation to the political, cultural and aesthetic issues involved in the *Dynasty* event and the surrounding debates in Norway. He shows how *Dynasty* was both a sign of the historical shift in Norwegian broadcasting and, especially in the light of the public debate, also an instrument of change.

Katja Valaskivi's work offers an example of a case study of a single production. *Relation on Television. Genre and Gender in the Production, Reception and Text of a Japanese Family Drama* (1999) focuses on different moments of communication process by using interviews, participation methods, and textual analyzes. Valaskivi shows how all three 'moments' of communication must be taken into account if one wishes to understand the work of genre and gender in production of the serial drama. The work is also an illuminating example of those difficulties a Western researcher could meet when entering both the television industry and (American) post-colonial context.

Other noteworthy studies in the field of drama production include *Coronation Street* (Dyer et. al. 1981), Robert Allen's *Speaking of Soap Operas* (1985), and Poul Erik Nielsen's *Bag Hollywoods Drommefabrik* (1994). William Boddy's *Fifties Television. The Industry and Its Critics* (1993) gives an illuminating account of the American television industry and especially its program formats within the turbulent period when television still was a writer's medium (ibid. 80-92). Dealing with the same period, Christopher Anderson's *Hollywood TV. The Studio System in the Fifties* (1994) offers a study on the movie industry's shaping role in the development of television and its narrative forms, especially the episodic telefilm series. In addition, the works of Ettema and Whitney (1982), Newcomb and Alley (1983), and Thompson and Burns (1990) all offer valuable perspectives on television as an organization and production institution.

Furthermore, Jeremy Tunstall's *Television Producers* (1993) is a useful handbook. In its pursuit of reconstructing the options of the principles by which a work in film industry is constructed, David Bordwell's *Historical Poetics of Cinema* (1989) also gives an important illustration of 'historical' analysis. The most recent study on the field is John Caughie's *Television Drama. Realism, Modernism, and British Culture* (2000), which shapes so

called 'serious' television drama relating the development of television drama in the prewar and postwar years to movements which were going on within the culture. The book is also concerned with a series of arguments around issues of realism and modernism in public culture.

### **3.2. Convergence in Theory**

Research on production processes and the profession of the program makers is a typical example of sociological research, represented by Muriel Cantor (1988), as well as Cantor & Pingree (1983). Newcomb and Alley's research (1983) instead is a typical example of humanistic research, which approaches the possibilities of creativity in production through the interviews of producers.

Some studies focus on a detailed analysis of one single series beginning with the position of the writer and different productive resources all the way to the finished product, that is, the series itself, while the others concentrate on the constitution of a program, its social and organizational framework, as well as productive selection processes from the idea to the implementation. By contrast, a cultural study willingly raises the question of hypotheses about the audience and its preferences in the planning and production of a television series, as well as how the series addresses the audience and what is its significance to it. For example, Buckingham (1987) discusses a fictional series as cultural articulation in the competitive situation between channels. In the cultural study approach, the cultural constitution, foundation and the discursivity of the produced series, in addition to the addressing of the audience, appear to be points of interest.

Horace Newcomb (1991) divides production studies into micro and macro level analyzes and into the in-between middle-level analysis without actually evaluating these. It can be concluded from these divisions that certain studies that are interpreted as sociological are typically macro-level analyzes, since they focus on television industry and general arguments on current culture. These studies generally refer to culture on a broad basis; analyzes of society and politics. Micro-level analyzes, for their part, refer to the preconditions, choices and realizations of individual productions. Middle-level analyzes are directed towards professionalism and the stories of individuals in different projects without a focus on one single production. Additionally, Newcomb brings forth the central research methods used in the analysis. In addition to the data collected by participating in production processes and interviewing program makers, it is essential to count as sources also different professional

and other documents in the analysis of which, for instance, discourse analysis should be used. Production studies can thus be divided in the following way<sup>12</sup>:

**Figure 2:** Studies on Television Production.

Analysis according to the object

	<b>PRODUCTION</b>	<b>PRODUCT</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>
Discipline			
<b>SOCIOLOGY</b>	<i>profession</i>	<i>content</i>	<i>demographics</i>
<b>HUMANISTIC</b>	<i>creativity</i>	<i>narrative</i>	<i>reception</i>
<b>CULTURAL STUDIES</b>	<i>constitution</i>	<i>discourse</i>	<i>address</i>

Sociologically and humanistically oriented studies meet each other easier today than earlier, particularly in the field of cultural studies. Therefore, it is at times impossible to clearly define research belonging either to sociological or humanistic discipline. The so-called cultural turn has narrowed the distance between the disciplines. Above all, this coming closer together is connected to the so-called understanding contexts. Unlike before, it is now understood as something other than a vulgar-material ‘basis’ or a general ‘framework’, which both construct context as the starting point of an analysis.

Accordingly, the studies on television production represent an obvious convergence of different theoretical approaches. The present study also makes use of traditions of both humanistic and cultural studies (the latter has also been familiar with the discipline of sociology in Finland). It follows that the materials of the study are both documents and interviews and that the study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. What makes a critical difference, however, is the notion of context.

In critical cultural studies, context is comprehended as something that is essentially formed only during the course of the research. It is both the point of departure and the conclusion of the research. Articulation is the central

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<sup>12</sup> In the categorization and construction of the figure I use the ideas Horace Newcomb presented in his unpublished lecture which he delivered in a seminar organized for doctoral students in Denmark (University of Århus, January 1995.)

concept here. Through an analysis of a single program it is possible to produce a critical analysis of one's culture, an analysis that aims for people's empowerment, whereas analyzes that reveal societal structures as such may remain too abstract and powerless in terms of social change. The next subchapter takes articulation theory under examination as an alternative solution to connect micro and macro levels in the study. First, however, it is important to clarify the difference between the terms of discourse and articulation.

### **3.3. Connecting Practices and Effects**

The study of serial drama is the study of discourses. The term discourse refers here to the "implicit textual content" (Fairclough 1995a, 6) of programs. Unlike 'discourse' theory in this narrower sense, articulation theory does not accept any preserved context of the analyses. On the contrary, the methodological purpose of articulations is to create the certain context of the study as the result of analyzes. It may be beneficial to different kinds of academic research to understand that the concept of articulation originally gained its political usefulness in depicting cultural struggle. This was surely the first political meaning of articulation that Ernesto Laclau in his *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (1977) meant.

Just against the vulgar materialistic determinacy that production determines everything else, Hall (1994) distinguishes the circuits of capital as an articulation of the moments of production, with the moments of consumption, with the moments of realization, and with the moments of reproduction (ibid. 255). Consumption and production can thus be seen as analytically specific and relatively autonomous sides of communication, which are then articulated together in this process of communication (ibid. 257-259). Hall precisely replaces the term determination with the term double-articulation: "the structure, the given conditions of existence, the structure of determination in any situation, can also be understood, from another point of view, as a simply result of previous practices have produced as a result" (1996, 15).

Furthermore, as Lawrence Grossberg points out, "(t)he concept of articulation provides a useful starting point for describing the process of forging connection between practices and effects, as well as of enabling practices to have different, often unpredicted effects" (Grossberg 1992, 54). It is therefore possible to regard articulation as the production of identity on the top of difference, of unities out of fragments, and of structures across practices. Articulation links these practices to this effect, this text to that meaning, this

meaning to that reality, this experience to those politics, and, finally, these links themselves can be articulated into larger structures. (Ibid.)

Articulation as a theory can be used both as a methodological standpoint and a method. Jennifer Daryl Slack (1996) states that theoretically, articulation can be comprehended as a way of characterizing a social formation without falling into the twin traps of reductionism and essentialism. But it can also be conceived as a method used in cultural analyzes, a way of “contextualizing” the object of one’s analysis. Politically, articulation highlights an important aspect of cultural studies. Using Slack’s words:

With and through articulation, we engage the concrete in order to change it, that is, to re-articulate it. To understand theory and method in this way shifts perspective from the acquisition or application of an epistemology to the creative process of articulating, of thinking relations and connections as how we come to know and as creating what we know. Articulation is, then, not just a thing (not just a connection) but also a process of creating connections, much in the same way that hegemony is not domination but the process of creating and maintaining consensus or of coordinating interests. (Slack 1996, 114.)

This is very much the case in the ways the concept has been utilized as a *method* in cultural analyzes. It follows that using it without any connection to wide methodological questions exhausts the concept. Consequently, articulation remains a stripped method, bereft of any political trace. For instance, the unproblematic argument that the soap opera and women as spectators have a fundamental connection needs to be opened and re-articulated, not considered as an articulation as such.

The set of circumstances, in which *Encoding/Decoding* by Stuart Hall was written, offers an example of the theoretical ‘history’ of articulation. The text was, as Hall (Angus et al. 1994, 253) asserts, positioned against, for instance, the positivistic models of content analysis and audience-effects survey research. Methodologically and theoretically, the paper challenged the notion that sender originates the message, that the message is itself one-dimensional, and that receiver has received it as such. Secondly, its political context laid in its notion of meanings, which are multi-referential, not the fixed and determined ideological import of the message.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the specific context

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13 There are certain limitations of the model of encoding/decoding, which imply the one-directional flow of communication as Seija Ridell argues in detail (1998, 36-39). However, while it appears to be founded on a distinguishable model of transmission, Hall’s model of encoding/decoding challenges the simple assertion



of the paper lay in Marxism itself, in its certain tendency to over-structuralize social phenomena which is now replaced by the model of articulation. (Ibid. 253) (Cf. Hall's recent interview, Karvonen & Koivisto 2001)

A useful example<sup>14</sup> in regarding Hall's encoding/decoding model put into practice comes along with the study *Bond and Beyond* (1987) by Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott: they combine an analysis of the professional ideologies of the filmmakers with an analysis of the ideological economy of the Bond films in general and particularly of a singular film in the series (Bennett & Woollacott 1987, 175-176). They were conscious of the problem of making overly simple connections between the film texts, ideological trends, and the professional ideologies and actions of the Bond production team. (Ibid. 186.)

As an introduction to the analysis they consider the traditional approaches to production prevalent in film studies. Some of them have been concerned with conflicts between the requirements of creativity and those of commercialism (ibid. 176-177). In part, the discussion on film as a cultural production has been a question of the determining factors: individual, ideological or institutional. In order to study the various 'texts of Bond', the authors of *Bond and Beyond* abandon the assumption that the texts constitute the place where the business of culture is conducted. Or as they say, the texts are considered as the place where culture can be constructed as the source of meaning or effects, which can ultimately be deduced from the analysis of their formal properties. (Ibid. 59.)

Bennett and Woollacott argue that the formal mechanism by which texts produce positions for reading, organizing their own consumption in the implied model, or preferred reader, posits them as conditions of their own intelligibility.

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of intrinsic identity in the moments of communication. Moreover, different components of the process of communication can be seen as articulations, lacking essential meaning or identities. (Slack 1996, 123-124.) In its own genealogy articulation became the sign that always speaks of other possibilities, of other ways of theorizing the elements of a social formation and the relations that organize it not simply as relations of correspondence, but as relations of non-correspondence and contradiction. In the process of articulation one should ask how these relations constitute unities that instantiated relations of dominance and subordination. (Ibid. 117.)

14 See also the British case study made by Stuart Hall, Ian Connell, and Lidia Curti (1981/85) for demonstrating the unity of difference working in current affairs program, *Panorama*. They show how both the broadcaster and the politician, operating in terms of a parliamentary democracy, were united in the program within the same ideological framework. As the scholars thus state, the 'unity' between the media and the political sphere in the program was not reproduced at the level of any one political party, but in the parliamentary political system as a whole (ibid. 113-115).

Moreover, they speak about the intertextual (discursive) and extratextual (situational) determinations as two immutable and independent frames of readings. Those determinations refer to the textual production of 'reader' as a certain subject position and a variety of responses to 'the same text' constructed by social practices of viewers. (Ibid. 60 and 62.) They also bring into focus John Ellis' listing of the number of levels of ideological determinations presented in his study on *Ealing films* (1975).

Instead of thinking that the professional ideologies have their origin in individual activity based on the socioeconomic status of filmmakers, Bennett and Woollacott suggest something totally opposite. According to them, individual intentions are in some essential ways either irrelevant or misleading to understanding the ideological meaning of the film. To avoid the idea that filmmakers are in a state of false consciousness, we need, instead, to rethink the place of production studies and merely examine conditions of the production of a text rather than seeking determinations of a text. Then, considering the context more as a condition than determinations of the mass media the views of the makers inform us about discursive practices articulating different and even contradictory textual and ideological projects. (Ibid. 188-190.)

Accordingly, for Bennett and Woollacott, the term intertextuality is an essential element for theorizing the production itself and also different prototypes of television drama. The term is used "to refer to the conjecturally specific transposition of one or more systems of signs to another, resulting in a new articulation of the enuciative and denotative positions they produce". (Ibid. 189.)

As shown in the analysis of Bond films, articulation takes the role of the ideological processes, which work intertextually from one signature position to another. As a result, the makers of film or television have neither the 'true' knowledge of their product nor act as the 'unconscious agents of the ideology'. The various realistic or comic strategies developed by film and television professionals and planted in the text do not have the intended consequences of catching viewers. (See *ibid.* 202-203.)

According to Pierre Bourdieu, the author-centered interpretation is an external analysis in which the relationship between the social and the cultural is seen as a relationship of reflection. Defending his own field theory, Bourdieu claims that the external analysis represents a reductive short-circuit because it associates texts directly with their authors' social backgrounds, or the groups who are the text's assumed audiences, or whose desires the texts are supposed to fulfill. (Bourdieu 1998, 51-54) In the light of field theory there is no such background behind the authors or their assumed audiences. The authors of

series and serials, rather, share a certain system of common co-ordinates, as a result of which they voluntarily or involuntarily inevitably fall into a relationship with one another. This network of relationships forms the field in which the authors act, or in which they take a stance one way or another. For their part, a special power relationship takes place in the field in which, for example, different artistic positions and attitudes wage battle. (See Bourdieu 1998, 47, 55-58)

### 3.4. Text-Context Relationship

It is of great importance that articulation as a theory does not allow a researcher to remain in a stable standpoint masqueraded as the foundation of knowledge, identity or social order. Furthermore, the texts studied here have both intertextual and extratextual elements and dependencies. This study uses the term 'text' to emphasize that most of the phenomena can only be found in textual forms, that is, through documents, interviews, television programs, etc. These texts are extratextual in the context of the study in so far as they articulate social tendencies such as the baby boom in Finland following World War II, the political dependency of the 1970s, and the rising global commercialization of the 1980s. In a certain sense, all discourses (i.e. how the matters in question are expressed in speech rhetoric and literary forms) are intertextual by nature.

When using the terms of the intertextual and extratextual dependency of discourses this study stresses, for instance, the realism qualifications emerging both from inside and outside the actual television production and artistic work that nonetheless is adhered to articulations of 'television aesthetics'<sup>15</sup>. I adopt a broad concept of television aesthetics, which highlights the importance of considering 'aesthetic' qualifications, such as questions of realism, as articulations of different discourses including not only internal or artistic, but also external, and non-artistic criteria, of evaluations that could nevertheless be overlapping.

As employed by Esa Väliverronen, the triple dependence between the 'discourses' and the 'contexts' is also very useful. Väliverronen argues that

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15 Aesthetic theories usually deal with a number of questions, which include presumptions of some sort of external dependence: What is art (and non-art)? What is the nature of aesthetic experience? What is beauty? What are the criteria for aesthetic judgments? What is aesthetic value or merit? (Wolff 1981, 68.) The two latter questions are more interesting than others as they are both directed towards the social and cultural factors of actual television productions as well as their public reception.

Michel Foucault suggests a model of division in studying the history of sexuality. Consequently, there are three text-context relationships that can be found in the study: intra-discursive, inter-discursive, and extra-discursive determinants or inter-dependents. (Väliveronien 1993, 31.) These determinants are easily adapted to the practices formatting aesthetics of serial drama of TV 2.

An intra-discursive relationship refers, for instance, to the development and constitution of generic conventions within serials and journalistic television critique. Contrary to this, an inter-discursive relationship directs attention to different discourses such as the realism conventions or the notions of democracy, and the relationship between them and the other discourses under scrutiny. And finally, the social trends and tendencies discursively trans-coded by drama series and serials or the television critique are regarded as the extratextual, situationally constituted determinants. These dependencies, naturally, have no rigid substance as such, but merely operate as analytical tools that require the definite material of study and an operative method.

As already assumed, the context is not a fixed and clear-cut social or cultural phenomenon, but an abstract term with different methodological potentials. Neither an essential form of public service television nor original television aesthetics exists. Instead, during its forty years of history as an aesthetic medium (especially in its 'realistic' mode) in Finland, television has been in the focus of articulations and re-articulations both inside the institution of television and in the cultural field. The link between epistemology and politics in the study comes through the use of the methodology and the method of the study. Methodologically, the study is then based on the articulation theory as Stuart Hall has introduced it in his early work on decoding and encoding. The analytical shift from the viewpoint of decoding to the encoding point of view, in which a certain *message form* takes place (Hall 1980), raises the question of the context of analysis.

I utilize the ritual model of communication as my background hypothesis. The model's ideological and affective nature in delivering therapeutic and pleasurable discourses suggest a consensus between the television practitioners and the viewers of what is a cultural formation of *perhesarja* (the family drama). As a consensus narrative (Thornburn 1987, 171), *perhesarja* constitutes the fictional world in which the Finnish society's central beliefs and values undergo continuous rehearsal, testing, and revision. However, the conservatism of *perhesarja* is not a simple, one-sided ideological construct. It can be seen as a matrix of values and assumptions that modify the narrative as a forum where the culture promulgates its mythologies in a "liminal space" (ibid.).

### 3.5. Conjunctural Reading

The concept of articulation emphasizes the importance of conjunctural reading in analyzing both the latent and manifested content of texts within the multiple frames. I want to distinguish it analytically from the *diagnostic critique* that, according to Kellner (1995), allows diagnosing “social trends and tendencies, reading through texts to the fantasies, fears, hopes, and desires that they articulate”. For Kellner this kind of critique allows to analyze “how media culture provides the resources for producing identities and advances either reactionary or progressive politics — or provides ambiguous texts and effects that can be appropriated in various ways”. (Ibid. 5-6.)

In diagnostic critique, as Kellner puts it, the critique focuses on the media text, films and television programs, which merely constitute a basis for interpretations of the social world displayed by ‘a process of discursive transcoding’ (Ryan & Kellner 1990, 12). It appears that diagnosis is merely an instrument of the study, which assumes that the social world can be diagnosed through the symptoms the media offer. In any case, in the core of the critique there is the society as a collection of extra-textual determinants, on the one hand, and the ways media is discursively transcoding (articulating, IR) social trends and tendencies on the other hand. However, when using diagnostic critique, one should be aware that the reading *produces* but does not discover the context of the study.

The symptomatic reading as Ien Ang has shown in her analysis of *Dallas* fans letters (Ang 1985) is evidently more sensitive to the particular media material, than diagnostic critique, which passes this specificity and takes the social matrix as a starting point of a study and ‘diagnoses’ its symptoms of any possible audiovisual material. However, also the symptomatic reading shares the same basic problem than diagnostic critique; they both assume that there is a social or discursive context that is readable through symptoms it produces. In short, both methods regard context as something that exists beyond the analysis they make. Despite these basic problems, I prefer to maintain the term ‘symptom’ in my analysis. However, I use it mainly in emphasizing the crossing points of different symptoms.

I call my way of analyzing *conjunctural reading*. Conjunctural reading connects both symptomatic reading and diagnostic critique. I wish to maintain the centrality of the research material in my reading process and also the possibility to examine articulations of social and cultural conditions in connection to the material. By the conjunctural reading it is possible to leave space for sociological and political imagination. Moreover, the reading helps to avoid the traps of referential and symptomatic readings, which, for instance,

imply analogies between female viewers and women's pictures. Finally, the conjunctural reading does not suggest 'realism' as an ideologically effective unity of discourses. The unity of a particular 'realism' discourse is a result of articulations within a particular conjuncture. In this conjuncture the broadcasters, TV critics, and viewers operate within certain generic conventions.

Although articulation is regarded here as a method in creating connections between texts, it is *methodology* that helps us to understand the nature of signification process. For instance, 'discourse' as term is in common use, but not always regarded as discursive *practice*. In my reading, articulation emphasizes that realism is more a textual effect (if not even after-text effect) than a reality effect. Realism regarded as effect of text then accentuates signifying practices, not language as a system. In analyzing gender in relation to perhesarja genre, my reading stresses cultural positioning of different discourses and the ways the female viewers of the genre negotiate the role of the mother.

The conjunctural reading facilitates me more than any other method to consider how *utility drama* forms the discourse that in fact connects the material I examine. Thus the construction of this particular discourse is the most central achievement of my reading. At the same time the conjunctural reading opens the way to construct the ways the discourse of utility drama is articulated in periods of TV 2 drama production. In these articulations different discursive connections can be found between television production and social development, the perhesarja genre and family ideology, the perhesarja genre and public culture, and finally, the serial production and the role of authors. Based on my analysis it is evident that what is called utility drama is an ideological *text form*, which does not return to any one ideological determination.

Before going further in analyzing the division between episodic and serial television and the periods of TV 2 family drama I would like to emphasize at this point that my interest is in the textual or symbolic world that is 'real' insofar it takes its shape and is realized through social practices. That is, the analysis is not exhaustive in a way that would ultimately reveal a reality that indicates the world outside the fictional world of the television series. On this basis, however, it is possible to argue that what is already constructed as a signified — for example, the 'realism' of the Finnish drama series in portraying indigenous life — to some extent reflects my own and the future understanding of the term.

## **Part Two: Family Drama in TV2**





## 4. EPISODIC TELEVISION

Despite the monopoly of YLE in radio broadcasting, the early years of television were largely commercially financed. In its first year, television was funded based on the financial contributions of radio amateurs and other TV pioneers who worked under the aegis of the Foundation for the Promotion of Technology (Tekniikan Edistämisseätiö, TES). The amount of voluntary work, chiefly organized by local television clubs, was gradually limited and consequently the role of the sponsor became increasingly important for financing operations and producing programs. It logically followed that TES-TV ultimately turned away from club activities towards private program companies (*Tesvisio* and *Tamvisio*).

After the privately owned *Tamvisio* was sold to YLE, many changes took place in drama production, especially in 1966. For example, the company's financial and administrative offices were moved to Tampere to continue television operation in the town. As a result of this organizational reform the channel — now called TV 2 — was able to establish its own Theater Department. The major studio in the Frenckell building, originally established with the assistance of the Tampere City Council, was expanded and the unit received a mobile complex for multiple camera remote (MCR) production. The van was important for drama production not only because it facilitated work on locations, but also because it freed the production teams from studio scheduling at a time when studio capacity was still limited.

As TV 2's broadcasts still only covered southern Finland at the beginning of the 1970s, some of its most popular programs were rerun on the main channel, TV 1. However, the situation seemed to improve by the end of the decade after YLE decided to expand the parallel-broadcasting network. (YLE 1968, 133.) The exchange of programs between the two channels ended in 1970 and TV 2 maintained its own channel. (YLE 1970-1971, 81) The move from the various studios in the city center of Tampere to Tohloppi in the suburbs of Tampere was completed in 1974, the same year that TV 2 became a national network. After the new television building was built in Tohloppi, once again with the financial help of the Tampere City Council, TV 2 began to broadcast in color. That year, TV 2's coverage reached 80 per cent of Finnish viewers. (YLE 1974-1975, 80-81.)

The first years of public service television were beset with changes, both in the YLE organization and in its program policy. Changes in the program policy culminated in the informational program policy and its practical

articulations. The spirit of the policy originally was “to offer a view of the world based on correct information and facts, which would change as the world changes and as our knowledge of it increases, alters or becomes more perfect”. (Nordenstreng 1972, 397) However, as early as 1972, this fairly reformist attitude was replaced by a normative one, in which “correct” meant a *balance* of voices and the dissemination of impartial facts. The informational program policy found itself in further trouble when the family comedy genre turned into parody and a reactionary attitude toward information began to be felt in the early 1980s.

Accordingly, during the period which I call *Episodic Television* (1961-1986) there were changing narrative elements in the family drama regarding their settings, characters, time, focalizations, attitudes, and depictions of realism. For instance, the settings and characters of the family drama shifted from the private to semi-public and public spheres and back again to the private, the nuclear family life. At the same time, the narratives varied in their representation of family members, as well as in representing people as either citizens or consumers. The division, which followed, into intimate, journalistic, consensual and comical television genres, captures these different narrative changes.

In this chapter, the first two decades of TV 2’s serial dramas are examined more closely. The method in which I present the data is partly based on a highly detailed chronicling of numerous narrative elements. It would not be possible to examine the public criticism of these dramas or the views on the practitioners without an analysis of the actual series. However, the textual analysis is directed towards the dominant narrative elements of the series. These dominant elements consistent with periods of television are modified in analyzing by means of the following narrative features: settings, characters, time, focalization, attitude, realism, and supposed narrative effect. At the end of chapter, the different articulations of the *informational program policy* in the contexts of 1960s and 1970s will be dealt with. Also those questions, which are related to the episodic presentations, are examined briefly.

#### **4.1. Dominant and Emerging Narratives**

*Intimate television* was built on the aesthetics of Platform Theater and emphasized the central position of a few individual characters throughout the storyline. According to Ismo Silvo, intimate television also followed the aesthetics of the so-called visual radio and offered its audience ‘peephole’ glimpses into the lives of the characters being depicted. Throughout the

*journalistic* and *consensual* periods of television, dramas attempted to forge a connection with society by using rural and political stereotypes and selecting semi-public and public settings. The consensual period tried to maintain an impartial position toward political party interests, especially during the heated political climate of the 1970s. Therefore, the term ‘consensual’ is better than ‘political’ in this context. The journalistic period relied upon the use of real locations to offer a strong dose of ‘documentary’ realism. Both periods also adopted the political goal of television participating in society.

As the following figures suggest, these early attitudes towards narrative and supposed effects of ‘realism’ changed quite sharply. Instead, domestic settings and private focalizations have maintained their footing in episodic television. This is explained by the different articulations of the program policy. Since the middle of the 1960s the informational program policy has, in one way or another been articulated in serial drama productions, first through reformist, then through normative, and finally through a reactive, politically directed mode of expression toward television. In the 1960s, television was expected to provide information on society. In the family series, this was manifested in the narrative focus on the position of the newly-urbanized family and the reformation of social policies that were taking place. It was also assumed that social problems would be openly processed by television. Politicians did not always like this. In the 1970s, a glaring mockery of politics was avoided, even when, for example, the trade union movement was made a part of the narrative setting of the family series. Fiction was expected to pay attention to different social voices, all the while maintaining its impartiality. By the time the 1980s came about, the creators of family series were no longer interested in the ‘tidiness’ that was described above. Instead, they separated ideologically from the program policy of creating serious dramas, which they claimed avoided laughter at all costs. Gradually new family series began addressing viewers as consumers, rather than as citizens.

Documentarism was an important aesthetic instrument for drama production up until the end of the 1970s. Despite the fact that *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* (Men of War and Peace) was broadcast on television between 1978-1979 and was a production of the Theater Department, the transition to serial *Comical Television* had already begun in 1978 when the Entertainment Department’s *Tankki täyteen* received noteworthy attention. I will return to the period in Chapter 5.

**Figure 3:** Episodic TV and its Dominant Narrative Elements in TV 2.

### EPISODIC TELEVISION

	<i>Intimate 1961-</i>	<i>Journalistic 1968-</i>	<i>Consensual 1970-</i>	<i>Comical 1978-</i>
<b>Setting</b>	Domestic	Communal	Work	Domestic
<b>Character</b>	Nuclear Family	Citizens	Workers (Politicians)	Consumers
<b>Time</b>	Present	Present (Past)	Present	Present
<b>Focalization</b>	Private	Semi-public	Public	Private
<b>Attitude</b>	Expressive	Reformist	Normative	Reactive
<b>Realism Effect</b>	Peephole	Documentary	Descriptive	Comic

The following subchapters illuminate further the three narrative articulations of utility drama, i.e. intimate, journalistic and consensual. A closer inspection reveals that the first years of the serial drama were fully dependent on the practitioners' capacity for creating them. Some foreign examples from visits in the British television centers and Hollywood studios provided producers with a starting point, while still leaving room for fairly independent solutions. Therefore, the chapter begins with an overview of the practitioners of the time. It is especially worth noting that many writers of TV 2 have been freelancers who had other occupations in industry, trade, advertising or theater.

The next pages also focus on the emerging narrative forms of the period of Episodic Television. A clear exception during this period was *Oi kallis kaupunki* (Oh Precious Town, 1975). It resembled serial-like television with its multiple plots and modern camera angles. *Oi kallis kaupunki* was a contemporary story whose main plot and the numerous subplots continued from one episode to the next in order to create anticipation in the viewer. Furthermore, family comedies, such as *Tankki täyteen* (Fill It Up, 1978 and 1980) and *Reinikainen* (Constable Reinikainen, 1982-83) are discussed separately, as they are representative of the new form of expression in Finnish television.

## 4.2. Intimate Television

The very first Finnish television series, *Hilma ja Akseli* (Hilma and Akseli) by *Mainos-TV* ran from 1961 to 1963. It exploited the airwaves since it was based on a popular radio series (1957) about the everyday lives of a shoemaker's family, the old couple, Hilma and her husband Akseli. The series reached its natural end on *Mainos-TV* when the male actor suddenly died. The new version of the series began when *Hilma* (The Widow Hilma 1967-1968) was taken into TV 2 production. *Hilma* also made Finnish television history by being the first spinoff character in a drama production. Paavo Vihervä (pseudonym Pavi), who was the office manager of a large dairy company, wrote the series.

*Hilma* was mainly shot in Turku — a large city in Finland — by using an MCR van, which facilitated filming on authentic locations. Under ordinary conditions this equipment was available for reportage. Director Jarmo Nieminen used the new technique as an instrument for shooting drama. *Hilma*'s twenty-two episodes were mainly about the wisdom of old proletarian women in everyday life. In a given episode of the series, which lasted between 15 to 20 minutes, the widow Hilma would, for instance, help her master and mistress, as well as a strange male alcoholic to overcome some crisis to which on the widow knew the solution. Her philosophy of life was based on Christian charity, in which one remained content despite how little one had.

The first original series of TV 2 was *Heikki ja Kaija* (Heikki and Kaija, 1961-1971). The background of its creator, Pertti Nättilä, touches TV history in general and sheds light on the ways that early TV series have been produced.

Nättilä had originally worked as a photographer in the advertisement and public relations office of a large textile company. He became familiar with television technology during a business trip abroad in the late 1950s. Later he appeared as the host of a fashion show on a live broadcast of *Tamvisio*. After doing different types of volunteer work in the Television Club (*Televisiokerho*) and the local station, he was appointed as a staff member of *Tamvisio*. In this position, he visited Britain in order to become acquainted with television there and to learn how, for example, a series such as *Coronation Street* (1960-) was produced.

When *Tamvisio* was bought by YLE in 1964, the Nättilä's series, *Heikki ja Kaija*, continued and it was allowed to run with sequences that were taped and then later edited in YLE's Helsinki studio. This was the duty of the production assistant who hurried to Helsinki with the unedited film. Due to the simple editing methods that were employed at the time, there was sometimes a blank screen between two shots.

*From idea to practice.* Before consulting any writer, Pertti Nätilä already considered the actors Vili Auvinen and Eila Roine, a married couple from the local theater. In the following years, Vili Auvinen and Eila Roine would become the best-known television couple both on Finnish television and in real life. The arrangement was in many ways rewarding for television. Money had always been a problem with drama productions and the young acting family could organize their duties so that shootings only took one day in three-week intervals. There was also the possibility to rehearse television roles at home after workdays at the local theater.

With the primary idea in mind, Nätilä got in touch with Reino Lahtinen, a novelist and clerk at a liquor store, who had already written two radio plays. Nätilä and Lahtinen continued to create the series by envisioning it as a story about the everyday life of a young couple living in Tampere, which would represent ‘average’ thinking and the values of workers in the Tampere industrial area. The husband would be a metalworker. The creators also thought that it would be more dramatic if the wife was somewhat better educated than her husband. When the basic idea of the series was ready, it was necessary to realize it at a moderate cost. In the creator’s words:

We made an agreement with Reino Lahtinen that he’d make those episodes in a way that they all wouldn’t be written beforehand. They were to be made in three-week intervals. And he’d first write an episode, and then see the result on television while he’d continue writing the next one. We couldn’t tape episodes because they were live broadcasts. The only condition I made was that there shouldn’t be any strange things in the series by any means. Characters should be ordinary people, I mean, they should think ordinary things and be in that way realistic. Sure they can have daydreams and so on.

When *Heikki ja Kaija* (1961-1971) began it was briefly broadcast by TES-TV and later by *Tamvisio*. The first twenty-nine episodes of its total of seventy-five episodes were broadcast live.

It was the duty of Pertti Nätilä to cooperate with the writer and edit the manuscript for each episode. When Vili Auvinen, who played the young husband, also took up the main responsibility for directing, he paid special attention to the dialogue. It had to be as close to normal speech as possible, and in particular, Eila Roine’s Tampere dialect had to be maintained in the series. Overall though, Nätilä was responsible for the final outcome. Sometimes the inventiveness and personal experience of the production team brought variations to the manuscript. The members of the team took examples directly from their everyday life as young husbands and wives. They also

utilized other writers, such as the journalist-writer Jorma Savikko, who wrote short scenes for the series.

The series was mainly filmed on studio sets with a three-camera set-up. Once it became possible to record, scenes were also shot on location. The house, for example, was located in an easily identifiable suburb of Tampere. But only the exteriors were filmed there in order to create the visual image of the place in which they lived. The interior scenes continued to be shot in the studio. When the young husband bought his first car, viewers were able to identify downtown Tampere. There were also a few episodes that were shot in the countryside. Those episodes were shot outdoors during the summer time. In real life, all of the main actors of *Heikki ja Kaija* owned cottages in the same province and they spent their summer time close to one another. The cottages were used in the summer episodes.

On the whole, the emerging television production was intertwined with the lives of its makers. For example, when the main actress gave birth to a child in real life, the fictional family also increased. The christening that took place on the show's 30th episode (entitled *Ristiäiset*), which was also the first taped episode, was the actual christening of the actors' newborn son. In the episode, the team mixed reality and fiction. The role of Kaija's father was played by the actress's real father. Actors, who performed as friends of the couple in the series, were asked to be the godparents of the baby in the ceremony, which all viewers could watch on television. The decision was quite economical for the busy actors who could now kill two birds with one stone. In addition, the early settings of *Heikki ja Kaija* were similar to those in theater plays, but instead of sitting in theater viewers could watch family events in their private homes. Together, these elements all produced the intimacy which was characteristic of the family series of that era.

But there was also a down side to all of this. Publicity produced not always positive effects for actors who had careers in both the theater and in television. Viewers sometimes confused the actors and the characters they played, which at times had embarrassing consequences. When the actors of *Heikki ja Kaija* moved to the Tampere suburb, they started receiving advice through letters on how to repair and furnish their house. In addition, viewers' feedback dealt with such issues as bad language, Kaija's potholders, and the alcoholism of Heikki's father. (Kalemaa 1995, 260-262.)

With time, it seemed to be necessary to bring new characters into the series. The most memorable character was Mrs. Lahtinen (Lahtiska). Plots, concerning this aged female character, centered on the issues of health insurance and occupational troubles. In these plots, *Heikki ja Kaija*, seems to have had a very organic relationship to society; the main characters — the

main couple — were informants of the new social security system in Finland and therefore exponents of state social welfare. There were still however many aged people in the 1960s, like Mrs. Lahtinen, who attempted to survive on their own and did not turn to institutions maintained at public expense for ‘support of paupers’. In the ideological meta-discourse of the series, ‘poverty’ is above all the result of ignorance. As a result of this perception the series aimed at informing viewers of e.g. the new social benefits. In other words, poverty is depicted as a public rather than an individual crisis in *Heikki ja Kaija*. Poverty is acknowledged by the state through social legislation, which aims to eliminate it.

The main couple of *Heikki ja Kaija* had their own utopian vision, which probably corresponded to the social matrix they shared with their contemporary working class viewers: financial independence accompanied by ownership of one’s own house, a cottage by the lake, and finally, freedom from debt have been important. Due to rampant inflation, many of their contemporaries had accepted these state ideological aims in Finland. However, many working-class families living in the 1960s may have recognized people like the fictional character, Mrs. Lahtinen. She was reminiscent of *Finlayson’s* textile factory community in Tampere, the world of patrons with the security of factory-owned stores, hospitals, and flats. As a single woman and former factory worker, she had to calculate her pennies at every turn. The wooden house used as a location set is little more than a memorial to the years when Mrs. Lahtiska was young and fit to work in the local industry.

Her former neighbors, the main couple of *Heikki ja Kaija*, are practically the only social contact she has with the outside world. In the cultural experience of this aged woman, they are a well-to-do couple. The ‘tragedy’ of Mrs. Lahtiska, in turn, has always been to live at the mercy of others, as a girl begging for food and clothes, later working as a servant girl, and finally as the wife of a bad husband. The constant impecunious situation makes her loneliness even worse. In the era of rising welfare services, the life of this ex-weaver sometimes appeared comical in the series. However, she is often forced to turn to the ‘old world’, the mentality of a subject under control. This time, she is also under the controlling gaze of those questioning her ignorance of social reform. The fictional character, Mrs. Lahtinen, acts as a person who is forced to look at herself through the eyes of others, and wonders whether her behavior is appropriate or not in various social situations.

The narrative of *Heikki ja Kaija* however was not as political as one might assume in comparison to the turbulent epoch of the 1960s. Through the fictional characters, the writer and directors created different events which all captured the social climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s as seen through



the filter of family life. Yet, nobody wanted to irritate or be provocative through this form of television fiction. In the latter part of the 1960s, this harmlessness was noted as evidence of a bourgeois sensibility. The storylines were not always cautious. The young wife's miscarriage, for example, was treated with a surprising openness.

In time, the creative team gradually got tired of making the series; the ideas seemed to come to an end. In the 1970s, TV 2 broadcast only eleven new episodes of *Heikki ja Kaija*, which were run between 1970-1971. The last episode's title was "So the world has changed". Shortly after the production ended, the team of Pertti Nättilä and Reino Lahtinen started a new series. Within one and a half years, *Rintamäkeläiset* (The Rintamäkeläs, 1972-1978) began. It was about the life of a small farmer in a village that had been practically deserted because of the migration of young people to the southern cities or Sweden.

*Heikki ja Kaija* had especially developed a very strong *house style*, which according to John Ellis (1982/1992) is characteristic for low-budget production. Similar to *Crossroads* in the British context, the first Finnish serial dramas gave the impression that the actors were having their first run-through rather than giving their polished up performance. (Ibid. 219) Over and over again, new generations of television viewers have been under the impression that the actors of *Heikki ja Kaija* did not act, but improvised. This unpolished style is what Ellis referring to by 'house style'.

At the time *Heikki ja Kaija* began its run, there was no visible or documented program policy that expressed the social tendency of this particular series. The primary goal of the series was to entertain rather than to inform citizens. *Heikki ja Kaija* was full of hope for the future and on the whole the series reflected the reformist belief in the good society. Throughout its seventy-five episodes, the series offered information about social reforms in detail. But it also served as a site for the creation of a new proletarian lifestyle by offering a social matrix for an urbanized television audience. The series indicated the death of patrons, and the birth of the isolated nuclear family. The modern family values are central in the series, but some relics of the integration of the family members within the community (neighbors) still occur.

### 4.3. Journalistic Television

In 1966 TV 2 came out with a new series, *Kiurunkulma* (Kiurunkulma Village, 1966-1969), which told the story of a small community in a rural area in central Finland. In conformity with the emerging informational program policy of YLE, *Kiurunkulma* was more journalistic in nature than purely dramatic.

The series ran from 1966-1969, not coincidentally at the strongest period of Reporadio. It made use of subjects of current interest and a reportage form of storytelling. In a way the series tried to *correct* the bad social situations it portrayed and redress grievances, unlike *Heikki ja Kaija* which merely sought to integrate the audience into the existing society. As in *Heikki ja Kaija*, the sense of a geographical place was an important part in creating the storyline of *Kiurunkulma*. The fictional village was located in the area where the fundamentalist beliefs of an extreme Christian sect under its protestant leader, Lars Leevi Laestadius, had a strong impact on communal life. The fundamentalist beliefs, and conservative values in general are central targets in *Kiurunkulma*.

*Kiurunkulma* serves as an example of the informational program policy directed towards serial drama. There is also another closely related example in 1970-1971, *Pääluottamusmies* (Union Steward). Both *Kiurunkulma*'s content and aesthetic form corresponded to the informational program policy adopted at the time. As such, the series informed and educated, but it also utilized the space given by the program policy by conflating fact and fiction in its narration.

Antero Nurminen and Pekka Koskinen directed the first six of the twenty-five total episodes. After that, *Kiurunkulma* became a collaboration between two women, Eila Arjoma and Liisa Vuoristo. During their collaboration, the series gradually changed its direction towards the journalistic expression characteristic of the informational program policy.

Liisa Vuoristo's background was in youth literature and television writing. She had learned the process of making television drama in the U.S. and was able to put her knowledge into practice. She originally came from Mainos-TV — where she wrote episodes for a famous family drama, *Me Tammelat* (We, the Tammelats). In 1968, Eila Arjoma committed herself to *Kiurunkulma* and a long lasting cooperation between the two female creators began. Arjoma's previous workplace, the Pori Theater, was the launching pad for many of the makers of *Suomi Filmi* (Finnish Film). Arjoma received her professional education at the University of Birmingham and then, after the Pori years, she was the first female television director at TV 2.

Vuoristo and Arjoma planned the episodes together and toured different provinces in the country to find out what was going on out in the heartland. They also set up relations with the authorities in order to gather information about social facts, statistics, etc. For example, they used experts' opinions as background information and they also asked experts to perform in episodes. Usually the *Kiurunkulma* team worked two days in the studio and one week with a filming crew. The actors for *Kiurunkulma* came from the Tampere Theater, which is the one of two local theaters. Often they used their day off to act on television.

One of the greatest problems for the production team as well as for individual directors was that they literally had to know years in advance when and how often they might need studios and other equipment. It followed that these conditions and constraints determined the production. A preliminary manuscript was required for allocating these resources. Studio footage shot in the Frenckell building, the first offices of TV 2, was shot in cramped spaces. In practice, the sets of other productions had to be substituted for *Kiurunkulma*'s sets before the shooting could begin. The main settings of the first studio episodes were the health care center and its fictional environment, the small village.

In episode after episode, new characters were introduced: nurses, the large Koskinen family, a wealthy farmer who was a city councilman; the cellulose mill's steward Suonperä; and an elementary school teacher. The series called attention to its 'favorable' contents shortly after the cooperation between Arjoma and Vuoristo began. Max Rand, a program observer for the Section for Long Range Planning (in the era of 'Reporadio'), in his evaluations praised those plots that were strengthened by using documentary material and events that had real-life correspondence. In the framework of the serial film, the plots seemed to be an effort to offer information:

A good example is the episode "Too Late" (*Liian myöhään*) [in which Ms. Koskinen is dying from kidney failure caused by a miscarriage]: While Ms. Koskinen is waiting for a kidney transplant, statistics and interviews informed viewers about the lack of transplants. Sometimes the information was presented in an overly instructive way — yet it strove to offer information on what was usually the most necessary knowledge that otherwise wasn't being discussed: opportunities granted by social security, the pollutants of waterways, the social reasons for unemployment. (Rand 1968, 511.)

Rand argues that despite the fact that not all episodes of *Kiurunkulma* were 'informative' or achieved a sufficiently societal point of view, the series could,

at its best, change attitudes. He uses two examples, the episodes “A Log Rolling” and “The Case of Suonperä”.

The first episode is about the fatal event that happened to Ms. Koskinen as described in the quotation above. In the second example, the episode is about the consequences of shutting down the local cellulose factory, a major source of livelihood for the community. In this episode, partly filmed in a real factory in Valkeakoski (located near Tampere), a local delegation from the Kiurunkulma Village goes to meet the Prime Minister, but with no results. The factory steward, Mr. Suonperä’s teenage son, explains to his sister why the state should take over the factory. Through his rather lengthy monologue, a connection was drawn between the events occurring at the local fictional factory and other similar cases truly in Finland at the time. For Suonperä’s son, the only solution is the socialization (state-ownership) of all large-scale industry. Later on in the episode, the sister finally formulates her own position: “The Church needs to be socialized, too!”

*Kiurunkulma* contains many other examples of raising topical issues. There is the episode (Who is right?) that concerns itself with educational television. The series shows how some villagers are against television in general and especially educational television. One of the foremost opponents, the councilman, tries to prevent children from watching the “sinful” television. A minority of parents objected in statements to the school board. As a result of their counterattack, the councilman and his followers resign from their positions of trust. As in other episodes, the main storyline was filmed in the studio, but some footage was filmed in exterior settings. In the heat of the debate on the negative impact of television, a journalist from the radio (or television) interviews the school principal, a religious member of the school board, as well as young people who are unsympathetic to the anti-television movement and the course of events in their village.

Through topical issues and the ways they are dealt with in *Kiurunkulma* the journalistic style — typical for the series — rears its head as well as the informing alongside entertaining narrative pattern.

As already mentioned, it appears that the expression of ‘Reporadio’ was different in the two YLE channels. Some television professionals in the provinces felt that they were outsiders to what was happening in the capital. This feeling indicates a general gap in the writing of our cultural history of the 1960s. The 1960s have largely been regarded as the history of the movement of radical intellectuals and artists in the Helsinki area. (See for example, Tuominen 1991, 123-125, 179-190) At the same time, some of those who recognized themselves as outsiders were in fact geographically distant from those who participated in the events that the official cultural history has

repeatedly commented on. From the current perspective, it is curious that you hardly ever discover any commentary on *Kiurunkulma* in the official cultural history.

*Kiurunkulma* also participated in the constitution of the welfare state and its social policy. It was sensitive to conservative sets of values and feelings of inferiority at the time. The majority of *Kiurunkulma*'s 25 episodes were more didactic than dramatic in their narrative organization. (See Bondebjerk 1993, 174) In this sense the series differed distinctly from its contemporary, *Heikki and Kaija*. The former concentrated on social problems and pointed out progressive solutions to them. Within the individual narratives, however, the conservative village community did not always allow the reforms to take place. The viewers of *Kiurunkulma* could not count on happy endings.

The abstract division between 'affects' (feelings or emotions) and 'effects' (meanings or senses) is not adequate as such, but it may help here to make some distinctive comments on the implied audience image of *Kiurunkulma*. Its predecessor and its contemporary, *Heikki ja Kaija*, tried to satisfy the feelings and emotions of its audience, whereas *Kiurunkulma* invested a lot of effort in influencing the conscious thinking of its audience. The former assumed a 'viewer' who was a family member, whereas the latter considered the 'viewer' to be a member of society, a citizen. Consequently, a family member was expected to share laughter and worries with the fictional characters, but a citizen should be informed about the social conditions.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.4. Consensual Television

It was not until the turn of decade that viewers saw the first historical series on TV 2, *30-luvun mies* (The Man of the 1930s, 1968-1969). This epic was created by the author Tauno Yliruusi, and the directors, Jarmo Nieminen and Mikko Majanlahti. *30-luvun mies* is about the influence of the Depression on Finnish society from the perspective of the editorial staff of a liberal newspaper. Each of its fourteen separate episodes was based on the experiences of Yliruusi's own father.

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1 The very same aesthetics found in *Kiurunkulma* were evident in *Palveleva puhelin* (The Hotline, 1970-1971) as well. With eight separate episodes, the latter represents the paradigmatic idea of journalistic TV. The series, written by Tauno Yliruusi and Eero Silvasti, was similar to reportage, in which one describes in a journalistic manner small-scale social stories and individual problems. The narrative background of these stories came from the distress calls that the hotline of the Church (*Kirkon palveleva puhelin*) received at that time.

In the late 1960s there was still a great deal of historical material, clothing, furniture, and instruments available from the 1930s, which helped the production team to build authentic sets and kept the budget in check. Episodes dealt with, for example, the rising anti-Communist movement (*Lapuan liike*), the events leading to the so-called Nag Revolt (*konikapina*), and Prohibition (*kieltolaki*). The series was shot in the studio (editorial office and other interiors) and on locations. Despite the fact that the series treated sensitive issues in Finnish history, it did not receive counter-arguments by television critics. On the contrary, the critics thanked the authors for a fairly impartial treatment of the material, for instance, in the narrative depiction of Finnish foreign policy during the 1930s.

Shortly after the end of Reporadio, TV 2 came out with the series *Pääluottamusmies* (Union Steward, 1970-1971) written by the journalist Jorma Savikko, who was well informed about trade unionism and the logrolling between political parties in local government. This was the era in which there was a sharp distinction between reformist and radical politics in trade unions. In Finland, the dispute was embodied in disagreements between social democrats and communists. Before Savikko was requested to create the series, he had dramatized several plays for the theater and television. He had learned from these previous experiences how to write for television. His last work before the series had been a dramatization of Finnish novel, *Tehtaan varjossa* (Under the Shadow of a Factory) by Toivo Pekkanen. In this production he had already cooperated with director Rauni Mollberg, who was appointed as a director in TV 2's Theater department in 1968. Mollberg, who directed *Pääluottamusmies* took advantage of authentic settings and amateurs as actors. This has been Mollberg's way to create naturalistic expression also in his film productions.

As already mentioned, Jorma Savikko had a background in journalism. It was therefore natural for him to conduct interviews and use documentary aesthetics as part of the series. He avoided giving any final solutions to the problems depicted in the narrative, but highlighted all sides of the issue. Savikko continued to focus on political issues in his *Oi kallis kaupunki*, which was his and director Matti Tapio's effort to combine entertainment and informative goals in drama production. In many ways *Pääluottamusmies* resembles 'film', not television drama, but only if we compare it with its contemporaries. Its style is still based on television narration, multi-plots, close-ups, contra-shots, and flashbacks.

The preliminary goal was to film six episodes of *Pääluottamusmies*, but since it was so popular, TV 2 decided there had to be more. The first few episodes were shot at a slow pace, but throughout the rest of the episodes, the

production team was busy. These circumstances may explain the fact that the series does not maintain its storyline. In any case, there already existed a clear gap between the third and fourth episode. The original narration which emphasized the public and private lives of the main characters was put aside and the storyline engaged in side issues, even though socially significant ones. The series, for instance, turned away from the family to examine the strike of a cleaning firm, and later, a communication of the trade union movement.

The protagonist of *Pääluottamusmies* is the union steward of a big factory. He is a social democrat. In the first episode, a film camera pans on faces among paper workers who were gathered in the meeting in their workplace. The series starts with a plot in which the chief of staff describes the new principles of industrial democracy. The next episode introduces the home of the union steward, where his nephew, a young gloomy radical, tries to instruct his social democratic uncle and his female cousin in socialism. The following episode continues this the political polarization of the Left dealing with a pay dispute between two units in the factory. This dispute is first presented from the employer's and then the workers' point of view. There are also other problems in the factory, more private ones, which also help to mediate the political ones: the son of the chief of staff has fallen in love with the communist's daughter. The fourth episode returns to the factory and the union steward's position in negotiating the rationalization plans. At this point the continual narration ends.

The main characters, the union steward, his wife, the communist, and other workpeople in the factory still appeared on the screen, alongside new characters. Furthermore, the series added real people to its narration in order to promote authenticity. Viewers were now informed about the history of trade union activists and working class culture. In one of the main plots, a real social democratic veteran of the labor movement was interviewed. He explained the conflict between the social democrats and the communists in front of a visible television camera and journalist. It looks as though the entire episode attempted to adjust this antagonism and pointed out that employers have always exploited disagreements among workers. As promised by the first episode, the series took on one of the questions of the day: pay disputes in the paper industry. However, after four episodes, the series extended its themes to the wage dispute of cleaning women, the communications of trade unions, safety at work and problems in public health, and finally, the refinement of wastewater.

*Normative narration.* Despite the efforts to avoid open moral lessons, in *Pääluottamusmies* the political antagonism is presented in a conciliatory way:

the organizational and personal power relationships between the workers and salaried boss appeared to be solvable within the private sphere. By utilizing individual characters, the series told its viewers how they might avoid political conflicts on the whole. In this manner, the series ultimately tried to relieve the political parties' of their mutual grudges and demonstrate the rules of suitable behavior to their members. The reconciliation can only be understood in light of the history of the Finnish labor movement. The labor movement split into two factions during the Civil War of 1918. After this bloody war, it has been difficult for the reformist social democrats and revolutionary communists to work together in, for example, the trade unions.

The casting of *Pääluottamusmies* is, from this perspective, appropriate. It was significant that Kapo Manto played a main character; as he was an actor whose face was not overused in television, whereas his opponent, the communist worker, was played by Martti Pennanen, a well-known television actor. Kapo Manto's newness in television made the role of the union steward plausible and mundane. His relaxed method of acting was compatible with his character, who tried to keep party politics separate from the trade union movement.

*Rintamäkeläiset* (The Rintamäkeläs, 1972-1978) also attempted to achieve political consensus in its narration. In the series, the impoverished countryside was depicted in a downcast manner, without much effort to disprove this fact. The sense of place was fundamentally important since most of the shooting took place in the studios. In the series, the protagonist, a disabled ex-serviceman and anti-reformist, is driven into conflicts with the villagers and with his own family. His wife is shown to be religious and conciliatory by nature. Her life is thus a continuous effort to achieve a balance between her irritable husband and the neighborhood. However, in the series this happens in playful ways and she treats her husband with sympathy. The widely known television actress Eila Roine played a neighbor's wife, a glib chatterbox who interfered in others' lives through gossip and by revealing hidden secrets. Her bad manners annoyed her husband, a conciliatory socialist. The key elements of the storyline were the chats that went on between the farmers' wives.

The half-hour series was based on dialogue and the stories were full of humor, dealing with the stereotypes of farmers and their wives. The lives of the Rintamäkelä and Honkonen families and their personal relationships comprise the major part of the storyline. Reruns willingly showed the episode, "Souvenirs from Leningrad" (*Leningradin tultaisia*), in which the farmers go to Russia as Second World War veterans and come back a little drunk bearing presents of flower shawls and tea samovars for their wives. The episode also



reveals another ‘souvenir’ — Mr. Honkonen’s son, born after the war, who arrives unannounced to the village. This unknown son suddenly appears to visit his father and momentarily upsets his life. However, the situation calms down and the lives of the farmer and his wife continue.

*British influences.* The geographical location of Tampere, in the form of the Pispala district, has been in many ways at the heart of many issues in TV2 television drama. Working class people, who built their houses on the high ridge, have traditionally populated Pispala. The area has been the setting of many TV programs and Finnish novels. For example, the novel, *Moreeni* (Moraine) by famous Finnish author Lauri Viita, is about everyday life in Pispala. Jarmo Nieminen dramatized the novel for television in the early 1970s. This dramatized epic left viewers, as well as channel managers, to ponder the fate of Pispala residents in a contemporary context. This paved the way for the creation of the first television series focusing specifically on Pispala. One proposition for the name of the series was *Harjulla tuulee* (Wind on the Ridge). However, the final name was *Mustat ja punaiset vuodet* (Black and Red Years, 1973), which conjures up the image of political movements. The black-and-white production was shot on location in Tampere, mainly in Pispala. In order to get at the core of wartime and postwar reconstruction experiences, the series focused on a few central families. The series had a laudatory reception in general, but some episodes were considered irritating to the public, mostly due to the way the serial treated politically sensitive issues.

The two women behind this Pispala saga, Eila Arjoma and Liisa Vuoristo, decided to start the series in the 1930s. The idea originated from the Finnish television broadcast of the British work, *The Ashton Family*, a historical drama that mirrors modern times. Arjoma and Vuoristo wanted to make an analogous work for Finnish television. They decided to depict the historical events of the era from a local point of view with the result that *Mustat ja punaiset vuodet* concentrated on the life of metalworker Taavi Jokinen’s family from the Depression of the 1930s all the way through to 1973. This serial had ten episodes of one hour each and it was screened in two-week intervals.

Even if the characters’ personalities and political attitudes were drawn from everyday life, they came into conflict with governmental policy through the storyline. For some characters, for example, the war against the Soviet Union was a mistake and they termed the Continuation War a war of conquest. The treatment of the local resistance movement raised exceptionally strong arguments against Vuoristo, the writer, who was accused of being partial in writing about the historical events and giving a false representation of the reasons for the war between Finland and the Soviet Union. Moreover,

documentary-style inserts that provided information about the social conditions, attitudes, and governmental affairs of the postwar period annoyed some critics. The postwar episodes dealt with state-subsidized housing loans, retirement plans, increasing social security, the general strike of 1956, unemployment, and housing shortages, all encountered through the lives of the fictional characters.

Arjoma cast the serial by using actors from the Tampere Theater. Shooting took five days on location and an additional two days in the studio. As much as possible was shot on location in Pispala. The last episode shows the central character of the serial, the old woman, unwilling to move from Pispala. Her death at the end of the episode was, however, depicted as hopeful and optimistic; as a misty light shimmered through the window.

*Exceptional serial aesthetics.* After a short break, Jorma Savikko, who had written *Pääluottamusmies*, started on a new television project that received encouragement from Matti Tapio, the main director of the Theater Department, and Pekka Holopainen, a planning chief for TV 2. There had already been a discussion among the directors of drama, Eila Arjoma, Pekka Koskinen, Rauni Mollberg, and Jarmo Nieminen, about a new kind of city drama, which would depict contemporary urban life. *Oi kallis kaupunki* (Oh Precious Town, 1975) was shot on location (a supermarket) and in the studio. The home of the protagonist's family was a set built in the drama studio of the University of Tampere. A great deal of attention was paid to the interiors of the characters' homes.

The serial told the story of a young man, who was the son of a wealthy shopkeeper and was interested in taking part in conservative politics. *Oi kallis kaupunki* was also a love story with a happy ending. Every episode began with the specific title sequence (Ellis 1992, 119) and the following words: "They are all people of this town, the rulers and their supporters. I am going to write a book about all of them, the sunshine of politics and its other sides..." In the title sequence, a woman read these sentences as the still pictures of the local residents ran across the screen. Her words spoken in a sarcastic tone are heard only at the beginning of the episodes and there is no voice-over during the sequences. She is one of the drama's central characters, bitter about her personal situation, but perceptive and ready to write the series of events on paper. In the serial, her tales of the city are published as a novel. *Oi kallis kaupunki* was the first TV 2 serial drama filmed entirely in color and unlike the half-hour series, *Heikki ja Kaija* and *Kiurunkulma*, the episodes were 50 minutes in length. The cameraman operated a camera on his shoulder, resulting in the viewers seeing moving camera angles. The fast-paced camera work was considered experimental at that time.

*Oi kallis kaupunki* gave birth to two television stars, Kim Floor, who was already known as a pop singer, and Eija Nousiainen, a young actress from Helsinki. The production took advantage of the prior celebrity of its central actor, Kim Floor, whose songs resounded throughout the series. Both the popularity of the actor and the combination of singing and acting were sources of criticism by television critics. Especially the latter was seen as introducing elements of popular entertainment into the serial. The storyline, however, emphasized the conflicts that the main character faced in his political career. He took part in politics, met influential local politicians and other big shots, and finally found out the games they played behind closed curtains. Within the series, for example, the young conservative realized that it is a political decision whether to build a library or a sports center.

In journalistic critiques, the serial was compared to *Peyton Place*, which had already come under public discussion. The press scrutinized characters from *Oi kallis kaupunki* and compared them with the main characters of the television melodrama. The main characters were called on the critics Rodney Harrington, his fiancée Allison McKenzie, and his temporary girlfriend Betty Anderson. (Liitto 5.4.1975) Similarities could certainly be found between *Oi kallis kaupunki* and its American counterpart. The serial was intended to entertain viewers, not only to inform them as its predecessors had done. For that reason, in addition to the major political themes of the series, there is also a focus upon the lives of two young women who are involved with the main male character. These two women represented different cultural backgrounds. One was a working class girl who needed a man in order to have a better life. The protagonist's fiancé, in turn, is a librarian and an independent woman.

Before his death in 1978, director Matti Tapio completed a documentary-style series about the peace negotiations between Finland and Russia, which is considered his greatest achievement in television. Related to the foreign policy of Finland, no other series or serial has raised as much controversy as *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* (Men of War and Peace) (1978-1979). Based on published and unpublished documents, the dramatic serial depicted the difficult years during which the Finnish delegation negotiated with the Soviet Union (and partly with Great Britain) during the Continuation War (Jatkosota, from 26 June 1941 to 5 September 1944). Though this work still requires a close analysis, this is not the purpose of the present study. Some words are, nonetheless, necessary about aesthetics of *Sodan ja rauhan miehet*.

The series has been described as "utility art," which is very close to the term 'utility drama', but refers in this context to journalism that generates discussion about the drama. This means that as an artistic work, the drama

raised discussion on different topics and forced people to give opinions on them, which made the drama both good ‘utility art’ and good journalism. (Silvasti in 1979, 8.) Newspapers published 350 articles on the serial. The reception was fairly balanced. Some critics focused on minor details, whereas others accused the serial of misrepresenting the truth. (Tarkka in YLE 1978-1979, 9-19.)

#### **4.5. Paradigms of the Informational Program Policy**

As we have seen, from the very beginning, TV 2 concentrated on developing different types of drama from TV 1. Instead of revived classics and on-off dramas, TV 2 invested in original Finnish TV dramas and serial production. In the profile, the division between Helsinki and Tampere indicated that the serial drama was to be a characteristic of TV 2. This division of labor between program units lasted almost twenty-five years and it also manifested itself in different dramatic aesthetics between 1961-1977.

The fact that YLE made a clear distinction between two definitions of citizenship: the private and social, was also indicative of the era. In the eyes of its official program observers, Joan Harms, Max Rand, and Keijo Savolainen, a series such as *Heikki ja Kaija* (Heikki and Kaija) seemed to be ‘only’ a family series that did not take advantage of the opportunity to describe the social environment any more than necessary within the genre. Instead, they argued, the young couple seemed to adopt middle class attitudes. (Harms et.al. 1970, 118-120.) Program observers, which were YLE researchers who had bound themselves particularly to the ideology of the informational program policy, summarized that only a few domestic television series were engaged in depicting ‘real’ Finnish society, and in *Kiurunkulma*, it had been done deliberately. (Ibid. 112-116) According to the program policy of the time, even entertainment could be informational if it reflected reality, raised discussion about social problems and prejudices. Furthermore, the basic document of the program policy (1967) gave space for blending the boundary between fact and fiction especially in entertainment.

Realization of the informational program policy was very different in the two YLE channels. Somehow it seems that TV 2 was given a great deal of freedom due to its characteristic program policy during the period of ‘Reporadio’.

While the Television Theater of TV 1 presented programs, which mocked and shook bourgeois hegemony, the Theater department of TV 2 aspired to a different kind of line in its programs. Through a sort of progressive attitude,

the channel tried to avoid certain types of leftist dogmatism that were said to be characteristic of Television Theater on TV 1. What makes the division of labor between the two YLE channels especially interesting is the way it has also influenced judgements of serial drama. While TV 2's single dramas and some of its historical dramas have been lauded as proof of good quality, most of its dramatic series still carry the stigma of entertainment. This situation has a historical background, since dramatic series in the early 1960s did not have artistic goals.

Historically, the Television Theater of TV 1 is usually mentioned as a representative example of 'Reporadio' because of its political cabarets and classical dramas. Therefore, it is strange to realize that despite the paradigmatic form of the informational program policy, TV 2's *Kiurunkulma* has largely been ignored.

With the passing of time, YLE expected the program profile of TV 2 to be differentiated from TV 1's with the result that the channel would eventually specialize in the depiction of life outside of Helsinki (YLE 1966, 79, and 1967, 80). This has also been evident in the departmental policy. The first head of the Theater department was Tauno Yliruusi, who left the position at the beginning of the 1970s. The policy of his successor, Eero Silvasti, was to create television drama from original domestic manuscripts that strove to represent Finnish reality in the present and near past. At that time, TV 2 was also forced to search for new potential writers and performers from the provinces. Producers also considered it a great economic advantage to use the serial form. Moreover, the repetitive aesthetics of television seemed to prefer the serial form. TV 2 tried to show 'what was truly happening in Finland', how individuals experience and live with problems when solutions and decisions are so often made strictly from the Helsinki perspective.

Indicative of the situation was the fact that although the Theater department was established in 1966, some serial productions seemed to be out of alignment with its prevailing aesthetics. The entertaining serial drama does not reflect the Finnish TV theatre (TV 1) paradigm of the sixties. The explanation is simple. The first family series had been developed during the time the television clubs, when the channel was still commercially financed. When YLE bought the channel, the original production line remained in force. What followed was that some TV 2 serial dramas were produced in two different departments. For example, *Rintamäkeläiset* was partially produced in Entertainment and Children's Programs, but was also budgeted for by the Theater department.

The 1970s in Finland were marked by the adoption of the idea of democracy and the bureaucratic planning of cultural policy. The "new deal" in cultural policy took over: everything was politicized and the cultural policy

became profane. (Ibid. 229-232.) Politicizing also took place in television. The ‘normative’ program policy, however, aspired for political ‘neutrality’ in television instead of engaging viewers by transforming their social circumstances or attitudes. Though party politics became part of the storytelling, the style was affirmative and the 1970s seemed to be a blossoming era of rhetorical consensus narratives.

Later in the decade, the theater department and its new head, Reima Kekäläinen, took another road in relation to both serial production and entertainment. While the original idea to promote indigenous dramas written for television survived, some large-scale artistic productions such as *Rauta-aika* took resources away from other serial productions. Kekäläinen had been transferred from Helsinki (TV 1) to Tampere and had brought with him the artistic vision of the television theatre. As a result, the new endeavors left a vacuum in the production of family series and corresponding popular forms. It followed that the entertainment department rerouted productions into comedic series beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These series were made for the purpose of making people laugh, not primarily for informing.

Meanwhile, the theater department shifted from serial dramas to single plays. Its new head had his own vision of TV 2’s drama production and was not eager to produce television drama series, which he considered to be “routine repetitions” of television (Fiske 1987) such as *Heikki ja Kaija and Rintamäkeläiset*. Reima Kekäläinen’s policy was that it would be a misuse of the skills of the author and director to produce serial dramas. Productions were mostly one-off dramas or serials with artistic quality. According to Kekäläinen, television series such as *Rintamäkeläiset* had no literary or cinematic artistic value. The purpose of entertaining was thought to be rather negative; it gathered a large audience fairly mechanically. It also seemed that when the production of family series increased, it threatened the multiplicity of choices otherwise available to viewers.

Following Silvasti’s initiative in seeking out domestic authors, the Theater department under Kekäläinen also had ambitious goals for its artistic productions. Among TV 2’s productions were miniseries, such as *Rauta-aika* (The Iron Age, 1982), a dramatization of the national epic *Kalevala*. The epic has been a source of national inspiration for artists and political leaders since it was first published in 1835. Now it was Paavo Haavikko (writer) and Kalle Holmberg’s (director) turn to dramatize it. The project took up the entire production capacity of TV 2. It took years and about twenty permanent YLE professionals and practitioners to produce this large-scale serial for television (Flemming in YLE 1981-82, 155). *Rauta-aika* won the Prix Italy Award.

Among the other serials with a traditional artistic bent were the dramatizations of Paavo Haavikko's novel, *Barr nimenen mies* (Man Called Barr 1984), Hella Wuolijoki's *Niskavuori* (The Niskavuori), Aleksis Kivi's *Seitsemän Veljestä* (Seven Brothers 1989), and Maria Jotuni's *Huojuva Talo* (The Shaking House 1990).

Changes in media policy also brought new challenges for drama production. MTV was allowed to start its news experiment in 1981, which broke the monopoly of YLE over television news. Since TV 2 then chose to broadcast MTV's news, the experiment also influenced the program coordination of TV 2. MTV news seemed to relieve TV 2 from being regarded as the 'other channel'. Increased broadcasting time indicated a sort of strengthening of the channel's image. Only then did broadcasting operations move from Helsinki to Tampere (See Wiio in YLE 1980-81, 74.) TV 2 began to establish its position as the national alternative television network. This boast became easier to prove when some of the channel's entertainment programs, such as the comedy series *Tankki Täyteen* (Fill It Up) and its spin-off series *Reinikainen* (Constable Reinikainen), raised their popularity.

Before proceeding to consider more closely this new media environment and its impact on the staging of serial television, let us first examine more deeply how it was possible to call the first two decades of television 'episodic'. This is necessary in order to understand why it is justifiable to regard the stage that followed as serial television. The central reason for dividing TV 2's serial drama production into two key periods concerns the initiation of the program policy that has been described above. Seriality as such was not the central motivation in the making of the family series. In principle, if the series was regarded as popular, it was produced for years. The first long series, *Heikki and Kaija*, aired once a month, not once a week. Only in the 1980's did the broadcasting of family serials once a week become common. However, as I describe in more detail below, *episodicity* has been a factor that also structures the narration of the family series. The fact is that the episodic presentation has dominated Finnish television narration from the outset.

#### **4.6. The Episodic Presentation**

The family series were not only infrequent but they were usually also quite short. These dramas do not self-evidently cause the serial effect. However, the serial effect was best created in the series, which in spite of the episodic form of their narration, continued on for years as *Heikki ja Kaija*. Television scholars usually make a distinction between the two 'formats', series and

serials, which differ from one another according to both the temporal and dramatic movement between and within episodes. Tudor Oltean (1993) delineates three basic types of serial continuity: The ‘movement’ and ‘stasis’ between (1) character roles, (2) protagonist and antagonist, and (3) an invisible occurrence, that is, an implied incident which supposedly happens in-between the episodes. (Ibid. 15.)

Even though there has been little experience of industrial genres in Finnish television production, it has a rich variety of serial forms. Therefore, the division between series and serial is too restrictive for the purposes of the study at hand. Instead, it is more useful to utilize the serial typology offered by Tulloch and Alvarado (1983):

1. Continuous serial
  2. Episodic serial
  3. Sequential series
  4. Episodic series
- (Ibid. ix-x.)

According to these definitions, the continuous serial runs an infinite number of episodes with multiple narrative strands, which are introduced and concluded in different temporal periods. In Finnish television culture the first example of the serial form was the imported television melodrama. In indigenous productions the form did not emerge until the middle of the 1990s. Instead, episodic serials have been more familiar in domestic productions. They are characterized by narrative continuity but for a *limited* number of episodes screened, for instance, in separate seasons.

Even though the above-mentioned *Heikki ja Kaija* aired infrequently, the ‘continuity’ was preserved through the permanent main characters. The individual episodes of the series, however, ended in harmony and their representation emphasized the inner logic of the individual episode, not the movement between episodes. *Kiurunkulma* introduced more recurring characters than its predecessors on TV 2. The continuity between the separate episodes was even more occasional and there were also floating main characters. Despite the main protagonist, in *Pääluottamusmiehes* there were likewise clearly separate periods. The clear exception to these series was *Oi kallis kaupunki*. It was a continual serial but because of the number of the periods it depicted, it remained a seasonal serial. The situation comedies that began at the beginning of the 1980s, however, still stood distinctly for the episodicity of narration.

Episodicity has been the most enduring fictional form in the Finnish television. Most of the YLE’s serial dramas in the study at hand belong to this



category. In practice, the distinction series/serials is even more complex than indicated above. For instance, in its initial episodes, *Pääluottamusmies* was like a continual serial but the rest of the episodes surprisingly resembled episodic serials.

The logic of seriality, however, became common in the mid 1980's. This not only displaced episodicity from the narration but also from the very planning of programs. The ideology of seriality was directed toward a general desire to produce drama more economically and place TV programs more competitively in the program schedule. This explains why there has not been much talk about the drawbacks of seriality before the 1990's in connection with Finnish series. Until recently, one criticized above all the American serials, such as *Peyton Place*. It was feared that *Peyton Place* bound the Finns to television and thus acclimated them to the wrong watching behavior. Seriality has thus been considered a problem of imported programs and thereby of the program *schedule*. That is, as a result of the increasing broadcasting day of various channels, American and British long lasting serials (among them, the famous *Coronation Street*) and episodic series filled the Finnish television schedule.

Ultimately, as Roger Hagedorn (1995) argues, seriality is neither restricted to a particular medium or genre. In his terminology, serials are distinguished as a narrative form by the discourse they trace between the industry that produces them and the spectators (viewers, IR) who consume them. In short, Hagedorn suggests that we must look to the mode of production, distribution, and consumption, through which a narrative text is offered and seriality is defined to consumers. Moreover, episodicity as he understands the term is the crucial property of text that distinguishes the series and serial from the 'classic' narrative text, that is, the single-unit realistic narrative. (Hagedorn 1995, 27-28.)

The serial form breaks with the three classical unities: multiplying the elements of time, space, and characters, allowing for extensive narrative complication. Thus, serials differ from the classic storyline in manifold narrative enigmas, partial answers, and traps activated in the course of the narrative. As a result of the episodic presentation, regularly setting up delays *across the narrative breaks* and usually motivated by 'cliffhangers', the serial operates to stimulate consumption of later episodes. (Ibid. 28.) Similarly, the suspense between episodes answers the question as to why serials exist. An episode of any serial promotes the continued consumption of later episodes of the same serial, product loyalty, and the very medium in which they appear. As Hagedorn states:

This explains why serials have been introduced into every medium precisely at the point at which they are emerging as a mass medium: because they constitute a remarkably effective tool for establishing and then developing a substantial consuming public for that medium. Once attracted, that audience is then available and predisposed to consume other texts the particular medium provides. And for this same reason, serials have also been used to expand an existing audience base by targeting specific subgroups of the population, generally women or children. When a medium needs an audience, it turns to serials. (Ibid. 29.)

Hagedorn's discussion of seriality is equally valid of serials in newspapers, serial novels, book series, cartoons, radio programs, and television programs including miniseries and soap operas. As John Tulloch (1990) says about the scheduling and sequencing of television programs in the British context:

If traditional academic discourse has tended to contrast single-play 'seriousness' with soap-opera 'triviality' in positioning TV drama, *scheduling* is central to its positioning inside the organization of the TV industry. Scheduling television drama involves making choices according to two sets of relationships. First, there is the choice of *which* TV genre — soap opera, current affairs, news or action-adventure — to place (or view) in any one-time slot. Secondly, there is the choice of the *sequencing* of programs: news at 6.00 p.m., current affairs at 7.00, followed by soap opera at 7.30 and action-adventure at 8.30. (Tulloch 1990, 38, original italics.)

Before we begin to deal more closely with the consequences of serial television for TV 2 drama production, let us remain for a while in the 1980's. What I call in next chapter *Comical Television* is the era in which the Entertainment department produced all periodically screened television series whereas the Theater department concentrated on big and more 'serious' productions and a few short serials. Over the course of time, 'comical television' paved the way for many new comedy series and a new type of morality in YLE's productions: the culture of amusement. This phase also anticipates the increase in competition between the channels and the transition to the ideology of seriality in television production.

## 5. COMIC EFFECT

In the 1970s, TV 2's serial dramas predominantly aspired towards political consensus. According to the informational program policy, this was understood as an attempt to impartially reflect the views of different social groups and give these perspectives a balanced representation on television. As already explained in Chapter 4, alongside with the portrayal of family life, family series also tackled issues related to the trade union movement and municipal politics. As the 1980s approached, Finnish foreign policy also became a topic of the historical drama.

Since the late 1970s the Finnish society was living in a political climate in which so-called old political regimes were put under examination and consequently new interpretations of the foreign policy began to flourish. The time seemed ripe to delve into different versions of what had happened in the near past, as for instance, in the friendly relationship between Soviet Union and Finland as well as during the war negotiations between Finland and the Soviet Union. The political establishment, however, was not necessarily ready for the exploration of politically delicate matters, which now were interpreted through televised fiction.

*Sodan ja rauhan miehet* (Men of War and Peace) aired 1978-79 was based on historical documents and interviews of historians as well as participants of negotiations between the representatives of the Finnish government and the Soviet embassy in the 1930s and early 1940s. Besides this, *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* represented a shift in the production policy of TV 2 drama.

Fairly didactic family series disappeared for a while from the television screen. This change can be explained by the fact that recourses of the TV 2 Theater Department were put in the large and more 'serious' drama productions, such as *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* as well as the dramatized version of *Kalevala*, the national epic (*Rauta-aika* [Iron Age, 1982]). But the department was not the only one turning into a new direction. Rising ambition of some directors and writers of the entertainment department gave room for an alternative to the conventional family drama, namely the family comedy. As a consequence of this, the period *comical* television began in the TV 2 drama production. During this particular period, only the entertainment department produced family series and they were entirely comedies. Later in the 1980s the production of family comedy moved first to the Drama Group that was established in the entertainment department, and then to the new Theatre department.

In order to comprehend the shifts that occurred during this period in the Finnish television culture, it is essential that we explore the debate over entertainment on Finnish television as well as the changes that had taken place in TV 2's Theatre department. The entertainment writers and directors were worried about the state of the humor on Finnish television. They claimed that Finnish laughter had been buttoned up for a long time. At the end of the 1970s, TV 2's entertainment department instead openly declared that Finnish television still avoided taboo subjects at which the viewers were not allowed to laugh. While the theatre department shifted its production towards so-called serious dramas, the entertainment department began investing in comedies. Until this, the Entertainment department had mainly produced music and talk shows.

The new family comedies of the early 1980s were not necessarily thought of as *family* series, but they soon caught the attention of families, due in part to their concentration on family life. The family units of these comedies, however, were not ordinary. Instead, they consisted of communities of adult members of the family who hung out together without any explicit reason. These popular series also had a new attitude towards the political climate that was pervasive of the 1970s television and, in the opinion of some, were more sober-minded than earlier series. This attitude was not reflected thematically within the series, but was indirectly in the ways the comedy series put its characters posed as disinterested in politics. It can be said, that the family comedies of the early 1980s raised the ordinary individual person — mostly male — to the status of a hero in the narrative.

In the opinions of the fictional community, the actions of this person were often dis-functional, but the viewers were offered an example of heroism in ordinary life. The hero did not have the societal ethics that were imagined to unite citizens in the 1970s. His relation to society was critical in a populist way; the unique experiences of the individual were raised above the collective experience that was still essential to moral thinking a decade earlier. In this sense, *comical* television anticipated post realistic television images, in which a unitary moral order was replaced by the morals of individuals.

In spite of the above-mentioned shift in serial family drama in the early 1980s, the tradition of Finnish television comedies is still young. There have been only few genuine situation comedies on TV 2, often produced by the same authors. Typical comedic tropes have focused on the laziness and inefficiency of the average Finn. Accordingly, these comedies require a certain type of audience who recognizes, for instance, the meaning of laziness in the Finnish context as the act of resistance towards both internal and foreign (due to history, mostly Swedish or Soviet/Russian) rulership. The viewers of family

comedy thus form a discursive community, which functions to produce a comic effect. There is both a cultural and social element to their laughter, to which I will return at the end of this chapter.

In this chapter, I explore three situation comedies, which have all been the work of the same author, Neil Hardwick. One of these series, *Tankki täyteen* (Fill It Up) is analysed in detail. The next few pages provide a short presentation on the situation comedy and its different conventions in Anglo-American television. This is done in order to valorize the Finnish comedy tradition. The family series of the late 1970s and early 1980s utilized the British convention of the ‘social comedy’. However, in critical readings, the Finnish comedy of the 1980s appears to have been oriented towards individuals, while addressing its viewers as consumers.

Some other characteristics are also important. On the one hand, comical television has worked against purely realistic narratives, challenging the informational program policy and thereby the existing ideology of public service. On the other hand, the use of irony in the family series has brought about a new form of television aesthetics. This makes it necessary to say something about the ‘discursive community’ of the Finnish comedy audience.

## 5.1. Situation Comedy

When considering television comedies all over the world one should not only take into account the text but also those discursive communities where audiences are constructed. As Sigmund Freud in *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten* (orig. 1905) suggests, the ‘comic’, unlike jokes, must be discovered (Freud 1983, 160) and can be located anywhere, including in the practices of everyday life. A person appears comic when bringing him/herself into a situation that depends on external circumstances. Social factors render a character comic regardless of his/her personal qualities (ibid. 175).

As Neale and Krutnik (1990) note when comparing jokes, there are those in which a jokester does the work, while with *gags*, the comic must be figured by the observer, the viewer of the comedy (ibid. 74). Within plots, gags can involve both suspense and surprise (ibid. 55). According to Neale and Krutnik, the original meaning of the gag as a technique is similar to that of the wisecrack and the joke, which have been defined as “an improvised interpolation” or as “a pre-prepared piece of action”. Gags are different from a single, one-time comic occurrence such as a ‘double take’ or a ‘pratfall,’ in which somebody slips on a waxed floor, which both lack the structural complexity of the gag. Sometimes, for instance, the double take is simply called gag, while sequences

involving a complex elaboration are known as developed or articulated gags (ibid. 51-52). However, in the case there is put an equation sign between double takes and gags, the title 'gag' is misleading.

Gags seem to be appropriated to express ineptitude and frustration. Gags are especially suited to the articulation of failure because of the potential ingredient of interruption, just as gags are compatible with the articulation of sudden success because of the element of surprise. (Ibid. 58.) For example, the male protagonist of *Tankki täyteen*, Sulo Vilen faces himself constantly in a situation that makes him and the family recognizes that what in first sight seemed like a good purchase was in fact a lousy one. More importantly perhaps, as Neale and Krutnik suggest, the term 'gag' is appropriate to all these above mentioned forms — ineptitude, frustration, and failure — because “they all share a property marked in its meaning as interpolation: they each constitute digressions or interruption in the progress of a plot or a piece of purposive narrative action”. Moreover, each tends to involve a degree of surprise. (Ibid. 52.) Neale and Krutnik argue that gags are a set of actions linked by the logic of variations in relations to cultural and narrative expectations of the comedy audience.

When actions take an unexpected turn, audience expectations of what is to happen next may be derived from (1) their general cultural norms; (2) prior narrative development; or simply from (3) the logic of repetition. Consequently, actions may then themselves become the object of unexpected variations and, as we will soon see in the example of *Tankki täyteen* (1978-82), a single, one-off gag can become part of a series that is an integral component in an articulated gag (ibid. 53).

John Tulloch (1990) restates what a number of critics have previously asserted, namely that there is a distinction between the two major types of comedy. The first is the comedy of formal disruption, which is 'aware of language', confusing and recombining it. The other type of comedy is that of social disruption which disturbs the empirically given social-discursive order. Tulloch does not agree with the argument that the latter is somehow conservative in nature, instead noting that there are various kinds of social comedies offering different tendencies in terms of 'subversion' or 'incorporation'. (Ibid. 246) Along with Janet Woollacott (1986), Tulloch also states that the specificity of television comedy lies not in its exclusivity of elements but in their combination, a play with a disturbance, process and closure within the narrative. In doing so, situation comedy constructs particular temporal sequences. (Tulloch 1990, 249)

According to Woollacott, the comic narrative offers the viewers “a transformation of the initial equilibrium through a disruption and then a

reordering of its components” (1986, 199). For Woollacott, the narrative seems to work ideologically in situation comedies, which constitute but one form of realistic fiction (ibid. 206). In rejecting, however, the notion of popular fiction as ‘mere ideology’ that echoes some vulgar ideological criticism Woollacott considers the ways in which stereotyping works through comedies by using Althusser’s ‘structuralist’ reworking of Marxist theory. Woollacott argues that viewers’ identification with a character follows both from the articulation of a character within a text and from the spectator’s position within a particular reading formation.

Woollacott suggests that identification with a character depends on identification with the text itself. In this way, there are also problems with outlining the ideological function of social types and stereotypes, which are characteristic for situation comedies. It follows that female characters could be said to be represented more negatively than men in the comedy, but it can also be argued that there are considerable negotiations surrounding the use of gendered stereotypes both textually and inter-textually. In terms of viewing and reading the situation comedy there is also the same situation; the comedy can allow viewers different strategies of identification. (Ibid. 209-211)

Stereotypes surely are one attempt to bridge the gap between individual and more general ideological formations, such as the gender system. However, if following Althusser’s idea of the formation of subject stereotypes do not tend to work in a direct way where ideas of the ruling class or the gender system are handed down to the masses. (Ibid. 212) Althusser uses the term ‘interpellation’ to which in a way or other a viewer gives his/her response. In terms of Althusser, it is appropriate to speak about ‘identification’ than ‘negotiation’. The concept of ideology is discussed in detail in Chapter 9. At this point, it is enough to state as Janet Woollacott does, that negotiations surrounding the use of stereotypes are “indicated by the shifts and differences in one stereotype across a range of texts and by the way in which social subjects established in different reading formations negotiate identification with a stereotyped character” (ibid. 212).

Situation comedy can also be seen as working toward the expected re-ordering. As Terry Lowell (1984) further argues, most television sitcoms are comedies of “social realism”, or, situations in a real, external social world largely drawn from recognizable, standard situations, usually from personal or family relations, or in small-scale working environment (ibid. 22). Unlike Woollacott, Lowell is reluctant to accept Neale’s (1980) terminology of ‘discursive orders’. Instead, Lowell uses the term ‘discursive’ in relation to “widely held beliefs about the nature of social reality, social relation, social causation”. Accordingly, the social order comprises two levels in comedy:

the *normative* order and the *typical social* order. The former expresses what people think ought to be the case while the latter is what they think is usually the case. (Lowell 1984, 22) Terry Lowell continues, that:

Social comedy negotiates the problem of comedy's necessary effect of highlighting the telling, by 'naturalizing it'. In this type of comedy, the comic is 'found', not constructed (which Freud incidentally believed to be the case for all comedy). The construction of comedy can only be recognized where 'naturalistic' characters do the constructing, through jokes, wit, gags, etc. The comedic is integrated with the requirements of social realism where it is seen as originating from a believable character than from the texts. A second way, in which social realism can utilize the comic mode without disturbing its own conventions, is by constructing narratives which 'bring out' comedy seen as inherent in the 'human condition', even where the characters themselves are innocent of comic intention. (Ibid. 22-23.)

By the 'real', Lowell means something that is very close to what Antonio Gramsci calls 'common sense' — the 'real' that is recognized is composed of platitudes, popular truisms, common experiences, observations and prejudices. Therefore, in social comedy one laughs at the ideal because it is so far removed from what is regarded as 'real,' and laughs in turn at this 'real' because it is so far from the ideal. A viewer laughs at what is familiar rather than at what is unexpected, and the comedy depends on some kind of recognition and acknowledgement of both the ideal and the 'real'. (Ibid. 24.) Lowell, however, does not argue that comedies of social realism on television are inevitably ideological nor does she go to extremes in statements about their subversive potential. In other words, the 'recognized' as 'common sense' in social comedy is not necessarily parallel to the naturalized dominant ideology. Rather, some comedies could extend 'recognition' beyond its usual boundaries and strengthen the sense of that order as normal. (Ibid. 29.)

## **5.2. The Feminist Contributions**

Through the situation comedy, viewers can negotiate cultural meanings related to different social phenomena. The position held by women in society is a type of social phenomenon. Many feminist analyses also emphasize the female viewers' cultural negotiations of media texts. In these feminist analyses, the relation of humor to the subconscious is examined alongside cultural interpretations. Feminist analyses of the situation comedy have brought an



important contribution to the discussion of gendered meaning structures of humor. Comedy is considered an important 'language' when dealing with culturally difficult subjects such as gender relations and the role of women in society. It would seem that comedy plays an especially important role when an attempt is made to deal with the negotiation between old and new role models.

As Tulloch (1990) suggests, situation comedies can value *both* traditional familial and *new* 'independent' relationships. Therefore, situation comedy needs to be analyzed both in terms of myth and resistance. Here Tulloch uses Raymond Williams' conceptualization of residual and emergent cultures. A case in point is *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (CBS 1970-77) that actively worked with feminism by replacing the 'romantic' male lead and the traditional family utopia with 'the mutual exchange that has always characterized the daily lives of women'. Having progressive potential, the comedy is claimed to have questioned, for instance, the place of woman as a consumer and as a believer in the myths of femininity and correspondingly providing its female viewers a utopian fantasy from which to examine the banal reality of daily domesticity. (Ibid. 258-259.)

As Kathleen Rowe (1997) has demonstrated, *Roseanne* (ABC 1988-1997), created by Roseanne Barr, can be seen to carry a strong ambivalence towards a class and gender identity. Different kinds of feminist and other explanations would be apt in this case, but in explaining the ambivalence surrounding the female figure of the show, Rowe demands a closer look at gender and the historical representations of female figures similar to Roseanne. The comic figure of Roseanne uses a 'semiotic of the unruly' to expose the contradictions between, on the one hand, both the ideals of New Left and the Women's Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and on the other hand, the realities of a working class family two decades later. (Ibid. 75.) Rowe's analysis of the show juxtaposes the two uncertain faces of femininity: female unruliness and its opposite, the ideology of the self-sacrificing wife and mother (ibid. 80).

A different take on the situation comedy and feminism is found in psychoanalytical theory, which revolves around theories of the comic and humor. Patricia Mellencamp's (1986) study of the female protagonist on the situation comedy as the joke teller is derived from her criticism of Freudian joke analysis as not being applicable to the structure of television comedies because the joke is a male preserve in Freud's assessment of the comic and humor. Freud's essay on humor is interesting in terms of Mellencamp's own analysis of the *I Love Lucy* show (CBS 1951-1957). Lucy is the female 'victim,' which Mellencamp defines as the place of the female performer and the

spectator in the internal and external conditions of the production. (Ibid. 90-94) For Lucy, who endlessly repeats that she wants to work and to perform, humor is in Freud's terms "a means of obtaining pleasure in spite of the distressing affects that interfere (with) it" (ibid. 92). This is humor Mellencamp notes, "as a substitute... at the cost of anger, instead of getting angry" (ibid.).

Thus Mellencamp states that "(p)erhaps, in relation to husband and wife sketches, and audiences, the sexes split right down the middle, alternating comic with humorous pleasure depending on one's view of who the victim is; this invocation of different pleasures suggests a complexity of shifting identifications amidst gendered, historical audiences." (Ibid. 92-93) While Lucy is confined by patriarchy and incarcerated within the domestic regime, her Cuban-American husband is, on the contrary, often the immediate victim of Lucy's attempts to escape via the cracking of jokes — the "comic of movement". In Freudian theory, humorous pleasure is thought to "save" feelings because the reality of the situation is too painful, and emotions towards it are often repressed. Thus, Lucy's weekly frustration with the confinement of domesticity is counteracted through her attempt to control the situation through humor. (Ibid. 93) Mellencamp draws the conclusion that considering the repressive conditions of the 1950s, with the double bind situation of the female viewers replicated in the structure of the show, "humor might have been women's weapon and tactic of survival, ensuring sanity, the triumph of the ego and pleasure" (ibid. 94).

### **5.3. Comical Television 1978-1986**

On September 10, 1978 *Helsingin Sanomat* published a full-page article written by Matti Rosvall with the cooperation of Neil Hardwick, a comedy writer, and Jussi Tuominen, who was an editor in TV 2's Entertainment department. The purpose of the article was to confront the uncomfortable feeling that comedy makers had received mostly negative feedback on their work. Hardwick and Tuominen, together with Esko Leimu, the director, and Jussi Näätä, the executive cameraman, had won an award in Montreux in 1978 for their work, *Dumb Show* (Kielipuoli potilas), a 30-minute comedy about a foreigner lost in Finland. Producers were particularly anxious about the lack of discussion about the comedy in the Finnish press. Matti Rosvall wrote provocatively about 'bullies' at YLE and other organizations: "Traditionally, these bullies react to entertainment in anything but a reasonable way".

The “bullies” were the following: Those who created the rules of programming (OST), political members who sat on the Program Council, congresspersons, critics, journalists, the proponents of magazine journalism letters to the editor, and reports collected by the internal duty editors (ohjelmapäivystäjät). The article argued that Finnish entertainment oscillates between informative communication and fine arts. According to Rosvall, the fine arts had overcome their numerous taboos, but in the age of television there still were an increasing number of taboos in the field of entertainment. He gave a list of topics which were not to be made fun of: minorities; nudity and genitals; dipsomaniac clergymen who swear and behave badly; a positive attitude towards malingerers, bums, and fools; dullards; cursing; getting drunk; and committing adultery.

By complaining about the state of entertainment, Rosvall, Hardwick, and Tuominen were strategically promoting a new comedy series, *Tankki täyteen* (*Fill It Up*, 1978, 1980)<sup>1</sup> that was touted as “just about the first attempt to make Finnish television comedy”. As the title of the series suggests, the program was loosely about cars and gasoline. Customers, however, rarely took their cars in for service in *Tankki täyteen*, which was a key element of the comedy. The serial was primarily about the Vilen family<sup>2</sup> who are fifty something parents, and their adult son, living together in an old garage where they repair and service motor vehicles. This “commercial establishment” was located near a highway. During the first six episodes, however, only a few customers — accidentally — found the station or the bar (cafeteria), which left the family members with a lot of time to bicker over their situation and plan a better future.

The protagonist, Mr. Vilen, is an ordinary Finn who, nonetheless, has an unpredictable obsession with buying cheap things. He does not necessarily need all the things he happens to purchase and therefore repeatedly makes the excuse that “I got it cheap”. Among his purchases is the unprofitable garage where the events of the series transpire. His wife wearily accompanies

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1 *Hanski* (Nickname Hanski) was chronologically the first comedy on television that utilized odd situations. This popular MTV production of the 1960s starred a popular actor, Hannes Häyrinen, and was based on a foreign format, whereas *Tankki täyteen* was regarded as being the first Finnish comedy, even though it borrowed some elements from British comedy. Some conventions were consciously omitted from the production, however, including a studio audience. Due to suspicions that Finnish viewers would not like watching canned laugh tracks, comedy makers did not use a live audience. Furthermore, live performances in front of a studio audience were considered to be very demanding. Moreover, many episodes of *Tankki täyteen* were filmed both in the studio and on location.

2 The name ‘Vilen’ connotes the name V.I. Lenin.

her husband in his undertakings and tries to keep up appearances among the local people. Their adult son gets tired of his mother's uninterrupted mothering and lack of prospects for his future.

The producers thought that it was better if the main actors did not act like comedians through jokes, but that the humor to emerge through dramatic actions. The protagonist and his snobbish wife often clashed in the comedy since their expectations were totally different. Although these clashes produced comic effects, the two were always serious about what they said and the only one able to openly joke was Reinikainen, a policeman who used archaic methods in his work.

As a production, *Tankki täyteen* was a significant experience for all of its creators, who felt that they were making something exceptional in Finnish television history. *Tankki täyteen* was the first drama-based series for Neil Hardwick and all of the other team members. Hardwick had emigrated from Great Britain to Finland in 1969 and worked first as an English teacher before embarking on his entertainment career. Esko Leimu had been working for YLE in Helsinki and Tampere since the mid-1960s. He had already directed several single plays in the theaters. In *Tankki täyteen*, he preferred the multi-camera technique, which allowed long shoots, with the result that the production team turned out nearly 20 minutes of material a day.

The comedy was shot both in the studio and on location. The setting was an abandoned gas station in Ylöjärvi, near Tampere. The series was originally intended to be only six episodes, but due to its popularity the team was asked to produce more. After this point, however, the previous setting was fundamentally changed, because it was impossible to continue with the original milieu. As it was fashionable at that time to move back to the countryside and take up, among other things, breeding sheep, the director proposed that the Vilen family could move to the countryside. After a break of more than one year, the remaining five episodes appeared on the screen. All episodes were run on Saturdays in two-week intervals.

Jussi Tuominen, who created the series with Hardwick, had come to TV 2 in the early 1970s to write sketches. Hardwick was writing sketches for TV 1 when Tuominen contacted him. Their cooperation started with *Kielipuoli potilas* and later, *Tankki täyteen* and *Reinikainen*. They wrote the series together; Hardwick would write the first draft and Tuominen would rewrite the script in order to meet the requirements of a specific Finnish dialect. Sometimes they rewrote scenes while shooting was already in progress. Fictional biographies of the characters were written in order to keep their psychological profiles consistent throughout the screenwriting.

Jussi Jormanainen (1999) states that in *Tankki täyteen*, Neil Hardwick utilized the common features of situation comedy, but created situations suitable for Finnish viewers. For Hardwick the common features are: the amount of characters, locations, sets, the studio audience, and laughter of recognition. Two features he changed in the terms of the genre were two last-mentioned; Hardwick gave up the studio audience and tended to use the situations recognized in the Finnish contexts. (Ibid. 15) As many other situational comedies, also *Tankki täyteen* was heavily dependent on dialogue and on gestures, as the first minutes of the series demonstrates. Viewers see a supposedly abandoned gas station from the point-of-view of a car traveling down the highway. Inside the bar, in a one-off section, only the protagonist's knocks on the door, the clacking of his wife's shoes, the movement of furniture, the opening of ketchup bottles, and a record player make audible sounds.

#### **5.4. Lack of Concern: A Critical Reading**

The comic of *Tankki täyteen* is realized not only through gags but also in its basic situation — people on the margin. No doubt the recession and concomitant rural depopulation could be seen as the backdrop for the storylines. The comedy itself, its characters and the situations they encountered could be understood as a micro-model of Finnishness. The comic was directed towards their actions, which were useless in a material-practical sense, but nonetheless psychologically motivated and recognizable. The first scene of the opening episode, where the couple communicates without saying a single word gives an illuminating example of the types of gags at work in the series:

*The indoor settings open on the bar where the protagonist's wife, Emilia reads some magazine and leans on the counter. The male protagonist, Sulo enters the room, and she disappears into the kitchen. Knocking on the bar's showcase, he gets straight to the point; he takes the cutlery and sits down to lunch with his stocking cap on. Sulo gets up to go to the jukebox to select a number. Just as he turns, the jukebox stops. Emilia reenters with his lunch on a tray and then returns to the bar counter to continue reading her magazine. Squeezing a plastic bottle of ketchup, Sulo tries in vain to spice his food — the bottle is empty. The empty bottle makes a flatulent noise. Sulo tries another tube on the next table before going to the bar counter. He squeezes the last bottle cupping his palm — his palm fills with tomato sauce.*

*Returning to his seat, Sulo realizes that his lunch has vanished. The wife has taken the plate to the kitchen. Now it is time for dessert and Emilia brings him a cup of coffee. Sugar, however, is missing and Sulo starts to go to get it, but suddenly remembers to take his coffee along. When finally seated again, he drops something. While Sulo is searching for what he has dropped, we hear the tramp of a woman's heels. As the punch line of the gag, the coffee cup disappears as Sulo raises his head. The five-minute scene ends when he starts to leave the bar as Emilia asks "Yea?" and he answers: "Thank you." The next scene exposes why she gave him the silent treatment: Sulo has bought a wrecker — on the cheap, of course.*

On the surface, the wife's silence introduces the storyline and its basic theme, her husband's inclination towards losing bargains. The wife reacted by giving him the silent treatment. At the same time, she can cope with the situation. Her behavior was convenient for the husband, who has a tendency towards contemplation and would rather avoid than encounter his nagging wife.

Emilia's treatment exposes the power relations between the couple. The gags, involved in the scene, dealt mainly with food, the preparation and serving of which is supposed to be a female duty. Hence, she has a commanding position in this realm. Emilia can, in the last resort, also be silent, but as the scene described above reveals, Sulo is somehow independent of his wife. At least he is powerless to eat lunch without Emilia and depend upon her cooking and serving him. Without these, he does not get up and make his own lunch, but simply resigns himself to his fate of going hungry and thanks Emilia for her "hospitality". During the next scenes, it is possible to register that by writing detective stories Sulo has developed a fictional world where he is the all-seeing protagonist. This is a realm of masculine freedom in the very same way that bars are regarded to be such a space for many Finnish men (Sulkunen et. al. 1985). In the case of *Tankki täyteen*, as the first scene reveals, the bar instead has been feminized.

Sulo's repeated attempts to get food (which take up almost the whole scene), which ends in failure, is the major gag in the scene. There are also sub-gags, which sustain the major one: the short episode with the jukebox, the ketchup bottle, and the dropped item. And finally there is Emilia's onomatopoeic word "yea" and Sulo's reply to it.

As viewers of *Tankki täyteen* might have realized by this point, the family enterprise, both the gas station and the bar, are unproductive even though this fact is never explicitly mentioned in the scene. In this way the series operates on both the level of ideal and 'real': the characters hope for wealthy life and

success in many ways, but they are forced to be frustrated and surprised repeatedly. Moreover, the series indicates two levels of beliefs about the social, the normative and typical social orders.

The production team surely knew that the gas station could have been somewhat more successful had the male protagonist been depicted as a hard worker. At the same time, the team was aware of what is usually the case when circumstances are at their worst: surplus value does not accumulate and a capital account is overeaten. Therefore, through its gags, the comedy depicted the 'real' lives of its protagonists as being far removed from the ideal that they were trying to reach. Consequently, viewers could laugh at what was a familiar structure of feeling rather than at a visible comical situation; they laugh at that which they recognize as 'real' within the 'ideal'.

In a market economy, the protagonist's ridiculous habit over purchasing unnecessary products is both shared and recognizable, if not always consciously, by many viewers, who often compensate for their feelings of emptiness by shopping for throwaway goods. His behavior potentially opens viewers' eyes to evaluate the world of ordinary people. The pleasure of the comic comes from the recognition of the consequence of a poor purchase. In this way, *Tankki täyteen* can be seen to be addressing a discursive community of consumers that either compensates for its members' frustrations by laughing at the imaginary Other (the protagonist) or by opening their eyes and recognizing their consumer-self. The social nature of laughter appears here both in its collective, historical and cultural articulations.

The protagonist is not a pitiful person who demands sympathy for his unjust situation. While we are busy laughing at him, he is also almost recognizable as a hero who has been judged according to his art of living. The protagonist escapes from his incompetence as a businessman into an action-packed inner world. Only his wife continues to represent social order in the series. It can be said that instead of examining the subject of social superstructure, the series pays attention to the individual dynamics of everyday.

*Tankki täyteen* in no way subjects the female gender to a close narrative scrutiny. The female characters, due to their psychological perspicacity, usually persevere or rescue the male ones from emotional and moral hazards. Most plots, however, are told from the perspective of a male protagonist and men have important positions in the narrative of *Tankki täyteen*. Female protagonists, in turn, perform tasks typical of women. As the history of Hollywood comedy has already shown, a woman is intended to signify the demands of integration and responsibility for the male within the genre (Krutnik 1995, 37). This is also evident in *Tankki täyteen*. Its men are

disintegrated characters evading their duty and, correspondingly, the women's duty is to bring them back into an accepted, hard-working community.

The comedy reflected certain class experiences of the late 1970s when the first signs of economic liberalism and individualism appeared. By describing the present and the future of the family's small-scale business, *Tankki täyteen* reworked the main contradiction of liberalism: the desire to be the architect of one's own fortune and the limited options to put it into practice. Reruns of *Tankki täyteen* were aired in 1980, 1982, 1989, and 1996.

The next series by Hardwick and Tuominen, *Reinikainen*, used a spin-off character from *Tankki täyteen* and focused even more clearly on the individualistic experiences of city life and people's own ethics towards society. The series *Mummo* (The Granny, 1987 and 1989) by Pekka Lepikkö dealt with similar ideas. In this comedy, an unruly grandmother tries the patience of her son's family by questioning their upstart values. These upstart values often stressed the centrality of social status and consumerism over charity and taking care of others. This kind of an attitude became common in the economic boom of the 1980's in Finland.

## 5.6. Spin-offs and Irony

There have been only a couple of spin-offs on Finnish television. One spin-off was *Reinikainen* (Constable Reinikainen, 1982-1983), who moved from the countryside to the city. Police constable Reinikainen became a nationwide figure whose exploits were occasionally reported as front-page news. *Reinikainen* described the everyday routine police work, but from the perspective of an unruly policeman who solved problems with the help of his dark sense of humor. On the first day that Reinikainen started his new job, his new colleagues arrested him. These colleagues were shown in several episodes and they have been used to explore the practice of the city police. Within its fourteen episodes, the comedy made fun of life, and even of death.

Constable Reinikainen is a big, loud, quick-witted macho man, but is also basically a kind-hearted and lonely person behind his dark tragic humor. The actor, Tenho Saurén, a joke teller by nature was charismatic in his minor role in *Tankki täyteen* and very soon his joking and swearing policeman caught the viewers' attention. Saurén's personality and versatile experience was an essential part of the character. Despite the fact that a chief police inspector is shown not to be up to his job on the series, the Finnish police quickly realized that the comedy gave them good publicity. The production team was asked to visit police social occasions; they received awards and were photographed



with a Chief Constable. The Tampere Police Department lent special assistance to the production, which resulted in actual police cars and officers appearing in episodes.<sup>3</sup>

Critical reception of *Reinikainen* was in general very warm. Neil Hardwick's position as the creator of the comedy was taken for granted. Some columnists pointed out that Hardwick; the British immigrant "declares that he is the doctor for our humor". Or they stated, that the Brit "seems to be more aware of the mentality the Häme people (hämäläinen kansanluonne) than most of the domestic writers". And finally, Hardwick "may certainly be a gift to the Finnish people". Reruns of the comedy were shown in 1982 (episode 1) 1985, 1992-1993

Hardwick's next work for TV 2 was the comedy, *Sisko ja sen veli* (Sister and Her Brother) in 1986. Its six episodes were written for two actors, Tuija Ernamo and Ilmari Saarelainen, both from the Tampere Theater. Saarelainen had already acted in the *Tankki täyteen*. Both actors knew the Rauma dialect, which became part of the comedy. The comedy was both written and directed by Hardwick, who preferred to be involved in the production from the beginning to the end. He even founded his own production company, through which he later he made an experimental murder mystery for TV 2, *Pakanamaan kartta* (Off the Map, 1991). *Napaseutu* (Polar Region, eighteen episodes for MTV, 1995) was among his other dramatic series.

*Sisko ja sen veli* was a comedy series about an adult sister and her brother, Tuija and Immu, both in their mid-thirties and both still living together and facing things that were not so common in Finnish comedy: death, sexually transmitted diseases, and physical disability. Tuija worked at a bingo hall, and her brother, Immu was at home, a perennial student and nude model. *Sisko ja sen veli* involves a great deal of one-off irony.

Irony usually indicates, through character or plot development, an intention or attitude opposite to that which is actually or ostensibly stated. This sort of irony is implicated through dialogue. The characters seemed to speak about things in a common language, but they did not necessarily express what they meant. For example, in one episode, Tuija and Immu list all those international competitions in which the Finns have lost. They feel sorry for the bad luck of

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3 The popularity of constable Reinikainen opened doors in many places, but sometimes the team also received negative feedback. Once, the production team shot in a local cemetery and by mistake did something that was not permitted by the cemetery's regulations. Representatives of the church got in touch with TV 2's head, Tapio Siikala and asked the producers to visit and explain the disturbing incident. As a result, the name of the cemetery was edited out of the episode *Soutuveneellä Kiinaan* (To China by Rowboat).

the Finns. At the same time they, of course, indirectly feel sorry for their own fate. In this situational comedy, irony is not so much a style that predominates the narration, but a one-off presentation. However, this kind of irony also needs a specific social and communicative context in order to be effectively understood.

Linda Hutcheon (1994) assumes that ironic meaning in its social and communicative context is something that "happens" rather than something that simply exists. Irony is for her a communicative process:

And it happens in discourse, in usage, in dynamic space of the integration of texts, contexts, and interpreter (and, sometimes, though not always, intending ironical). (Ibid. 58)

In this framework irony is rather relational, inclusive and differential rather than — as many critics see it, intentional. Being inclusive means that irony follows the logic of 'both/and' rather than substitution, in cases where irony exists between the said and the unsaid meanings. In listing the international competitions in which the Finns have lost, Tuija and Immu brought out the quality of insignificance of those competitions and their audience. The 'frustration' of the siblings hides the most common legend of the Finnish people in relation to their self-esteem; The Finns (professionals) test themselves by international attentions and honor, which only strengthen their zero self-esteem.

Irony also has a differential semantic structure. Hutcheon states, in structuralist terms, that the ironic sign would not be made up of one signifier but two different, though not necessarily opposite, signifiers. In this way, irony is differentiated from metaphor's defining relation of similarity. The reason exists in irony's dynamic, performative, and social nature. While metaphor is rooted in "the naming function of language", irony is based on "the communicative function". (Hutcheon 1994, 57-64.)

The inclusive and differential meanings of irony are both bound up with the relational. All three semantic strategies refer to a number of suggestive images, double or multiple meanings of texts, which do not exist only in the binary either/or terms of the substitution of an "ironic" or a "literal" (an opposite) but are simply other, different (ibid. 66.) As a relational strategy, irony not only operates between meanings but also between people, thus having a social dimension in those discursive communities, which both enable and comprehend irony (ibid. 58). Linda Hutcheon's theory that irony happens through discursive communities as a context is crucial here. Context is not only a sort of background body of assumptions, but "the norms and beliefs that constitute the prior understanding we bring to the utterance" (ibid. 143).

Most of what Hutcheon says about discursive communities of irony fits well with comic effects in the Finnish comedy of the 1980s. For example, discursive contexts are needed to make the statement deployed within *Sisko ja sen veli* possible and meaningful not only as irony, but also as one-off irony. As previously stated, strategies of television comedy, however, are not analogous to that of irony. On television comedies there are seldom such indirect presentations and oppositions between the literal and intended meaning, which belongs to the ironic.

Television comedy is a genre-bound practice. Wisecracks, jokes, gags and the one-off irony characteristic of the situation comedy usually promote happy endings (See Neale & Krutnik 1990, 59-61), which is the case in *Sisko ja sen veli*. Both Tuija and Immu discover their own place in the community. Finally, the irony of Tuija and Immu seems to be a visible and legible attitude towards their life rather than a critical, indirectly recognized attitude towards the Finnish society. The full irony used by the siblings, Tuija and Immu, needs to be recognized by the discursive community of the Finnish television viewers. This assertion also emphasizes the social nature of comic effect.



## 6. SERIAL TELEVISION

In 1987, TV 2 established a specific Drama Group that would be responsible for producing entertainment programs, whereas the theater department continued to produce 'serious' dramas. The intention of the Drama Group was to build an apparatus that would produce more effectively an increasing amount of television drama. In short, the goal was to develop a special toolbox for making long-running serials, thus following foreign examples in format-based productions. Later, the group was merged into the Theater department, but its goal did not change. In general, the new industry-like productions were met with resistance and had a difficult start in TV 2.

As part of the 1990 organizational reform, YLE started training its professionals as producers, who would not only take the creative but also financial responsibility for single projects. Earlier, all drama productions had been under the ultimate supervision of the departmental head. Some department heads had already used the signature of a 'producer,' especially when they were working with visiting directors. Now the aim was to give this job to a single producer (or a group of producers) committed to a particular production. In the wake of the organizational reform, the Drama Group was discontinued and its work was integrated into the old Theater department resulting in the foundation of a large Drama department.

The new competitive environment that arose out of the 1993 channel reforms initially resulted in fumbling attempts to search for new images for TV 2 as well as to legitimate, if possible, the old ones. As Heikki Hellman (1999) has shown, the reform required that YLE develop the division of labor between its two channels to make their production more distinctive and complementary in general and to standardize YLE programming schedule in particular. This better division of labor was aimed to happen by steering TV 1 to focus on information and TV 2 to provide more fiction and entertainment. It was also to concentrate on program types that were underrepresented, such as programs of specific target audiences, and increase its use of external productions such as independently produced series. (Ibid. 289-290 and 297.) In the case of TV 2, the main task thus was to legitimate the old image that had been represented in both the regional aspects of programs and the tradition of serial drama productions

During the early years of the channel reform, the emphasis placed on serial dramas rebuilt TV 2's reputation as an original drama channel and saved it as a national network. The family serial *Metsolat* (The Metsolas, 1993,

1995, and 1996) is indicative of this achievement. It was scheduled on Wednesday evenings as a leadoff of the prime time slot between 9 and 10.30pm with the target audience of 600 000 viewers. *Metsolat*, however, received over a million viewers as a rule and 2 million viewers at its best. It even beat the audience ratings of the *Bold and the Beautiful* that was a mega-hit of MTV 3. As will be shown in Chapter 7, *Metsolat* accomplished a task to portray the regional differences as well as to continue the tradition of TV 2's serial (family) drama by offering in both the informative and entertaining ways a series of touching life stories. In short, *Metsolat* re-designed the paradigmatic elements of the informational program policy in the modern era of the public service television. Since its airing ended, *Metsolat* has not had equally popular successors in TV 2.

The increasing number of broadcasting hours devoted to serial production raised suspicions that the new situation would reduce the production of other drama forms such as single plays and mini-series. There is, however, no serious investigation available on whether this actually happened. However, it seems that Juha Rosma, who was nominated as the chief of the theater department in 1997 has not had aspiration after long series, but mini-series and single seasonal drama series. In practice, it was the production apparatus itself that with time developed the greatest difficulties for the serial-oriented theater department: There was a shortage of scripts and writers as well as a lack of producing experience. This situation resulted in blunders on the parts of writers who were unfamiliar with the new producer driven culture, which also caught the public's attention.

The following pages continue to develop the snapshot provided above. The general situation in drama production has already been depicted, but detailed information on the difficulties in building an apparatus and implementing a producer-based system is necessary in order to bring serial television into focus. Moreover, the first steps taken toward format television require extra commentary. Therefore, *Elämän suola*, by far the longest serial drama in TV 2 together with some other examples, will be placed under close examination later this chapter.

The division between *sociological* and *nostalgic* television reflects the two phases of serial television. On the one hand, the years between 1987-1993 can be defined as a pre-history of the production apparatus whereas 1993 onwards express different tensions within TV 2's production culture. In a way the two phases of serial television have coexisted; they represent the shift from the old director-centered to the new producer-based production culture. On the other hand, both sociological and nostalgic televisions are representative of YLE's changing attitudes towards audiences.

The pre-history characterized by increasing interest in consumer surveys is called here sociological television, mostly because during this period YLE in its audience research and the family drama of TV 2 in its content considered the idea of cultural and diverse audience-ships. The new conceptualization of television viewers as differentiated cultural segments was originated in the theories of a cultural taste and habits as well as the ethnographic turn in the Finnish sociology. In the middle of the 1980s, with the help of university researchers, YLE launched a series of studies, which were anchored in the sociological study of everyday life. This ‘cultural turn’ (in terms of its audience orientation), however, was a re-articulation of the old informational program policy, now closely linked with the competitive economic and the nascent producer system.

This re-articulation continued with nostalgic television. Nostalgic television that was also the later phase of the production apparatus, in practice emphasized customer-orientation towards the audience. Besides that, nostalgic television articulates a shift into reverse in conceptualizing the Family and its place in society. As stated in Chapter 7, *Metsolat* — the prototype of the phase — gives an example of the imagined, late-modern community, which however can be considering a sentimental yearning for the happiness of ‘good old times’ when the big families with three generations populated the countryside.

## **6.1. Building an Apparatus**

The idea to increase the production of television dramas, which would be directed towards viewers’ everyday experiences, had been approved by YLE and, along with the channel reform, drama productions were also allocated extra money. Earlier, a separate production line for serial drama had already been built for TV 2’s entertainment programs. Theater director, Olli Tola, was nominated director of entertainment programs. In the department, Tola had two assistant directors, one in charge of spoken entertainment and the other in charge of musical programs. Another fully equipped studio had been constructed specifically for continual serial drama. The Drama Group’s annual time quota was upgraded. There remained, however, a shortage of writers for serial drama; a lack of authors and above all a lack of an industrial tradition for quickly producing multiple projects.

The TV 2 Drama Group started off by basing its productions on the channel’s existing theater tradition and, among other things, on what they had learned from Swedish serial dramas. In addition to Tola, its members

were the writer Jussi Niilekselä, Kristiina Repo, and Merja Turunen. Director Jukka Mäkinen also joined the group. Among the first works produced by the Drama Group was the acclaimed five-part mini-series *Häräntappoase* (The Bull Killing Tool, 1989), which was based on the novel by Anna-Leena Härkönen. The Drama Group also produced three series that emerged from the scriptwriting competition organized by entertainment programs: *Rikos aamulla* (Crime in the Morning, 1987) (the winning manuscript by Raija Oranen), *Saastamoisen poika* (The Son of Saastamoinen, 1987), and *Lottovoittajien maa* (The Lottery Winners' Country, 1990), all 6-part mini-series. This competition was an attempt to get more original materials for television drama.

In time, the work of the Drama Group raised questions as to why theater programs were being made in two different departments. Combining the two theater-producing departments received management's support, but the Theater department was still reluctant. It was evident that it felt threatened. Regardless, along with YLE's general organizational and channel reform in 1991, the Drama Group and the serial dramas produced by it were transferred to the new theater department and were integrated into it as a program area of its own. Olli Tola was nominated as the director of the newly-named Drama Department. As a result, Reima Kekäläinen, who had been running the Theater department for fifteen years, stepped aside and concentrated mainly on directing. Although the exact reasons for the fusion remain unclear, one explanation was that the Drama group had limited production resources and was able to increase their share of the apparatus through the merger.

The channel reforms carried out in 1993 were difficult for YLE to swallow. Commercial programs transferred onto their own channel and YLE had to profile itself in relation to the commercial channel (MTV3) and also to find the right image for its own two channels. In Olli Tola's (1996) words, the policy towards TV 2's theater programs in this situation can be described as follows:

- To promote domestic, original television texts, which reflect various stories about the Finnish people and their lives, representing a regional point of view, distinct from the Helsinki outlook; and at the same time
- To invest in large-scale national productions, such as *Rauta-aika* and *Seitsemän veljestä*, and thereby continue the tradition of the old Theater department

According to the 1994 Annual Report, TV 2's goals were to produce programs that would target both large and select audiences. The pivot of this program



strategy was that high-quality domestic serial dramas should be created along with versatile entertainment and current affairs programs. (YLE 1994, 34.) The goal was modern public service, a customer orientation. For instance, satisfaction of viewers as *customers* with television programs and a quality of the programs consequent to this satisfaction have been considered as significant factors in modern public service (See Kytömäki & Savinen 1993, 1-2). Instead of extending the idea of cultural viewership, the importance of audience ratings increased in YLE. TV 1's goal was to get a 30 percent share, whereas TV 2 aimed for 20 percent (Hellman 1999, 290). A rising consumer orientation led to the investment in both low-cost and more attractive formats, such as situation comedies and long-running serials. As a part of the financial orientation and allocation of resources between program departments, a separately calculated average cost per hour for each program type became the norm. (Ibid. 293)

TV 2 survived the channel reform rather well because of the success of *Metsolat*. (1993, 1995, and 1996) The theater executive, Carl Mesterton, who had retired from the Finnish Swedish Television (FST), had offered his serial idea to other channels before finally coming to an arrangement with TV 2. The channel took a policy risk by using the extra money brought in by the channel reform and allocated to them by YLE to finance a serial that was created outside their own drama department. The saving grace was that although Mesterton had developed the serial idea, it still required time and TV 2 personnel to write and polish the manuscript. Hardly anyone expected the serial to be a mega-success. It is quite clear that the audience was not only attracted by the emotional storyline but also by the nostalgic treatment, which capitalized on national mythology, and the survival ethos, which fit in well with the current historical moment, which was characterized by financial recession and membership in the EU (see Chapter 7).

One of the basic requirements for a long serial's financial viability and efficiency of production was already in place with *Metsolat* before filming began. The manuscripts for all its twenty episodes were complete before the production started. This enabled the shots to be planned in advance and to build an effective dramatic arch. It was one of the first times that a storyboard was used in television production. The manuscript was dismantled scene by scene so that, for example, similar milieus and seasons were all shot at the same time. The first twenty episodes of the serial were thus made efficiently from the point of view of serial production. Problems began when came the time to start making new episodes. Curt Ulfsted, the other writer on *Metsolat*, had been seriously injured in a road accident. At this stage, the writers Anna-Liisa Mesterton and Miisa Lindén joined the team. Except providing for the

extension of *Metsolat*, they brought “a feminine perspective” to the serial that also created new depth to the characters.

In addition to being a successful serial in and of itself, *Metsolat* served as a training ground in how to make serial dramas. Moreover, it partly helped YLE’s survival amidst the general European crisis of public service and thereby strengthened YLE’s legitimacy in the new competitive environment. The success enjoyed by the serial made it easier for the channel’s directors to argue for license fees and justify how they were being spent.

People involved administratively in serial drama production became convinced that it would be worth TV 2’s while to invest in domestic television scripts and especially in narratives that took place outside of Helsinki. If one looks at the question from the perspective of production, there are two sides to *Metsolat*’s success. The first one was already described above — it surely helped both YLE to defend its position as public service tv-company and TV 2 to strengthen its channel profile. In addition, the success of the serial was used to warrant the special position given to long serial dramas among the various theater productions and in particular to justify the construction of “hit products” when competing for ratings. Minimum ratings requirements were raised for serials. Ratings as large as 700.000-800.000 viewers began to seem modest when compared to the 2 million that *Metsolat* reached at its peak.

Despite the fact that the idea had been brought in from outside the channel, which created mixed feelings among the regular staff, *Metsolat* was quite logically used as an example of the outcome of a successful production apparatus. There was an even attempt to disseminate the experience throughout the company by organizing a seminar in 1993. Every person involved in the making of a serial drama knows that even “an apparatus” is in the end made up of people, of different professionals and their identity as ‘authors’ and their success as a team. These things came under serious consideration in the company only after the effects of the transformation to a producer-based system had begun to show in the everyday work of the makers of serial drama (see Chapter 13).

## **6.2. The Production of Long Serials**

The production apparatus is best understood as an efficient production culture overseen by a producer. Formerly, editors-in-chief had done the producer’s job. They made decisions concerning production, the use of money and production resources within the given budget. When certain services were

provided by the house — such as technology, settings, costumes, organization — one did not need cash to pay for them. There were quotas on the resources and, for example, studio reservations had to be made on time, sometimes even years in advance. This did not mean, however, that they did not follow a budget or keep track of the resources and money being spent. In addition to the editors this work was partly done by production assistants and later administrative assistants.

As a result of the channel reform, all program areas were transferred directly under the office of the Director of Programs. At the same time that the company was adjusting to the producer-based system as well as to internal entrepreneurship, the company also started utilizing the internal market system. This signified a great change in TV 2's production culture. Resources were now being budgeted according to program areas and inside these according to individual producers who were all in charge of their own productions, both in terms of finances and content.<sup>1</sup>

Competition between channels had forced YLE to undertake continuous “product development”, building successful products and, as has become evident above, drama was especially important to this process. New initiatives were expected, particularly from continual serial dramas other than *Metsolat*. The company's research and development department was also involved in a production experiment. *Elämän suola* (1996-1998) was intended to be the production that follows a particular series of production guidelines, which together comprise an “apparatus” that is intended to produce quick and efficient popular programming. It helped that the Media Workshop (Mediapaja) of YLE carried out the program testing. The new apparatus employed in the production of *Elämän suola*, involved having multiple non-staff writers and directors being supervised by a script editor (Mika Ripatti). Some of the non-staff writers quit quite early because of the difficulties that became apparent in the teamwork.

None of the productions of the Drama Group, and later the Drama Department, resulted in very long serials, though many of them were intended to be long running. When the whole of the 1990s is examined, none of the serials that were produced were as long as *Elämän suola*'s sixty episodes. *Hovimäki* (*The Hovimäki Saga*, 1999-), which is an ongoing production by Mesterton's production company, will be a long-running production, but it is not a clearly continual serial in character. From the point of view of production,

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1 In 1996, 40 hours of serial drama were made for two slots for a little less than 40 million FIM, which means about 900,000 FIM per hour. This is cheap as far as drama is concerned but it is relatively expensive compared to, for example, newsproduction.

it is an episodic series — such as *Heikki ja Kaija* and *Rintamäkeläiset* — even though it tells the continuous story of the same families, as it is produced in seasonal entities.

Series or serials that had originally been intended to be longer may have wilted at the stage when the authors thought that the script had become too far removed from the original idea. This happened to *Autopalatsi* (Car Palace, 1994) and *Lähempänä taivasta* (Closer to Heaven, 1996). All of the changes to the production system and hardships encountered in implementing the format-based production culture described above will receive further clarification over the next few pages, as I move on to look more closely at the two phases of serial television, namely, sociological and nostalgic television. In sociological television, settings shifted from rural and urban to suburban locations (Figure 5). Nostalgic television, in turn, tackled both domestic and nationwide problems as experienced by the individual — in the disguise of family members. In the *Metsolat* case television fiction attempted to deal with national concerns by sublimating them down to the level of the individual character. Sociological television invested in descriptiveness and a strong sociological likelihood of its time, whereas nostalgic television used factual material in disguise of realism to re-narrate ideologically the old family saga in the late modern era.

**Figure 4:** Serial TV and its Dominant Narrative Elements.

## SERIAL TELEVISION

	<b>Sociological 1987-</b>	<b>Nostalgic 1993-</b>
<b>Setting</b>	<i>Suburban</i>	<i>Nation</i>
<b>Character</b>	<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>Family members</i>
<b>Time</b>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Present</i>
<b>Focalization</b>	<i>Semi-public</i>	<i>Public</i>
<b>Attitude</b>	<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Individualistic</i>
<b>Realism Effect</b>	<i>Descriptive</i>	<i>Factuality</i>

Sociological television actually started with the perhesarja *Kotirappu* (Home Stairs, 1987). *Kotirappu* depicts a utopian vision of everyday life in the Finnish suburbs. Ideologically, it is based on carefully documented sociological information about everyday life of Finnish suburbs at the time. *Kotirappu* galvanized the idea of an active apartment community in which people still care for each other. In contrast, *Metsolat* (The Metsolas 1993, 1995, and 1996) also provides a utopian vision, but it is an idyllic and romantic nostalgia for the past. Furthermore, it not only depicts the Finnish countryside and the family living in an imaginary community, but it also restores some of the elementary features of journalistic television. It strongly informs, educates and guides at the same time that it entertains viewers. A separate analysis of *Metsolat* will be presented in Chapter 7, while the next subsections consider other serial productions between 1987-1998.

### 6.3. Sociological Television

Towards the middle of the 1980s, the entertainment imperative began to take precedence on all Finnish channels. Moreover, TV 2 serial dramas took a new turn towards family drama. The peak of the economic boom coincided with the boom in family television. Suburban settings that captured the lives of yuppies appeared on the screen. The narratives followed the doctrines of social realism by depicting recognizable, stereotypical characters. The series and serials placed characters within a semi-public setting, such as a neighborhood or a small village. The emerging narrative, however, remained that of the comic.

Partly in response to the pressures faced by entertainment director Kekäläinen, who was still in charge of the Theater department, Jussi Niilekselä's idea for a family drama, *Kotirappu* (Home Stairs 1987) was taken up. It became the last of the serial dramas made by the so-called old Theater department. According to the TV 2 tradition, which emphasized social realism, it used a contemporary story and new sociological research on the suburbs (e.g., Kortteinen 1982). Compared to earlier family dramas, the serial employed a profusion of characters and utilized multiple plots in its narrative construction.

*Kotirappu* was Jussi Niilekselä's first, but not his last, serial. During his professional career, Niilekselä had worked on different film and theater projects

as a dramatist, writer, and director<sup>2</sup>. *Kotirappu* is a story of suburban life, neighborly relations in owner-occupied apartments inhabited by young and old people, families and singles. One major character in the series is a social worker. *Kotirappu* realistically represents these middle-class people, their dreams of a good life and the everyday problems they encounter. The series also presents them as participating in neighborhood activities. The suburban environment is shown from the perspectives of these men and women, parents and children — in short, from the perspectives of heterogeneous people of different ages. Love and jealousy are a part of the slowly paced narration. At the time, the series matched both the demographic and social make-up of Finland. *Kotirappu*'s location was in a Tampere suburb and the story emulated the fact that many Finns at that time were living in the same manner and could thus identify with the characters.

The serial strove to show the suburban way of life, but television reviews did not credit it for this. In its use of social realism and light comedy, *Kotirappu* emerged out of the same tradition as *Heikki ja Kaija*, but it also used multi-plot narration and correspondingly, had more characters. Unlike soap operas, however, the multi-plot method was employed in a rational and linear manner by placing one plot after another. Apart from the fact that YLE promoted *Kotirappu* as a product of TV 2's new studio, there are no reviews on the series to be found from YLE's own archive. It could have been that the series was overshadowed by the numerous comedy series aired during the latter part of the 1980s and produced by the Drama Group.

Among them was the comedy *Mummo* (The Granny, 1987 and 1989). The idea of using the grandmother figure came from Pekka Lepikkö. The production team created an unusual main character, which worked against the stereotype that the aged were conservative and could not adopt new ideas. Pekka Lepikkö both wrote and directed the series and Jussi Tuominen, as a producer, was only involved with the production at the beginning. Every scene of the comedy was shot in authentic settings. Though spin-off figures have been rare on the Finnish television, the granny from *Mummo* also appeared on the screen in *Kyllä isä osaa* (Daddy Sure Can, 1994-1995), which was Lepikkö's next series produced for TV 2.

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2 Jussi Niilekselä was in a significant position when a special *serial apparatus* was developing. He had first come to TV 2 to write and direct single projects and assist with others, such as the dramatized family chronicle *Niskavuori* (1985-87). After being appointed as a director, he wrote and directed the series *Pari sanaa lemmestä* (A Few Words on Love, 1992-93), the rural comedy, *Hyvien ihmisten kylä* (The Village of Good People, 1993-1994), and created the longest of all the continual serials of TV 2, *Elämän suola* (The Spice of Life, 1996-98).

There was also a comedy series that was produced by the independent film company. In fact, *Korpi-Motelli* (The Woods Motel, 1988) represents one of those few productions of the late 1980s created outside of YLE by an independent company. Arvi Auvinen had been known for his films about Northern Finland and his film company (Korpifilmi Oy) made *Korpi-Motelli*. The comedy series expressed a strong opposition toward the values and behavior of the people of Southern Finland. Moreover, *Korpi-Motelli* was characterized by the director's strong relationship with nature and the depicted perspectives of ordinary people. Like many other TV 2 directors, Arvi Auvinen utilized amateurs in his film productions as well as in *Korpi-Motelli*. (Auvinen 1996, 85-86.)

*The family boom.* While MTV produced the more popular portraits of a middle-class family, *Ruusun aika* (The time of the Rose) in the late 1980s, TV 2 created *Rivitaloelämä* (Life in a Terraced House, 1989-1990), the first yuppie series on the channel. Unlike *Ruusun aika*, the series did not respect the ideal of the traditional family organization, in which, for example, three generations lived together. The main difference between the two series is that in the former, consumer culture is taken for granted, whereas *Rivitaloelämä* consciously calls into question its justification.

The narrative setup of *Rivitaloelämä* was built upon humorous characters and their habits, and not situations as such. Accordingly, the importance of family life is not self-evident to the individualistic and desire-driven parents on the series. On the surface, they constantly strove after upholding the traditions of family life and those of the good neighborhood, but entirely new questions await them as well. Amongst these are increasing value conflicts, globalization, women's liberation, and AIDS. Every episode of *Rivitaloelämä* had its own plotline, usually concerning the life of the new (neo-) family (a married couple, who had children from their new as well as from previous marriages). In short, this family series treated common prejudices relating to proper family life and neighborliness.

*Rivitaloelämä* was still a (single) director centered production that gave also space for playwriting. The writer of the series, Ilse Rautio, has been and still is a journalist in addition to her career as an author of theater plays and stage shows, radio and television dramas, and television series. She started writing as a team member of the long running radio series, *Yhtäköyttä yhdistys* (A Society of Unity). *Rivitaloelämä* was her first long television series. Since then, she has written drama series and serials for different television channels. Kristiina Repo, a director and dramatist for the Entertainment department,

dramatized and directed the first eight episodes of *Rivitaloelämä* and assisted the writer in outlining ideas for an additional six episodes.

Unlike *Rivitaloelämä*, the comedy series *Päin perhettä* (Against the Family, 1992) was clearly a producer driven product. An unknown freelance writer wrote the fast paced situation comedy under the pseudonym, J Puranen. Jukka Mäkinen, originally a team member of the Drama Group, dramatized the series and created its generic form with Olli Tola. The humor of *Päin perhettä* is somewhat cynical towards family harmony. In its narrative, a middle-aged man, who divorced ten years earlier, lived together with his two adult children in the house of his unprejudiced mother-in-law. The series made it impossible for the characters to have any kind of a private life, which resulted in the family members regularly quite openly expressing their biting remarks on sex, politics, and other events.

The end of the 1980s was a period of economic boom in Finland. Increasing consumption was also a central theme in the family series. MTV's above mentioned *Ruusun aika* crystallized best the set of values of that time. As the economic boom was at its peak and yuppies were still in power, Jussi Niilekselä from TV 2 wrote and directed his second family drama about the end of the 1980s. *Pari sanaa lemmestä* (A Few Words on Love, 1992-1993) is about a young man and the family of his female friend who lives with her elderly parents. They live in a family house that is the central setting of the series. The busy visits of potential sons-in-law enrage the old father. Everything happens somewhere in the Tampere area and the beloved elderly actors speak a broad local dialect.

Up until the end of the 1980s, the Finnish family series had been devoid of sentimentality. Gradually, the need to examine the present in light of the past began to take precedence. *Metsolat*, *Hyvien ihmisten kylä*, and *Kohtaamiset ja erot* ushered in the phase I call nostalgic television. The prototype of this period, *Metsolat*, best characterizes the narrative dominant in serial drama in this phase: family members facing and overcoming difficulties as individuals. The characteristics of the three aforementioned serials have all been a rural setting, sentimentality towards the past, and the exploration of men's roles in transition. A sort of sentimental yearning for the happiness of past times also characterized many other television series of the period. The man's role in the family has seemed problematic because the family series has predominantly been based on the figure of the strong woman. However, different roles for men appeared in television in the early 1990s. A man could now act contrary to general expectations and be a single parent, for example. The following pages pursue these arguments further.



## 6.4. Nostalgic Television

*Hyvien ihmisten kylä* (The Village of Good People, 1993-1994) was the first television drama written by Seppo Vesiluoma. He continued the tradition of freelance writers in TV 2: Vesiluoma had earlier published some short pieces and had worked in an advertising agency. *Hyvien ihmisten kylä* depicted the lives of a couple where the wife was a newcomer to the village environment. The young couple lived in the midst of political passions and the struggle for power. The idea for the drama was based on the writer's own experiences in a small neighborhood in Ostrobothnia. His point of departure was that most rural dramas were unrealistic in comparison with the environment he had grown up in. The events of the series are set in the near past, in an era in which the relationship with Soviet Union was maintained at all levels of public administration. The male protagonist and his healthy attitude towards rural politics, however, embody the nostalgia in this comedy.<sup>3</sup>

The series has no illusions about life in a small village. Instead it believes in a strong individual who is able to rise above the mass. Even though the individual lives under the pressure of the village's people, the community can still respect him. On the one hand, the series can be seen as projecting a longing for the 'good' old times that were yet to be damaged by party politics. On the other hand, the series indicates a strong belief in individuality and 'housebroken' community life. The nostalgic sentiments of *Hyvien ihmisten kylä* caught the attention of television reviewers.

The production of *Kohtaamiset ja erot* (Encounters and Farewells, 1994-1995) reflected the shift in policy towards longer and cheaper serials, as well as the turbulent circumstances that surrounded the channel reform of 1993. *Kohtaamiset ja erot* was originally intended to run for eight episodes, but ultimately grew to 21 episodes. During the first broadcasting period (1994-1995), the length of each episode was half an hour, but later, in reruns, the episodes were incorporated and the serial thus consisted of fewer episodes than the original airing. More importantly, the production team made the entire serial at a cost of 6 million FM. Thus it was a very economical

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3 Actors for *Hyvien ihmisten kylä* were selected from both provincial theaters and local amateur groups. Usually, amateurs contributed to the realism of a given series. In this case, the team also wanted to provide amateur actors with the chance to compare the events depicted on the series with their own life as villagers. Because the series was shot in real locations with the help of local amateurs, the team decided to offer a preview of a few of the first episodes to all of the actors and co-workers. This occasion, held in the local community center, gathered a large audience.

production, which meant that it also required enormous energy from its creators. In order to illustrate the serial's changing position in the production culture of TV 2, it is useful to take a closer look at this production.

When the dramatized script was ready in 1990, Olli Tola, the head of serial drama found it to be too expensive for a mini-series (eight episodes). Within a month, dramatist Merja Turunen, director Kristiina Repo, and writer Sirkka Laine proposed a new synopsis for a 21-episode serial based on the original idea, which producer Tola accepted. Yet, the final production decision was delayed for nearly a year and half and shooting did not begin before August of 1993. Moreover, screenings were intended to begin in the fall of 1994. Due to the tight production schedule there were only a couple of weeks to elaborate, plan, cast and prepare for shooting on location.

In relation to the conventional Finnish serial drama, the serial uses many symbolic and 'non-realistic' elements in its storytelling such as dreams and other imaginations. Its character gallery is also full of unconventional types.

In *Kohtaamiset ja erot*, one of the key protagonists is Inkeri (Merja Larivaara), the immigrant with Finnish roots who is from the formerly Finnish Karelia (Karjala), which now under Russian rule. She is an outsider who disturbs the peace of the village, Kärttämä. Her arrival upsets the balance of the villagers who are forced to live together. The setup of *Kohtaamiset ja erot* is thus very similar to the one in many US westerns, in which a stranger settles down at a small village. A saloon usually gathers male townspeople in westerns whereas in *Kohtaamiset ja erot*, the gathering place is the village store & cafeteria managed by a female character, Annikki. However, there is no clear protagonist or heroine in this serial, but a gallery of different characters.

It can be said that the Finnish nature is the 'collective heroine' of the serial. It appears as an uncontrollable and mysterious power, which works behind the villagers' backs. The village, with its lake and rivers has become second nature to them. The female characters have especially important positions as intermediaries between the law of nature and organized society. Still, there are no signs of a large-scale social system or references to current events in *Kohtaamiset ja erot*. Unlike the referentially and morally realistic *Metsolat*, the serial displays distinguishable symbolic elements, such as a wild boar that seems to reflect a human being's relation to nature and the social order. The boar is used in many contexts in *Kohtaamiset ja erot*. On the one hand it is the target of hunting, and on the other hand it appears when something that is marked mysterious, tragic, and wonderful such in an event of birth of new life. The wandering wild boar seems to represent the difficult

edges between disorder and order, primitive behavior and cultural civilization as well as past and present.

*The changing image of father.* Mainly shot in the studio, *Huomenna on paremmin* (It Will Be Better Tomorrow, 1993) featured an academic male protagonist who takes care of the home and children while his wife is a career woman in international business. Their children's names, Taisto (Fight) and Rauha (Peace), are clear references to the 1960s. Each episode of the comedy also began with a nostalgic song from the 1960s performed by the well-known radical author and singer, Aulikki Oksanen. The name Taisto referred not only to the activism of the new-left movement but a well-known communist leader, Taisto Sinisalo. This minority within Finnish communists, called the "Taistoist" or "Stalinist" line, was relatively powerful among both university and college students at the beginning of the 1970s.

Two female freelancers, Raija Talvio and Marjo Valve, wrote, and the latter also directed, this series that focused on the contemporary family life of the 1960s generation. The series brought on television screen the male character as a single parent, though, his female counterpart was found soon in neighborhood and the happy end was provided. The inability of parents to raise their children appeared to be a central theme in the Finnish *perhesarja* of the 1990s.

Children are also shown to be smarter than their parents, as often has been the case in Lepikkö's works. Also a father's changing role in family is visible in Pekka Lepikkö's second situation comedy, *Kyllä isä osaa* (Daddy Sure Can 1994-1995) that was created by his production company, Linssilude Ky. In *Kyllä isä osaa*, a working-class family of four lives in a Tampere suburb. Unemployment, the lack of money, and motivation are recurring subjects in this recession era comedy. The father of the family has no authority as a breadwinner. This foolish father was the major character in *Kyllä isä osaa* until a grandmother appeared on the screen in the second period of the series in 1995. In fact, the grandmother character was taken from the *Mummo*. As the atmosphere of *Kyllä isä osaa* already seemed to be very similar to *Mummo*, it was easy to incorporate the grandmother's role into the series. The mother, who disappeared in the second period from the comedy, had also been a central figure. The granny, familiar from the *Mummo* series, appeared in her place on the screen. But the grandmother is not just an ordinary matriarch. She sets things in order in her own way. With Lepikkö directing both works, the final outcomes of the two comedy series inevitably corresponded with

one another.<sup>4</sup>

As the family series continued to boom in Finland, Ilse Rautio, who had written *Rivitaloelämä* at the end of the 1980s, began a new project, *Onnea vai menestystä?* (Luck or Success?, 1995). Her earlier family series, *Rivitaloelämä*, was about yuppies. *Onnea vai menestystä?* was intended to be the story of intellectuals. More accurately, it was about two professional writers and their two daughters.

Unlike *Ruusun aika*, which had run a couple of years earlier and had portrayed family life in the Helsinki metropolitan area, the sense of place was conceived to be as broad as possible in *Onnea vai menestystä?*. The result was that the serial was not anchored in any certain geographic place (if not in Helsinki). The solution spotlights abstract family life, but also emphasizes an image of city peoples. Of course, this scarified TV 2's mandate of focusing on the countryside. This re-articulation of the sense of place was thus comprehensible within the context of TV 2 drama productions, which were usually set in the Tampere region. Chapter 9 gives a detailed analysis of this particular television series and makes some comparisons between *Onnea vai menestystä?* and MTV's family series, *Ruusun aika*.

*Public controversy.* Shortly after the screenings of *Onnea vai menestystä?*, TV 2 started a new family serial, *Lähempänä taivasta* (Closer to Heaven, 1996), which was slotted for Sundays. The theatre department intended it to be among the longest ones the channel had ever scheduled. However, the serial met its end soon after its first season. A central reason for this was low audience ratings. The production of the serial encountered different kinds of changes during the production process, mostly because its creator was away on maternity leave and the serial received different stimulus from its new producers. The serial was intended to be a long running and low budget program. The program management at the time also expected this type of production.

The Pispala milieu plays an important part in the serial, giving it an extra "production value" without costing extra money. The family's home is an

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4 Efforts to create the Finnish sitcom yielded different types of series. Among these series was *Taikapeili* (The Magic Mirror, 1995), a situation comedy that exploited fact and fiction. Jussi Tuominen produced the series for the Entertainment department. *Taikapeili* is a satire about a fictional editorial staff hunting for their weekly scoop amongst the real people of fashion, entertainment, and sport, which filled the front pages of the Finnish tabloids. All of its nineteen episodes contain real, famous people who came to be interviewed and photographed. Partly, the story was then about these celebrities, but it was also about the relationships of the fictional editorial staff.

ordinary single-family house at the highest point on the Pispala ridge. Other locations in *Lähempänä taivasta* were an ice rink and a school. Old Finnish tango music added spice to the series. Even though television critics were pleased with the nostalgic feelings of Pispala and the Finnish tango music, they were not particularly enthusiastic about the serial. They seemed to think, for example, that the slow paced, customary everyday life depicted was not interesting enough for viewers and in this case even the love triangle did not evoke the necessary dramatics. (Turun Sanomat 28.1.1996, Helsingin Sanomat 28.1.1996, Aamulehti 28.1.1996, and Keski-suomalainen 17.3.1996).

The writing team, Merja Turunen (the dramatist), Annukka Kiuru, Anne Raatikainen, and Anita Malkamäki outlined the story of a family with a divorced mother in her late thirties, her male friend and two children. The script, which the writing team thought to be ready, was, however, changed during the production of *Lähempänä taivasta*. This caused a public controversy in the newspapers. Annukka Kiuru (Helsingin Sanomat 19.11.1996), one of the writers, accused the producer and its three directors, of altering the original script and idea and of changing the order of episodes. She argued that the result did not correspond to the original script and should have required a consultation with the original writers.

Another production had also stirred up public attention. *Autopalatsi* (The Car Palace, 1994) was a successor to comedies such as *Pappa rakas* (Dear Daddy, 1993) and *Kyllä isä osaa*. As a comedy *Autopalatsi* was a typical farce; a light, humorous play in which the plot depended upon a skillfully exploited situation rather than upon the development of characters. The writer, Anita Malkamäki, wrote the comedy as part of a course YLE organized for young writers in 1990. Malkamäki was among the ten who went to Austin and Los Angeles to learn how to write television series. Therefore, it is possible to say that the framework of *Autopalatsi* was developed within this course and the first ideas for the series were discussed in workshops abroad. Malkamäki brought along her colleague, Anita Patjas, to write the series. Jukka Mäkinen dramatized; script edited, and finally edited the series.

Later, Anita Malkamäki publicly expressed her disappointment with the process of writing a “mainstream-sitcom”, as she put it. She argued that the two writers wrote several versions of the script without receiving necessary feedback on their work. In *Helsingin Sanomat*, Malkamäki criticized TV 2 for underestimating the writers’ skills in the production of serial drama. She felt that “it is frustrating to constantly hear accusations by producers hurled towards writers while there exists a great unwillingness of producers to accept the writers’ experience in the field.” (Helsingin Sanomat 28.11.1996.)

## 6.5. Toward Format Television: *Elämän suola*

In the middle of 1990s, there were several efforts to create format television. This subchapter looks at two examples, which illuminate both their success and failure in terms of quality. In addition, the experiment, *Elämän Suola*, is also closely scrutinized. The family drama is an example of how the production apparatus is put into practice. *Elämän Suola* also revealed some of the difficulties in breaking away from the tradition of the realistic drama and thus confusing the genre concept.

The first example, a large-scale production, *Pimeän hehku* (The Kiss of Plutonium, 1996), consists of a total of thirteen episodes, each of them 50 minutes in length. *Pimeän hehku* employed 70 Finnish actors, along with Estonian and Russian actors, in addition to its almost 400 other contributors. All these indicate that the series was designed for an international market. It not only required attention to the motif and treatment of the series, but also furnishing a finished tape with a new soundtrack and dubbing that would serve the foreign (German) television companies. Afterwards, TV 2 made a shorter, eight-episode version of *Pimeän hehku* especially for the international market. The crime series was shown in Germany. Visually, the series is an atypical Finnish production, which used powerful colors, especially in several thrilling scenes that took place on a freighter at sea.

Ilkka Vanne came along in 1992 to prepare the series for production. *Two writers using pseudonyms wrote Pimeän hehku*; one of them was a professional writer and the other a businessperson. They wrote the series with a TV 2 dramatist.<sup>5</sup>

In its own way, *Pimeän hehku* illustrated moral attitudes to the banking crisis and the stories of financial crimes that captured headlines in Finland in the 1990s. According to the narrative, it was a fictional Finnish bank that financed the transportation of the uranium from Murmansk to East Africa. Unwittingly, and with the help of a Murmansk professor, the bank had also smuggled plutonium 239. Some of the employees of the financier were behind the crime. While the dangerous load was at sea, the economic problems of the bank were exposed and led to a redistribution of power. The ship loaded

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5 The production began in 1995. The cooperation of the Germans was confirmed only a week before the production started. The production schedule consisted of recording days on locations in Finland, Germany, Russia, Spain, and Barbados. All of the settings were shot on location except for the captain's cabin, which was built in the studio. Ilkka Vanne directed the series, and Sirpa Bertling took care of the production. Juhani Heikkonen was responsible for the high standard of camera work.

with plutonium eventually caught fire, whereas the bank drifted towards redevelopment and fusion. An innocent protagonist and his family were set-up by the conspirators and suffered as a result.

In *Pimeän hehku* as well as some of its contemporaries in TV drama production, these economic sufferings turned into a metaphor for the more general situation in Finland in the early 1990s. After a long period of economic boom, the liberation of market, and both increasing lending and consumption, it followed that the Finnish society faced its biggest crisis after the Second World War. Important in terms of television fiction and its changing representations was that behind the crisis both in the real life and consequently also in the television series appeared people who derived advantage from others' misfortune. These 'others' were, however, not only the members of lowest social classes, but also many members of the high and middle class families. Consistent with the crisis or not, many television series of the 1990s were dealing with the problems of business world and the family members of business management.

The second example of format television was, however about the business world, but the world of young singles. It was also an experiment with 'reality-TV'. "True fiction from San Francisco" was the way in which TV 2 publicized *Heartmix* (1996), a continual series targeted to the generation X audience. Reaching this demographic had been a great concern of television managers for several years. TV 2 and MCT — Mankato Inc., owned by Mika and Pasi Kemmo, together produced this Finnish version of MTV's Real World in San Francisco, California. Seven Finns who were already living or had just come to the U.S. played themselves and displayed their experiences of love and sorrow; their hopes and frustrations in front of the camera. All of the actors were amateurs.

In *Heartmix*, three young Finns travel to America to live in a house in San Francisco that is already occupied by three other Finns. Pasi Kemmo, the producer, writer and director of *Heartmix* simply put cameras in different places in the house and recorded all of the events and conversations. In the serial, true events and fictionalized relationships were mixed together. As expected, the series initially raised the curiosity of viewers and critics. Some critics argued that the series was a clear miscalculation by TV 2, which had "bought a pig in a poke" (Helsingin Sanomat 28.11.1996) Other critics ironically declared that they enjoyed the series' "masochistic" and "unintentional comedy" (Suomenmaa 20.12.1996) TV 2 tried to improve *Heartmix*'s dramatic look by sending Jukka-Pekka Siili, YLE's young director to San Francisco. Nonetheless, the production was terminated after thirteen episodes.

*Elämän suola* (The Spice of Life, 1996-1998) was the first successful continual serial originally produced for Channel 2. As such, the production of *Elämän suola* manifested the shift from the old, author-based (or single crafts-person-based) television to the new producer-based television.<sup>6</sup>

The creator of *Elämän suola* was Jussi Niilekselä, who had also written and directed the family series *Kotirappu* in the late 1980s. He wrote the basic idea and the frame story in which the central characters, their traits and preliminary storylines were introduced. Thus, a sort of story bible was at the writers' disposal even before the first scene of the series was written.

The goal of *Elämän suola* was also to develop new tools for writing serial drama. This meant that the development of plots and characters would be completed before the freelance writers started their individual and team efforts at writing the scripts. There would be a story editor who took care of the timetable, as well as coordinate cooperation between the writers and the other members of the production team. The aim of the "new" (in the Finnish context) writing culture was for *Elämän suola* writers to follow the format. Thus, in this particular case, all innovations and ideas would be framed by mechanisms of the serial production itself, which fundamentally predetermined the use of locations, characters, and actions. It followed that that 95 percent of the production of *Elämän suola* had to be shot on the three main stages in the studio.

The text of the serial, not the traditional notion of emphasizing the themes set forth by the 'author,' became the starting point of the production. This method emphasized the production process over the creative individual. However, since individual writers still wrote single episodes, they were credited as individuals. Contrary to the old, writer-oriented production culture, *Elämä suola* went through as many as four to five versions of a script per episode. Since the mode of writing was new, the production head tolerated more negotiations of narrative solutions than the ideal 'apparatus' grants. In this way, the worst consequences of apparatus to the writer's creative work were avoided. It seems that in terms of narration and style, the writers were allowed to use their creativity more than it was usually thought to be allowed in so-called format-based productions.

In the middle of the 1990s, productions employing the multi-writer system were still very rare. At first, there were ten writers involved in the production

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6 *Metsolat* was a separate, disconnected example of the "apparatus". Though *Metsolat* was produced at the time of the YLE channel reforms it was not representative of the transformation of production culture at TV 2. Furthermore, it was heavily influenced by the serial dramas produced by Finnish Swedish Television (Finlands Svenska Television, SFT) and by Carl Mesterton's experiences there.



of *Elämän suola*, but later that number was halved. The method of writing as a team and the demands of the formula caused many problems in pre-production. The writers and directors formed their own cliques in addition to the work of the teams that designed the production. The writers of *Elämän suola* were: Mika-Alarik Ripatti, Risto Autio, Johanna Sinisalo, Markku Turunen, Vuokko Tolonen, Seppo Vesiluoma, and Jarmo Lampela. Ari Hiltunen also served as a consultant for several of the episodes (episodes 16-36). The directors of the serial were Jussi Niilekselä, Jarmo Lampela, Tommi Auvinen, Irmeli Heliö, and Ilkka Vanne.

The writers worked in cycles of three episodes, with teams of three writers with the editorial help of the script editor (Mika Alarik Ripatti) and the creator-producer (Jussi Niilekselä) responsible for three episodes. Their task was to carefully consider what would be a story that would run across these three periods and what would be the function of each part in it. After that, each of the three writers wrote a treatment for his/her particular episode. The treatment was a detailed plan on how the plots and scenes would be organized in the storyline. Then, the creator and the script editor discussed those treatments with the writer. Furthermore, the writers changed their treatments among themselves. Only after this process did the writing of the final manuscript begin. The writers had to continuously avoid location scenes. Settings were selected so that they would not slow down production. For example, long dialogues in a car were avoided. Throughout the whole pre-production process the writer continuously received feedback and comments from the script editor.

*Elämän suola* is about the lives of four generations in family and business. In the narration, the patriarch of the family, Armas Kunkainen, was the ex-manager of the family business. *Elämän suola* then, for the first time in TV 2's family series history, is about people who have a big business of their own. The next serial to employ a similar plot device *Klubi* (The Club, 1998). In the storyline of *Elämän suola*, European integration, the end of import to the Soviet Union and the general internationalization of business had an influence on the future of the family.

The serial describes the lives of the family members in their homes, in the food company that they run and in the restaurant. However, the scenes placed in the restaurant differ narratively from the others. The original idea was that the scenes that took place in the restaurant and the events that happened to the restaurant staff would be connected to the life of the family yet depicting them as two differentiated plots. Furthermore, the events that transpire in the restaurant are built upon comedy.

The restaurant manager, Pyry, is described as a dandy and the type of person that however respects the Kunkainen family. Pyry gets above himself

as well as sets rules for his subordinates, other employees of the restaurant. There are also allusions to his homosexuality in the serial. This allusion is introduced, for instance, when the male waiter trainee who arrives at the restaurant is guided and taunted by Pyry. There are also a female cook and a porter working in the restaurant. Later, the restaurant employs a mute female cook. All these restaurant characters are extremely stereotyped ones and the comic effect is created by means of their verbal and non-verbal expressions in general, not by surprising or unexpected situations in particular.

The patriarch of the family, Armas Kunkainen, lives in a big house with his oldest son's family. The house is in Pyynikki, a neighborhood that has been traditionally perceived as a rich residential area of Tampere. Indoor scenes have, however, been filmed in studio settings. The settings of the serial were mainly staged in a studio built in an old brewery. Plots about the lives of the workers in the factory are thus mainly set in this 'real' environment of an old brewery. The settings of the serial were mainly staged in a studio built in an old brewery. Permanent sets included the Kunkainen's home, the restaurant and the secondhand shop. The office of the factory and other sets were also built in the brewery. Another home was filmed in a separate flat owned by TV 2. There were also scenes shot on location in different places in Tampere, though mainly, these were shot in the courtyard of the brewery.

Writers had to take into account the readymade sets rather than suggesting new ones. This naturally restricted the narration of the story. For instance, the union stewardess's role is central to a plot involving the factory's economic troubles and its resultant reduction of its assembly lines. Due to the cost of production, however, the character as well as other characters in factory staff rarely physically steps outside the factory and its courtyard. For the same reason, the lives of the family members and some other main characters are shown sparingly in particular locations that would have cost too much to shoot in. Furthermore, the domestic lives of the characters in the restaurant and the company staff are seldom if not at all shown in the serial.

In brief, *Elämän suola* used 'realistic' locations, events, and characters, as well as a comic style of storytelling. Furthermore, it followed a version of Finnish utility drama in adhering to topical issues, such as bankruptcy and the demands of natural food. The team, however, had to avoid making the serial into too much of a family series that generally were invested in young characters and focused on obligatory family affairs. Scheduled in the late evening on Wednesdays, the serial was not intended for a family audience. Since its narrative focused on family life, however, critics began calling it a family serial". A child actor in the central role also accentuated this generic expectation.

The serial soon faced problems with its genre mixing. Although comic elements have always been a part of Finnish realism, in *Elämän suola* these were presented as elements of excess, an “intensification” of generic practices (Feuer 1994, 553, 556). The comic footages were first aimed to comment on the more ‘realistic’ events, thus combining two different generic practices. After the first audience ratings were calculated and a follow-up study by YLE was published, the production team acknowledged that the viewers did not exactly understand the genre blending. It was felt to be confusing and was generally perceived by audiences as the lack of ‘realism’. The production team thus made some improvements to the narrative, mostly by cutting and reorganizing plots.

The *Elämän suola* experiment indicates that neither the producers nor the writers could separate themselves from the tradition of the realistic drama. By using comical elements in the restaurant scenes, the production team sought to avoid the effect of realism. This, however, led to genre confusion. Since the most obvious generic sign appearing on the screen was the family itself, viewers and critics labeled the serial as a ‘family series’ in the traditional sense. As a result, the serial faced the archetypal situation in which its narration did not meet the generic expectations of its audience, who were accustomed to the tradition of family pictorials in Finnish television fiction.

*Elämän suola* did not meet a satisfactory level of knowledge of its genre by audiences. Television viewers seemed able to recognize the tradition of the family series still in use in *Metsolat*, but *Elämän suola* confused audiences that played with the convention of this tradition. By using elements of melodramatic (not radical, see Ang & Stratton 1995, 125-129) excess, it emphasized the rather conservative order of the family, but not in a way expected in the Finnish *perhesarja*. According to the follow-up study, which was conducted after approximately twenty episodes, *Elämän suola* and some of its characters appeared to be too cold and cynical. Some of the viewers who might have enjoyed following the comical world of the restaurant were not interested in the more realistic world of the Kunkainen family. More importantly, the events of the serial did not seem to offer any positive solutions for the lives of its characters. In summary, it is possible to say that at this point, the serial fell into the trap of Finnish realism, conventionally focusing on (usually after corrective actions) respectable social life.

## 6.6. Re-articulating the Informational Program Policy

The background to the profiling of TV 2's drama production has been YLE's preparation for channel competition and, as a result, its changing attitude towards commercial program policies. The strategic management of the company already in the late 1970s and at least in the mid-1980s realized that YLE's programs would soon experience serious competition brought about by encroaching satellites and cable networks. At that time, many thought that magnetic foreign programming was increasing and that the fact-based programming of YLE seemed to be losing the competition for popularity among viewers. In order to deal with the situation, the strategic heads of YLE began to adjust the company's program strategy.

The central starting point was to develop a new kind of program strategy that would both satisfy public and group specific needs, and this meant, among other things, an increase in the share of a certain kind of *serial form* in the company's programs. The company's philosophy was to simply respond to commercial demands by producing dialogue-based, emotionally appealing serial-type programming that ordinary people could relate to. YLE became simultaneously interested in the audience's relationship to television and in examining the idioms and production systems of serial-like programming.

This philosophy was documented in a speech that the research manager Risto Volanen gave on program policy in 1985 and in a chapter called *Drama and Lifestyle* that was published some time later (Volanen 1986). According to these documents, theater programming that agreed with the old-fashioned informational program policy corresponded to Brecht's ideas of epic theater. Its purpose was to offer a critical view of history and further alienate "the alienated" viewer from bourgeois society and culture. Seen from this starting point, most American television serials are strangers to the idea of epic theater; on the contrary, they offered the viewer the opportunity to recognize and identify with culture and society.

The most essential failure of the informational program policy had been, according to Volanen, its limitation of tasks to a narrowly understood scientific enlightenment and its derivatives, such as education from the top down, instead of orienting itself to people's everyday world and lifestyle (Volanen 1985, 12). Correspondingly, the policy did not recognize the intrinsic value of art (ibid. 6-7, see also Volanen 1996, 79-89). Volanen offered an alternative to *both* the informational program policy, which emphasizes information, and the American-style commercial policy. In this alternative, Volanen relied on the ideas of the pro-Finnish ideologist, J.V. Snellman (1806-81) on culture,

where the dynamic of history is found in people's wish to make themselves and their environment more complete. (Volanen 1985, 14-15)

The 1960s critique of the informational program policy had come full circle with the communications policy conjectures of the 1980s, which heavily supported commercialism as a solution to YLE's perceived inability to respond to the competitive electronic media. Cultural thinking, in its reinterpreted form, created space for entertainment, pleasure and communication and culture (See Program Policy Guidelines, YLE 1992, 5). It was, however, a re-articulation of the informational program policy, which was tied in with the competitive economy and the nascent producer system. To encourage an increase in cultural awareness, research projects were launched. The aim was to chart the Finnish lifestyle and determine the role and functions of YLE in the new cultural situation.

In the mid 1980s, sociological terms appeared at YLE audience research. The first anthology of the new research projects, *Kymmenen esseetä elämäntavasta* (Ten Essays on the Way of Life, 1986) shifted the old methods of conducting communication research away from program content, patterns of viewing, and media policy, towards lifestyle analysis and cultural change as experienced by viewers. A few years later, *Elämä kuvavirrassa* (Living in Visual Flow, 1989) continued this trend. Both *Nykyajan sadut* (Contemporary Fairytales, 1991) and *Terveisiä katsojilta* (Greetings from Viewers, 1993) clearly adopted an audience-orientation that emphasizes the experience of viewers and their families as cultural subjects. Questions of the taste and the Finnish viewers' perception of realism followed the discussion (Alasuutari 1991). Many books written by Veijo Hietala (YLE publications in 1990 and 1996) familiarized the audience with television aesthetics and popular narratives.

In addition to the above remarks, it can be said that Finnish television maintained an integrating societal function until the 1990s. In the dominant genre, the *family series*, the modern nuclear family served the function of a community that civilizes individuals. As the next chapter will show, according to the paradigm of the informational program policy, serial dramas should contain some utopian elements, which involve an egalitarian vision of society. Moreover, from the very beginning of television, the intention to inform and to educate audiences has played an essential role in the establishment of the modern welfare state, the conceptualization of democracy, and the formation of citizenship in Finland.



## 7. UTOPIAN SENSITIVITY

A yearning for the past in nostalgic television of the 1990s was connected to a general political development, which drew its arguments from populist, political unorthodoxy in Finland. Jane Feuer (1995) describes a similar development in the films of the 1980s in the United States. The political atmosphere of Reaganism could be seen in a number of significant made-for-TV movies representing populist trauma drama. According to Feuer, these movies contain a certain plot structure:

1. The family represents an ideal and the norm of happy American family life
2. A trauma occurs
3. The victims/parents seek help through established institutions
4. The institutions are unable to help them and are shown to be utterly inadequate
5. The victims take matters into their own hands
6. They join a self-help group or form a grassroots organization
7. The new organization is better able to cope with the trauma, often having a impact on established institutions
8. Normality is restored (however inadequately)

(Feuer 1995, 25-26.)

Even though a direct comparison cannot be made, it is possible to see similarities in the plots and themes that emerged in Finnish television drama during the 1990s. For instance, miniseries that described the anger of the middle class towards established institutions became more frequent in television along with the increasing economic distress of the Finns. Aggression towards the economic recession of the early 1990s and its consequences on the lives of Finns became fodder for televised fiction. However, open hostility towards powerful institutions was not yet apparent in the early 1990s when *Metsolat* appeared on the television screen. The consequences of neo-liberal economic policy emerged only after the middle of the decade.

Film and television scholar Veijo Hietala (1996) considers the *Metsolat* family and its setting to be a unique micro-model of Finland at a critical juncture. According to Hietala, it is characteristic that the serial was broadcast during the worst economic recession ever experienced in Finland. In Hietala's analysis the recession is connected with Finland's joining the European Union, which, in turn, was experienced as a threat to national identity. In a nutshell, these features underline the ritual function of the serial. (Ibid. 107-109.) As my prior study indicates (Ruoho 1994), a set of conservative family values was strengthened in this particular family saga. In its time, the *Metsolat* family represented a space where characters victimized by the recession could take matters into their own hands. In this narrative solution, the elements representing the 'old good times' were essential. In the series the conservative elements are:

1. The traditional rural family setting is located far from the capital, Helsinki. Thus the *Metsolat* family represents the majority of the Finns whose roots are in rural areas. The country life in *Metsolat* is also a return to the nostalgic, mythical agrarian culture in which many Finns have spent at least part of their childhood.
2. *Metsolat* reproduces a picture of a strong family community that is capable of solving almost any problem within the family circle without the help of outsiders. In addition, the strong women of *Metsolat* have a central role in resolving problems. This portrait is familiar from both literary and popular culture in Finland.
3. There is a lack of (the usual) generation gap within the *Metsolat* family. Instead, in the large family all members have their own roles and places, which are typical of conservative country stories. Even the youngest generation of *Metsolat* shares the same set of values with the older generations.

This chapter concentrates on examining how *Metsolat* articulates the effects of a recession in the life of a *family*. The chapter especially analyses how the series processes the conflicts created by the recession and, for example, the confusion that grew out of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Special attention in the analysis is paid to the myth of the strong Finnish woman as the solver of men's crises. As will be demonstrated, it is possible to connect the strong survival ethos and emotional work of women prevalent in *Metsolat* with the so-called utopian function of the serial fiction.



In order to offer some explanation of how entertainment works, Richard Dyer (1981b) has stressed in his article on the meaning of entertainment and utopia, the affiliation of the utopian sensitivity of entertainment with social inequality, where five utopian solutions stand out: energy, abundance, intensity, transparency and community. In *Metsolat*, the utopian dimension persuades us to ask how it would feel to live in a better community. How this better community, as a whole, should be concretely organized is left for the viewers to negotiate, even though the serial does offer quite concrete solutions all of which are somehow related to the family: gathering the whole family together for Christmas, establishing a family enterprise, etc. In any case, the *Metsolat* family can function at the same time as an idealized picture of a small community, the family, and, more generally, as an idealized picture of the community in the broadest sense of the word. What connects these different utopian solutions is escape from the present to something better.

In the Finnish context, the utopian function of entertainment contributes to the tradition of an informational program policy and its concept of entertainment programs. In Dyer's concept, the utopian function is a latent property of the musicals that materialize in the viewing experience. According to the paradigm of informational program policy, serial dramas should contain some utopian elements, which involve an egalitarian vision of society. Moreover, as demonstrated in earlier chapters, since the very beginning of television the intention to inform and to educate audiences has had an essential part in the establishment of the modern welfare state, the conceptualization of democracy, and the formation of citizenship in Finland. These factors are the background to the fact that the informational family series has become a hegemonic genre among serial drama of TV 2. Considering these factors it is possible to say that the family genre has been an organic social force in the constitution of modern society in Finland.

## **7.1. Metsolat**

TV 2 broadcast *Metsolat* (1993, 1995, and 1996) every week in three periods during the years 1993-1996. The central setting of the story was a small family farm in Northern Finland, Kainuu. The farmhouse was home to the family of four — a grandmother, an aging couple and their jobless son, Erkki, also a former top-ranking athlete. The other children had moved away from home and had their own families in the growing cities of the south or in Sweden. Still, the common joys and sorrows, achievements and setbacks kept the family together. During the first half of the story, times were better — the big boom

was barely over, the great recession yet to come. Later, exploding unemployment, which now touched also white-collar workers, devaluation, the disintegration of the eastern neighbor, the Soviet Union, and the concomitant collapse of eastern trade brought uncertainty and new risks to the life of the drama's characters.

The program was exceptional in that it was financed with certain development money in connection with the Yleisradio channel reform (1993). But *Metsolat* was not such an exceptional serial drama. Its thought-provoking, precisely detailed realism that aimed at enlightening viewers reflects a certain logic that is distinctive to TV 2 in general. *Metsolat* is characteristically 'realistic' both in its themes and in its mode of presentation. However, even though the serial drama is loaded with a host of problematic social relationships, such as gender relations, these are not resolved. In this way, the ideological impact of the serial depends, in the last instance, on how the viewer as a subject 'articulates' the characters and the themes of the drama together in order to create her or his own version of it. (See Hall 1992, 368) Moreover, it is necessary to point out that in the critical paradigm, ideology is seen as "the function of the discourse and of the logic of process, rather than an intention of the agent". (Hall 1982, 88) The production team may thus have had quite a different idea in mind than *Metsolat* eventually conveyed to its viewers.

Since my earlier analysis (Ruoho 1994) was based on the first twenty episodes of the serial I couldn't take into account themes that came strongly to the fore in later episodes. Many themes that are characterized as ambivalent features of modernity by sociologists (cf., Bauman 1992, vii-xxviii) became crystallized in these episodes. The analysis of these has led me to study the social space described in *Metsolat*, the space in which not only beliefs and risks turn out to be different from those one has been accustomed to (cf. Giddens 1993, 295-303), but the identities of the characters change as well and adopt more clearly the form of reflexive projects (ibid. 303-305). By studying the social space as well as gendered meanings of it, constructed by *Metsolat*, my goal has also been to examine the picture that the serial offers of Finnish society in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the time when the big boom rapidly turned into a period of recession.

*The survival ethos.* Every episode of *Metsolat* begins with a panorama of the Leppävaara family farm. This involves moving, in different seasons, along the road leading into the farmyard: with the camera most often following a tractor or a car slowly approaching the farm. These opening shots were repeated episode after episode, and the title of the first episode, "Way Home" symbolizes

the importance of the small community and especially the family in the serial. The family is represented as a community within a community, located in a fictional Hoikka village in Finland before the recession. In the closing episodes the family farm grows into a family-owned large-scale enterprise, and the threats are warded off with the help of strong family ties.

I point out only two spatial-temporal metaphors that structure the narration in *Metsolat*: the home and the road. Both are related in different ways with the ideas of family and kin in the serial and especially with the communal values represented by them. The home is a sacred place in *Metsolat*, and when the eldest daughter in the first episode proposes the selling of the farm, her mother, the farmer's wife, blurts out: "What is she saying? That we should abandon our home?"

The road is an ambiguous symbol: on the one hand it represents a threshold between two eras, on the other it leads the characters to the place — the home — where they meet. The home represents the inner world of the family, the road a line of demarcation between the inner and the outer. The road also concretizes the distance between different worlds and between the values associated with them. *Metsolat* was screened in a time characterized by a (structural) break between a hopeful and more or less controllable past and a seemingly chaotic present haunted with fears and threats.

The family's life is burdened with various hardships, such as the loss of the farm's cattle, a bankruptcy, a car accident just after the eldest daughter's wedding, the younger sister's breast cancer and the mental illness of the eldest son. Through these events *Metsolat* shares with its viewers an understanding of the tragic side of everyday life while still emphasizing an ethos of survival. Additionally, the youngest son Erkki embodies many of the archetypal characteristics of a Finnish man: heavy drinking, perseverance and sportsmanship. Erkki's successes, in turn, exemplify the survival of the whole community.

The contradiction embodied in the characters of *Metsolat* is an allegory of the shattering of traditional rural communities, but reflects also the breaking of a community based on wage labor. The traditional rural culture and the skills of the craftsman are represented by the figure of Antti Metsola, an old farmer. From his viewpoint, agriculture appears as the last resort for small-scale ownership. For his son, Erkki this doesn't make sense any more since he simply cannot believe in the survival of the farm in the globalizing economy. Nevertheless, he is expected to take over the farm after his father. In order to somehow fulfill his parents' expectations he starts a holiday center, 'The Hills of Urja', with slalom courses and a hotel.

The powers inside and outside the family promise different prospects and threats for agriculture. The Leppävaara farm, where *Metsolat* live, had originally been separated from the larger Kaukovaara estate after the landowner's son married the crofter's daughter. The farm was threatened first by the road-building plans of the state and then by the scheming of the estate-owner Kari Kaukovaara. The dramatic tension between the Kaukovaara estate and the Leppävaara farm brings to the fore a mythical struggle between good and evil forces. At the same time it echoes the antagonism between landowners and crofters, which was among the factors leading to the Finnish civil war in 1918. Kari Kaukovaara functions as a representative of evil in the serial, reflecting in one way or another the threats coming from the outside of the affectionate family community.

*Sense of place.* As Horace Newcomb (1990) argues, all locations in television shows have some basic meanings, but in some cases location is transcended. In other words, characters can be defined, revealed, and altered merely by putting them into contact with place. Accordingly, events are made special because they occur "here" and therefore creators of television programs can choose locations that already bear significant meaning. (Newcomb 1990, 31.) The fact that *Metsolat* live in a developing area has a central position in the drama. By placing *Metsolat* into the margin in contrast to the centrality and power connoted by the capital Helsinki, the serial offers us an 'underdog's' perspective but not that of a masochist or a passive victim. The figure of the youngest son working with his excavator in the dark, rainy night mingles mythically with the figure, often appearing in Finnish epics, of a man struggling against the apparently almost insurmountable forces of nature.

The juxtaposition between developing areas and the rest of Finland is present already in the first episode. The state-governed Road and Water Building Company are planning a road through *Metsolat* fields. At the same time, the eldest son comes back for a holiday from Sweden where he has emigrated. The emerging ideological and societal conflicts now take a strong emotional form. The farmer curses the government ministers in his living room, the 'Helsingin herrat', for forgetting the poorer parts of the country. The words of a song "... doing well ... the bigwigs in Helsinki..." are heard from the car radio of the family coming from Sweden. In the opening of the slalom center of the youngest son of the family (part 19: "The Opening"), in turn, plays the anthem of Kainuu, 'Nälkämaan laulu' (The Song of a Starving Land), in which the severe and parsimonious life the Finnish woodlands grant to their stubborn settlers is poetically crystallized.

It would be problematic to pay too much attention to viewer ratings, or at least to claim that the serial has especially managed to speak to certain groups, while at the same time forgetting that ratings are a kind of stereotype, which blur the differences within distinct viewer-groups. In any case, it is possible that the serial especially impressed those who felt threatened or insecure about their future in a reorganizing and globalizing economy perceived as uncontrollable: According to the statistics of YLE, *Metsolat* audience ratings were highest among agricultural, industrial and lower office workers. Still, I would claim that this was not so much due to the empirical verisimilitude, the fact that the settings, the characters and the events of the serial appeared 'like real', than the fact that the serial created a strong emotional link between the screen and the audience. Here, the questions related to general societal ethics and the moral choices of an individual were likely to have a stronger effect than the macro-social problems such as unemployment or the debt trap.

Roland Barthes (1986) speaks about redundant details to the structure as "a kind of narrative luxury, lavish to the point of offering many "futile" details and thereby increasing the cost of narrative information" (ibid. 141). In television narrative, excess is usually associated with melodramas such as *Dallas* and its narrative structure. (Feuer 1994, 556) But in *Metsolat* the abundance of ethical themes along with the effort to achieve the realism effect — even the famous Karelian pie was shown in its proper round shape — played a central role. Yet the preconditions of the serial's 'ethical realism', like of realism in general, are certainly characteristically historical (Ellis, 1982, 7-8) — after all, the serial aims at creating morally rigid rules in a social context in which the unitary moral code and concept of history had already begun to disintegrate. This state of disintegration refers to a situation that the postmodern theoreticians call the end of Great Narratives (Lyotard 1985) and the substitution of individuals for institutions as the sources of morality. (Bauman 1990, 143-169) *Metsolat* may, therefore, have had such an influence on public reception precisely because of the multitude — or even excess — of the ethical problematic it contains.

## **7.2. In Light of the Nostalgic Past**

*Metsolat* appeared on screen during a time of suspicion and insecurity and was, in its attempt to pursue the threatened values, exuberant in its ethical questioning. As Lynne Joyrich (1992) writes, from the viewpoint of the history of capitalism, the postmodern situation is paradoxical: capitalism, which destroyed the bond between signifier and signified with its law of value, must

now protect itself from the repercussions of this break. Nostalgia may even turn into a hysterical attempt to pursue lost meanings. In this “hyperbolic” state of postmodern, the search for morality and truth is made through visible actions and all meanings are sentimentalized and personalized. (Joyrich 1992, 233-237) In *Metsolat* these melodramatic meanings include above all ‘tradition’, family and the value of the work done at home. However it is necessary to understand that no original, lost meaning exists apart from our interpretations here and now: thus tradition lives only afterwards, posthumously, in the experience of its own disintegration (Bauman 1996, 49).

Indeed, *Metsolat* can be comprehended as a community in which the traditions cease to function as traditions, “since they face a situation in which they must justify themselves discursively to an audience, which evaluates them reflexively” (cf. Heiskala 1996, 179). The family of *Metsolat* is placed in a traditional rural setting. However, it is an imagined community like those postmodern communities described by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1992): “belief in their presence is their only brick and mortar, and imputation of importance their only source of authority” (ibid. xix).

A historical equivalent to *Metsolat* case is the earlier British serial *Coronation Street*, which came out at the approximately same time as Richard Hoggart’s work *The Uses of Literacy* in 1957. The book celebrated working class culture and set itself out against the corruption of its traditional values. *Coronation Street* brought the working class into view in nostalgic terms emphasized strong women figures and utopian ideas about how things should be like (Dyer 1981a, 2-6 and Glaessner 1990, 121). All of these cultural factors are compatible with how social changes in society and the corresponding meanings and values were represented in *Metsolat*.

But in *Metsolat* the nostalgia does not have such a manifest nature. Rather the process can be described with Raymond Williams’ notion of structure of feeling. The term ‘feeling’ is used in order to emphasize the difference from ‘worldview’ or ‘ideology’. Correspondingly, we talk about a cultural hypothesis, about describing meanings and values in the same way they are actively experienced - in social reality, which is in a state of flux and has not fixed into meaningful formations. (Williams 1988, 146-153)

The nostalgia of *Metsolat* clears up when the serial is compared to a twenty-year earlier product of the same channel — the *Rintamäkeläiset* (1972). In the latter, the disappearance of agriculture is taken in a downcast manner, without putting up much of a fight. In *Metsolat*, on the contrary, the yearning for the past is strongly grounded; the present is viewed nostalgically through the lenses of the past (see Lipsitz 1992, 97-195). However, through appealing

to traditional values such as hard physical labor and the solidarity growing out of common experience one is simultaneously legitimizing the trends that actually weaken these values, namely professionalization and globalization. In other words, the restoration of these traditional values is nostalgia because these values do not have a material base in reality any more. Professionalism fastens onto information technology where strong muscles are not needed nowadays. IT and globalization combine, in turn, to break the traditional trades, which represented quite similar professional identities and local trade unionism.

In comparison with the 1970s *Rintamäkeläiset*, the structure of feelings offered by *Metsolat* is ‘melodramatically’ tinged. The events are shown from the viewpoints of many different characters and the extending of the events to the public sphere enriches the articulations the characters carry. In *Metsolat*, and especially along with the successes and failures of Erkki Metsola, there emerges a structure of feeling that reflects both the struggle to survive and the suffering of the everyday life (Ang 1985, 78-79). In the serial this is connected with Erkki’s walking on a tightrope over superhuman powers represented primarily by alcoholism and the laws of economy. Nevertheless, the strong engagement with the Finnish tradition of realism prevents *Metsolat* from over-emphasizing this melodramatic aspect. The serial is, in the end, able to mix the melodramatic with the naturalistic everyday life, contrary to film narration, which shows a ‘mythopoeic tendency’ (Thornburn 1994, 545-546) to elevate even mundane events to a ‘greater than life’ level.

### **7.3. New Episodes — the Post-Soviet Era**

Since its beginning, the TV news (TV 1) has been among the most popular programs on Finnish television. About one million people gather in a ritual manner each evening to watch what has happened at home and abroad. *Metsolat* had twice as large an audience at its height. The numbers in as such are not unprecedented; domestic ‘soap operas’ have always attracted large audiences. However, the situation was different in the sense that television had shifted in to open competition between the channels and there were now three channels instead of two.

The large audience and wide public attention received by *Metsolat* proved the continuing popularity of the Finnish serial drama and with its success TV 2 had, re-established itself as a public service channel. The conclusion was that since Yleisradio was able to produce such a mega-success, no one would dare call the license fees into question. The head of the Drama

Department, Olli Tola, pointed out that the serial succeeded beyond any expectations:

We did expect to get good ratings with this serial because of our background: we have a long tradition of this kind of serial drama. We also live during this pro-agrarian period. It's a bit of a nostalgic time in that sense. We thought that the roots of the Finns are in rural life, and this is that kind of a human relationship story that rings true and is very realistic and Finnish viewers have all along hated trickery. And this is terribly ... even rather naturalistic.

The success of *Metsolat* forced TV 2 to continue the serial. Even the creator of the serial, Carl Mesterton, had not been prepared for that. He had retired from the broadcasting company's Swedish language program unit (FST) before *Metsolat* pre-production started. In fact, after having offered the idea unsuccessfully to TV 1 he eventually convinced TV 2. The first 21 episodes were written before shooting, which reduced costs and made it possible to shoot in one day, for instance, all of the footage for sunny summer scenes. In writing the new episodes Mesterton got help from Miisa Lindén — who acted in the serial and is a dramatist-director by training — as well as from his wife Anna Lisa Mesterton.

The first screening period with 21 episodes ends at the beginning of 1990. After that Eastern Europe started creaking at the joints, communist parties fell, socialism stumbled over perestroika and the Baltic countries became independent. After the Pact of Friendship, Cooperation and Support between Finland and Soviet Union was dropped, Finland adjusted to the new situation in its foreign policy. Tourism to former homes in Karelia — which had been lost to the eastern neighbor — flourished, many cities that Finns knew well had abandoned the names they had been given during the Soviet era, the old flag from the Czarist era as well as the royal family itself were rehabilitated. The graves of Finnish soldiers, who were missing in action during the war against the Red Army, were found and the soldiers were commemorated throughout the country. Finland began to experience the post-Soviet era that was characterized by the populist hopes that regaining the lost Karelia could still become a possibility one day.

All of this had to be included in the lives of *Metsolat* — in addition to reviving the central characters. The last nineteen episodes were divided thematically into two, so that the first nine episodes (23 - 31) broadcast after the separate Christmas episode (22) focused on the crises and changes related with the past: Erkki's slalom business faces financial difficulties, his sister's husband is paralyzed after a car accident and withdraws into seclusion. The



granddaughter, Liisa, begins to feel bored and too restricted on the abandoned farm. His father, the oldest brother of the Metsolat family suffers from the guilt of a post-bankruptcy trauma. The farmer Antti longs to return his former home in Karelia (occupied by the Soviet Union during the war), and his wife, Annikki meets an old acquaintance that tells her about her brother's fate in captivity.

The later episodes from 32 to 40 describe the settling of the debts made during the big boom. In Finland, dealing with the 32 billion marks in credit losses suffered by the banks, devaluation, bankruptcies and unemployment, meant that many individuals lost control of their life. Great changes also took place in the lives of the characters: Erkki starts drinking once again after losing his new wife and their newborn baby, the division of the inheritance brings about a new situation between the Kaukovaara and Leppävaara families, the grave of Annikki's brother, a victim of the war, is found. The business affairs of the Metsola family, the slalom center and the hotel, advance as well as the brothers' business relations in Russia. And finally, the family's son-in-law begin with his promising political career first as a Green Party local city councilman and later a member of the Finnish parliament.

*The Karelian Isthmus.* In episode 25 entitled "In the Shadow of Yesterday", farmer Antti Metsola drops by the village shop and overhears the shopkeeper talking with the biology teacher about the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Historically, the discussion is connected with the conservative communists' attempted coup d'état and the consequent rapid reorganization of the situation in the country, the end of the Communist Party, the fall of Gorbachev and the rise of Yeltsin. Antti Metsola is a Karelian emigrant and is asked whether he would wish to return to Karelia if that should become possible.

*The shopkeeper: What would you say, Antti, if we'd get Karelia back, would you be ready to move back there?*

*Antti: Couldn't say. I mean I've spent most of my life here. And being as old as I am I'd say that here's where I'm going to stay ... Or who knows. We'll see.*

*Teacher: And it can't be any paradise there with the environment destroyed and polluted and all that.*

This theme is picked up again in episode 30 ("On the Karelian Isthmus"), describing Antti's trip to his former home village on the other side of the eastern border. His wife and a whole busload of other villagers also attend the

trip organized by war veterans. After the memorial service held at the ruins of the Finnish Lutheran church, Antti finds his way to his home village with the help of a Russian taxi driver. Although the area has changed a great deal and the houses are in a bad shape, Antti recognizes his old home.

At this point the narrative turns into a semi-documentary. Fictionally, the house is Antti's old home but its present inhabitant is not fictional, but a real Russian soldier forced to settle in a foreign Karelian village after the war. With the driver acting as an interpreter, the Finnish visitors interview the man and it turns out that the 76 year-old, apparently widowed Russian has lived in the house over 40 years, brought up his kids and now sits alone in his living room with a photograph of Czar Nicolas II and his family hanging on the wall. Part of the footage appears quite strange, more like a documentary than drama.

Such a journalistic drama that mixes fact and fiction is a familiar feature that can be found also in the other serials that Carl Mesterton has produced for YLE's Finnish-Swedish department, such as *The Bergströms*. A similar style was pursued also in some earlier TV 2 serial dramas of the 1960s and 1970s. For drama like this, using real persons inside serial fiction has been a typical device, along with the precise detailing of facts and emphasizing these facts in narration. The drama may in such cases introduce a real expert who gives advice to the fictional characters in tricky situations. In *Metsolat*, the Russian man appears largely as himself even if the surroundings and the story may otherwise be fictionally construed. The impression of documentary is enhanced by the use of authentic settings and an interpreter who translates the lines spoken in Russian. While it so far has been a commonplace that a fictional serial drama largely imitates reality and aims at verisimilitude, in the Karelia episodes the 'reality' thus tends occasionally to make itself fiction-like, to imitate fiction.

The next episode ("A Bitter Strip") provides a summary of what has happened in Karelia and returns for a moment to the old Russian's house. In the end the man, wearing his best suit and Soviet Army decorations, comes out with Antti. They shake hands on the stairs outside the house with Antti's wife taking a picture for remembrance. When Antti Metsola then gets the idea to search the old barn to find an unfinished wooden ladle he had left earlier, the camera turns to the living room of the Leppävaara farm where Antti is sitting holding the ladle in his hands. Pictures are shown and the story is related to a visiting villager.

In the living room of Leppävaara the consequences of the war were not viewed from a power-political angle but from the viewpoint of two ordinary people who both had suffered equally from the war. Antti's former home in

Karelia had become a home for a man from the outskirts of Moscow. Both he and Antti were once driven from their homes and the ensuing ‘chain-reaction’ still astonishes them both. As Antti says: “Now what could give me the right to turn him out, after all?” Ultimately, this footage articulates a humane reconciliation.

The interesting feature is precisely the choice of the form of describing the visit to Karelia. Everything in the filmed material indicates that fictional characters appear there along with partly real persons and events. The serial doesn’t try to hide this feature at all. Here and there in *Metsolat* one has already earlier relied on documentary style of presentation in addition to ‘realistic’ themes — for example, when Antti in the early episodes showed his grandchild old farming tools or when the camera lingered for long moments on Erkki’s work. The verisimilitude of the themes was thus strengthened with a presentation form that requires us to take events as such for real.

#### **7.4. An Attempt to Save Male Identity**

Ien Ang (1985) claims that happy endings are typical features of feminist discourse. The utopian moment is, conversely, missing completely from the narration of a serial such as *Dallas*, since bad luck is the norm in it. Seen this way, the melodramatic sentimentality of *Dallas* is ideologically motivated. The structures that maintain the problems and bad luck are impossible to change — the patriarchal status quo will prevail. The women represent fatalism and passivity in *Dallas* whereas a good, feminist position would involve active fighting spirit and self-respect. (Ang 1985, 120-121.)

From the viewpoint of an active fighting spirit, *Metsolat* diverges from the melodramatic structure of feeling that *Dallas* is loaded with. The family structure of *Metsolat* is obviously matriarchal in comparison with *Dallas* (See Geraghty 1991, 62-83). Life doesn’t appear trouble-free in the family of *Metsolat*, which is structured on the basis of strong female characters, and there are no guarantees of a happy ending either. The community demands at least the mutual loyalty of its members and thus tries the limits of individual freedom.

From the viewpoint that politicizes the gender difference, *Metsolat* represents, in particular, an attempt to save male identity. Just as some postmodern philosophers think, the ‘feminine’ is employed in the serial to guarantee the future of the male subject. (See Braidotti 1993a, 140-141) To put it very strongly, the community of *Metsolat* may be equated with a male body in crisis. The female characters of the serial tend to this body, especially

farmer Antti Metsola's wife tends to his sons, Erkki and Risto. The women are charged with the treatment of the sickness of the male subjects as well as the whole community.

One can find points of contact between *Metsolat* and other Finnish stories of strong women. The Metsola family and kin form a natural combination and corporation in the same way as in the dramatist Hella Wuolijoki's *Niskavuori-saga*. In both cases the relation between the people and the land appears to be almost mythical, the land is loved with all the vigor that tradition can muster and the apparently unavoidable changes are seen as threats. In both, the female power-figures, Loviisa Niskavuori and the farmer's wife Annikki Metsola represent tradition.

The feminine members of the Metsola family, who from time to time meet each other at home, stand for different voices that are in dialogue with one another. The dialogue takes place between sacred motherhood, gender-equal womanhood, and the feminist ideal of a strong woman as well as the post-feminist ethos that emphasizes the free choice of identity. In the latter, the determination of 'femininity' moves more and more clearly to a personal level and the ambivalence connected with postmodernity comes to the fore most distinctly.

In her study on the appearance of that ambivalence in the interviews of the Finnish women's magazines sociologist Riitta Jallinoja (1997) takes up a theme that is connected with both the female and the male figures in *Metsolat*, though in a different sense. It is the representing of loneliness as a guarantee of individualization (ibid. 152-164): "The motive of action is now some mysterious desire or emotion inside a human being which in freedom may surface spontaneously and without constraint" (ibid. 154).

In the case of the oldest son of *Metsolat* and that of his daughter, the search for the self appears through loneliness in two different forms: the daughter runs away to Tampere with another man just to find out that he isn't faithful to her and that she is just as unhappy as with her cows on the farm. The father, for his part, resumes his old hobby, painting, but falls ill with reactive depression. Eventually the daughter discovers in herself an ethos of 'being-for-another' while her father's survival is associated with 'being-for-oneself'. As a mode of self-reflexivity, the daughter's individualization takes place in a reproductive sphere through the commitment to marriage, growing herbs and to pregnancy while in her father's case it is clearly also connected with professional competence and the public sphere.

The feminine figures of *Metsolat* can be compared to the classification used in the international analysis of the TV-serials that include the traditional and the modern womanhood as well as the role that reflects new values (see

Gallagher 1988, 9-10). The Finnish strong 'folklore womanhood' is best exemplified by the figure of Annikki Metsola, the farmer's wife, as I have already pointed out. Her story is most clearly a story about being-for-others despite the fact that Annikki is economically independent.

Her daughters are influenced by women's movements of different times and have their own desires and professional goals. In addition, the changes in the economic structures are also driving them away from the farm to pursue their own careers independently. Most interesting from this point of view is the juxtaposition of the good, hardworking younger daughter and her greedy and vainglorious older sister.

To a sort of middle ground left between them the serial places their niece Liisa who I already described above — a city-born young farmer growing her crops in an organic and biodynamic way, in whose figure are most clearly visible the necessity of a so-called free choice as a woman and the concomitant revolt against the mother. In the closing midsummer episode (part 40: "Rastas ja metso täälläkin soi") the mother visits Liisa who now wants to have children herself and takes part with the midsummer celebrations of the ever-growing Metsola clan.

It is possible to discern a certain logic functioning in the drama, which develops into a closure in just the closing episode; here the unity of the family is celebrated and every member of the clan gets some kind of a role in maintaining this unity. No one could deny the strong family ideology that functions in this part of the serial; almost everyone finds him/herself a partner, marries and has children. The family, or a group of families in the serial is something that solves its problems within itself or then by binding outsiders ethically to itself. Womanhood or manhood is no longer represented a societal fashion; as long as you are honest and hardworking and you have faith in your dreams, you will find your own place whatever your gender may be.

*Strong female characters.* The early ideology-critique against the conventional representations of women (Seiter 1986) and conservative ideas of family (Brunsdon 1981/1997) collided in due time with the empathy the viewers felt towards the traditional women of the serials (Winship 1988, see also Brunsdon 1993/1997). The question about 'right' and 'wrong' representations of women became, therefore, a site for cultural negotiations between the different 'feminisms'. In the end, the important thing appears to be primarily the way that the audience politicizes the difference between the men and the women as well as that between the women themselves (Braidotti 1993b, 146-147).

The representations of women in *Metsolat* are difficult to evaluate from the viewpoint of the often-stereotypical solutions found in the serial if one

leaves out of consideration the possibility of dialogue between the text and the interpreter. For example, the dichotomy of the good and hardworking vs. the greedy and vainglorious sister may make the latter an object of either hatred or even stronger identification for exactly the same reason — because she is an aggressive character who pursues her own desires and breaks the rules. The niece Liisa, who in the end ‘freely’ chooses the traditional woman’s role, could also serve as an example of both a figure who gives herself up to the patriarchal and a figure of the feminist utopia of the autonomy of women.

The differentiation between empirical and emotional realism often used in cultural studies seems to work when the concepts are used in a narrower sense to describe, for example, the relationship between the viewers and the serials. The dichotomy becomes problematic, however, if it is used to legitimize a certain narrative form or to divide the serials into masculine and feminine genres. On the conceptual level, the differentiation between empirical and emotional realism may well sustain the dichotomous understanding of the properties of the sexes. Besides, television demonstrates a tendency to recombine its different program formats. Such horizontal reconfigurations limit the usefulness of the vertically understood (film) genre thinking in television research (see Feuer 1992, 157-158).

Lidia Curti (1988) has claimed that no mono-gendered text seems to exist. She takes as an example *Hill Street Blues* that began as a male serial but also includes women characters struggling with their own problems. Still, the main element is compassion towards masculinity. Curti calls this ‘sentimental masculinity’. (Curti 1988, 155-156.)

Similar characteristics can be found also in more recent American series such as *NYPD Blue*, *ER* or *Chicago Hope*, in which male sentimentality is placed on a level with a feeling structure supported by strong female characters. In fact, there is a moral struggle between the worlds constructed by the men and women in these series, the former being clearly under threat. The drama unfolds in the semi-public setting (a police department, a court of justice and a hospital) and widens the social space available to women — and even to children — outside home.

The soap opera targeted at women is criticized for representing women’s duties as belonging to the private, personal and family spheres. In *Metsolat*, the collective importance of these spheres is emphasized in the way the serial pays attention to the ‘value of emotional work’ (Geraghty 1991, 43 and 45). In this show, the duties of women lie exactly here but since the scope of the drama transcends the family to cover also the semi-public sphere, it allows the women to appear outside the walls of the home. This comes to the fore

especially in the character of the youngest daughter: she adopts emotional work as part of her professional skills as a physician.

The fate of the drama's central character, Erkki, depends on the women in a way that is symptomatic: mother Annikki supports her son in all possible situations, grandmother guarantees his loans before her death, the physician-sister helps him out of his problems with alcohol and a wealthy wife paves the way for his economic independence. Erkki's father Antti, on the contrary, shouts at him for his drinking, his best friend kills himself, the other village men speak ill about him behind his back, his sister's husband, a bank manager, refuses at first to give him a loan, his wife's brother threatens him with legal action. After his wife's death Erkki starts drinking. Even though the drama's Finnish man may brood on his sorrows alone, in the end he needs women's support to get back on his feet again.

During the physical drudgery with the pitchfork, by the stove or on the seat of the tractor one is occupied also with emotional work, which in *Metsolat* is disclosed through rejoinders, close-ups of faces or long, silent footages. When the people of the Leppävaara must give up their cattle ("The End of the Old — The Beginning of the New", episode 17) especially the sorrow of the farmer's wife, Annikki, is intensely brought to the fore. Annikki has a strong ritual role in the drama during all forty episodes; it is she who again and again brings her adult children back home now through organizing a Christmas dinner, a hidden birthday party for her husband.

In other words, along with the survival story of Erkki's slalom business and the whole Leppävaara Corporation, *Metsolat* emphasizes the competence related to the control of one's own feelings and human relations. The women of *Metsolat* are exemplary in this ability. It belongs most clearly to the 'female narrative' of the serial that is distinct from the 'male' survival story.

## 7.5. The Mapping of Social Relations

*Metsolat* can be read as a 'map' of social relations, which functions as a guide in interpreting the drama. Its central landmarks are the family community in Northern Finland and it is based on the well-known items and icons of Finnishness. Even so, the Metsola family and the small community of the fictional Hoikka municipality offer to viewers a controllable net of social codes rather than the one and only norm in the serial is to follow through her/his life. Its creators encode these social codes emphasizing indigenous meanings into the serial. For example, the T-shirt made to advertise the serial

contains the slogan (among many others) that Dallas-type American dramas do not have the capacity to portray Finnish fears and dreams.

As a community *Metsolat* appeals to the utopian sensitivity emerging in a society where solidarity was scarce at the time the serial came out. Through its structure of feeling the serial shares with its viewers their fears for the future. The richness of emotions evident in the mutual care and support among the small community can in this way expand also into a societal utopia (see Geraghty 1991, 122-125). For those, who fear that the work society or the service society or that agriculture as a source of livelihood is about to die, the serial offers an escape to a completely different community — to an imagined community where the people truly care about each other.

*Metsolat* describes the survival of the community in a social organism threatened by the hard pressures of the economy and globalization. In combining the need to survive with the myth of the perseverance of the Finnish man, the story brings to the fore the logic of the exchange value, the transformation of a small farm into a large-scale modern enterprise. One should also take notice of a humane reconciliation in relation to the Russian War. But, as it already became evident, the energy of the serial is not exhausted with this. The other story, a story of ‘being-for-others’ related through the female characters, emerges as at least as important an aspect of the drama. In this story is the symbolic space of the serial crystallized.

Furthermore, the serial offers to its viewers a sphere that is exceptionally intimate: human relations are represented as rich, reciprocal and deep. The serial touches problems that one is usually prone to evade. The family may cause troubles but, on the other hand, it solves these problems by itself. In *Metsolat* this energy and richness has a particularly important significance as the engine of the whole drama. The members of the community support each other during hard times and human relations are built on the principle of ‘fair play’. Even though the ideal of *Metsolat* remains essentially ‘inside’ the capitalist market economy, the collective utopias lead in at least two directions — just as the road that splits the lands of the farm into two. And in realizing both these two utopias the women have a pivotal role.

Through anchoring meanings to the viewpoint of individual — on the one hand — the serial offers a liberal image of a free male individual pursuing his own desires. With its safety net, the fictional family community challenges the alienation and the worthlessness felt by the individual as a consequence of the hard facts of economics, such as unemployment and bankruptcy. The original home of the *Metsolat* family represents a place where the group of family members is sheltered from all kinds of outer threats. The meaning of home and its caring female members appears ambivalent, to say the least,



from the feminist point of view. It might easily be used to support the claim that the Finnish women should return home and that the state services, which are tailor-made to help the working women, should be suspended and their functions transferred back into the domestic sphere.

Bourdieu's (1998) conceptualization of social and symbolic spaces describes the exchange relationship between economic and social capital, which breaks the surface in *Metsolat*. These forms of capital are best represented on the level of the characters by the figures of the landowner Kari Kaukovaara and Annikki Metsola. The farmer's wife's, Annikki Metsola's character is illuminated with a collective utopia and through her 'femininity' she challenges the ideal of abstract masculinity and its orientation towards the exchange value (see Hartsock 1983, 241-242 and 246). In this way, it can speak to those carrying the stigma of cultural Other as well as to those marginalized in the convulsions of societal cataclysm — to those who dream about a down-to-earth, emotionally strong community with enough courage to respect the differences of its members.



**Part Three:**  
**Critique of the Family Genre**



## 8. PERHESARJA AS GENRE

This chapter further investigates the specific generic form of the *perhesarja* ('family series') serials that have dominated TV 2 productions. There are three principal reasons for this investigation. Firstly, it is important to study what it is that makes these fictions expressly 'family series'. Family series do not have the same generic unifying elements that soap operas or westerns do. Family series are an established category, however, in Finnish television culture, which is used not only in compiling program archives, but also in television criticism and previews. Hence, there is reason to analyze what those typical qualities of the genre are that make any given series expressly a family series.

Secondly, it is necessary to discuss why it is that the family series has been the longest-running type of program on Finnish television. It can be said that the family series has played a strong socializing role in the modern welfare society, particularly in relation to shifting conceptualizations of gender. As I show in chapter 9, family series have also participated in the changing definition of a man's role in the society. The third reason to examine the conventions of the family series lies in its ideological function. The family series must be critically scrutinized in order to determine its generic limitations. In other words, are the kinds of topics and the ways in which different issues are dealt with on these serials structured by both internal and external organizational strategies of the family series itself?

Despite some common elements, which justify the use of the term *perhesarja*, the family series does not form any homogenous set of conventions. On the contrary, until recently there has been no standardized genre system in Finnish television culture and what is called *perhesarja* has, in reality, encompassed a set of very different styles of narration, ranging from episodic series to continual serials. This chapter discusses *perhesarja* on three levels: taxonomy (or classification), standardization, and cultural system (or structure). It also examines the generic nature of *perhesarja* and asks which approach to genre is the most relevant in the context of this study.<sup>1</sup>

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1 As Lynn Spigel (1992) shows in her study on television and family ideals in postwar America, television was first welcomed as a catalyst for renewed family values at the time (ibid. 2). Moreover, television as an historical articulation of the apparatus in its postwar context presumed its viewers had a shared cultural knowledge of the 'average' family. Considering television's address as a late-Oedipal and fully socialized subject of family (Feuer 1986, 103) is a compelling point of view. It

No doubt, as I will demonstrate in chapter 9, new images of women and men in television challenge the old generic conventions in the long term. At the very least, new gender roles challenge the limits of convention. ‘Family harmony’ is the key to achieving narrative closure on *perhesarja* and articulates a certain consensus on how family members should be presented within these conventions. Just as in traditional soap operas, the setting for family series are usually the home (which is sometimes further linked with a semi-public sphere, such as a workplace and rarely with a public sphere, such as governmental politics). Almost without exception, Finnish family series have resembled the so-called matriarchal soaps that are said to be the British version of the genre. Some family series, however, have taken traditional men’s spaces and events as the core of their narratives (See for example *Pääluottamusmies* in Chapter 4).

## 8.1 Critical and Positive Definitions

In order to categorize a television series as a *perhesarja*, this study considers three essential criteria. First, at the center of the series’ narrative is a family or a group of persons related by blood. Second, the series is targeted toward a family audience (including children), or broadly speaking, seeks ‘family interest’; and third, there is a consensus between the authors and the viewers that the series is a *perhesarja*, and is therefore suitable for a family audience (See Ruoho 1996, 61). This last criterion implies some kind of convention-bound standard, though the term *perhesarja* by no means refers to the standardization of television. As a term, however, ‘perhesarja’ is used in various ways for classifying television dramas within the specific television culture of YLE. Accordingly, even a television series that was not planned as a *perhesarja* could be regarded as one due, in part, to the criteria listed above. In this process of definition, journalistic television criticism has played an important part.

Contrary to genre classification and taxonomy, *genre criticism* offers some theoretical perspectives for approaching the generic and cultural constitution of the genre. In this study, genre criticism illuminates those generic rules that are so prevalent in television drama in general as well as in its serialized

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refers to a certain spectatorship represented by a psychoanalytical process and ‘imaginary gaze’ (Cf. Kaplan 1988, 134). If the same practice is seen to work as a social, consciously processed ‘television glance’, some prefer to call it ‘viewership’ (Cf. Hartley 1996, 64–65). The point is that neither of the two conceptions as such refer to family as a television audience nor as the topic of a single program.

versions. The core of my analysis, however, is not so much genre itself, but those cultural conventions that the genre system usually tries to organize and classify. At this point it is necessary to distinguish the *convention* from the genre. In a critical sense, as Raymond Williams asserts, the convention “can uncover the characteristic beliefs of certain classes, institutions, and formations (whose) interest and procedures are not artificial and limited but universally valid and applicable.” In a positive sense, the convention may display the real grounds for inclusion and exclusion, the styles and ways of seeing that specific conventions embody and confirm. (Williams 1977, 173.) Williams draws attention to some fundamental variables in different conventions, which in many cases are indicated by specific notations. Thus, the presentations of character, narrative stance, place, and descriptive action have variable conventions (ibid. 174-177). These same presentations are also the primary objects for analyzing the conventions of the serial drama in this study.

As the above set of criteria for *perhesarja* indicates, television drama is a cultural product, which exceeds the mere focus upon its textual properties. As a term, *culture* refers, on the one hand, to praxis as a constitutive element of a ‘whole social order’. On the other hand, and in relation to the former, ‘culture’ refers to the signifying system through which such social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored (Williams 1981, 12-13) It follows that certain forms of social relationships are deeply embodied in particular forms of television drama. This does not mean, however, that television drama did not also adopt aesthetics of the theater (cf. Williams 1977, 173) such as reproducing ‘drama of the box’, and consequently, assumptions on the nature of representative reality as well (Williams 1975, 56). A drama of the box corresponds to the situation in early television in which it was possible as Williams says, to:

[...] transmit performances of an orthodox theatrical kind, and it could be argued that the television play was the ultimate realization of the original naturalistic convention: the drama of the small enclosed room, in which a few characters lived out their private experience of an unseen public world. closed internal atmosphere, the local inter-personal conflict and the close-ups of private feelings. (Ibid.)

The technical possibilities of the early television can also be used corresponding to the structure of feeling of the enclosed internal atmosphere, the local, interpersonal conflicts, and the close-up on private feelings (ibid.). Enclosed internal atmosphere was characteristic of the Finnish television theater and limited technical possibilities framing also the productions of the serial drama. However, the first models for *perhesarja* came from the cinema

and radio, which had already adopted some their methods from the theater and from popular cultural beliefs. In other words, the modern day family drama drew from the conventions established in these films and radio plays. *Suomisen perhe* (The Suominens) began perhaps the best-known film series (1941-1945) about the family during the World War II. It was based on a radio series of YLE (1938-1958). (Sihvonen 1995.)

The strong public service tradition in broadcasting also helped shape *perhesarja* both in radio and television. Its narrative style resembled 'social realism,' which was believed to work effectively in the service of social welfare. Furthermore, the construction of the modern state after the Second World War needed enlightened citizens, and the fiction was believed to help in creating them by correcting, directing, and uniting viewers' attitudes toward the formation of the nation-state. Even though this aim has sometimes been stronger and sometimes weaker throughout the first forty years of Finnish television, it still flourishes as a part of the new ideology of the modern, consumer-oriented public service.

## 8.2. Taxonomy and Formats

While I prefer to consider genre as a cultural system and as a variety of criticism, I first need to make some theoretical notes on the taxonomy and standardization of television drama. A taxonomic perspective is especially necessary to spotlight the terminology that TV 2 has used to characterize and catalogue television programs as popular family series. Even so, it is important to note that Finnish television fiction has largely been unmanageable in terms of high standardization. As visible evidence of this, TV 2 has been making room for some experiments. Side by side with its conventional drama productions there have also been some unique television series, which gave extraordinary space for the personal styles of their writers, directors and actors. Among these series were, for instance, *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* (Men of War and Peace, 1978-79), *Rauta-aika* (Iron Age, 1982), *Kiimaiset poliisit* (Police Officers in Heat, 1993) and *Tumma ja hehkuva veri* (Dark and Burning Blood, 1997-1998).

According to an industrial taxonomy of television, there are several program categories, which can be traced across a range of production formats, from one-off to serial drama productions. These are the anthology drama, the teleplay, the soap opera, the situation comedy, the crime series, and the television melodrama. These categories do not say much about their own history, social nature or their role as television programs. One matter that



distinguishes television from film studies in seeking an object of genre criticism is that television has hardly ever been allowed to have an authorial voice in the same way that film has.

Since discussion about the quality of commercial television began in the mid-1980s, some flexi-narrative series and serials have been said to reflect the distinctive style of their particular authors. Unlike the single drama, it took longer for serial production to rehabilitate itself as an artistic work. In Finland, viewers still remembered the old series and serials by their characters rather than by their authors. However, in recent years, television companies have willingly marketed the specific quality of a domestic television series or serial by emphasizing the 'unique' style of its director or writer. For instance, Carl Mesterton is represented as a master of *perhesarja* by YLE, and Aleksis Bardy is considered a master of domestic soap operas.

For a critical scholar, it is necessary to maintain distance from the industrial use of genre and authorship, although, as Dan Steinbock's work (1988 and 1989) has demonstrated, the concept of format offers a useful analytical starting point for program analysis. In the film and television industries, genres provide a creative toolbox for filmmakers (Feuer 1992, 142), whereas film criticism initially utilized the concept of genre to condemn mass-produced narratives, such as Hollywood studio films, for their lack of originality (*ibid.*). As film and television theory developed, genre criticism began focusing on issues of ideology, but in the case of Finnish television, criticism has remained grounded in identifying generic attributes and assessing the originality of a work.

Broadly speaking, television critics, the industry, and even viewers may all have their own discourses on genre. As far as I can see, however, it is important for television criticism to regard genre as a formation of culture and its intertextual constituents, which is displayed through a variety of texts. When institutionalized to some extent, genres *can* become targets of political struggle or moral attitudes, as has happened in the case of pornography. Television genres have less commonly been the objects of political demonstrations. Nonetheless, as my case study on *Peyton Place* and *Dallas* has shown in Chapter 11, the melodramatic television genre was engulfed by a set of cultural and political articulations united in the notion of the double standards of the Finnish program policy.

In the television industry, generic taxonomy usually works as a technique to maintain a certain aesthetic hierarchy in purchasing programs and organizing files. Usually, taxonomy results in the classification of programs (news, television series, current affairs, etc.).

Domestic production has rarely had the label of 'genre' attributed to it, whereas American genre productions have been familiar to Finnish television viewers for some time. In fact, the aesthetically defined genres, such as soap operas and sitcoms, were not adopted as part of TV 2's own taxonomy until the 1990s. Then, genre was used as part of the standardization process by which a particular television genre takes its identity in relation to other genres and corresponded to the expectations of popular audiences (cf. Neale 1990, 46). To some extent, domestic television series and serials have resembled their British counterparts, especially with regards to their length, yet despite study trips across the Atlantic, the American genre system (westerns, melodramas, situational comedies, soap operas, etc.) has not gained a foothold within Finnish television.

Finnish television companies have preferred to speak about programs by using the concept of *lajityyppi* (type of program). Accordingly, *perhesarja* is its own type of program that is broadcasted side by side with the television news, which is considered another type. The generic boundaries of *lajityyppi* are open to different kinds of narrative formats, styles and duration and need no proportionally stable aesthetic identity like genres do. As a result, a variety of drama programs on Finnish television still do not defer to any particular industrial genre system. TV 2 still produces one-off dramas, mini-series, episodic series, episodic serials, sequential series and continuous serials. Defining these depends on the amount of episodes and the quality of continuity between them (See Tulloch & Alvarado 1983, ix). There is no standard terminology to categorize TV 2's popular dramas, not even in the case of those fictional programs that most critics and audiences recognize as *perhesarja*. The variety of possible terms currently in circulation speaks for itself: *perhesarja* (the family series), *sarjanäytelmä* (the serial drama), *näytelmäsarja* (the drama serial), and *komediasarja* (the comedy series).

The average length varies between three and fifteen episodes and only some fulfill the criteria of continual serials. In this study the longest-running television series, *Heikki ja Kaija* (Heikki and Kaija), continued for about ten years but consisted of only seventy-five screened episodes. Comparatively, *Elämän suola*, with its sixty episodes, ran at a steady pace for 2 years. The situation in Finland is, in many ways, the same as in other Nordic countries (See O'Donnell 1999). Since domestic serial production began, both episodic and continual serials have been fairly short with regard to the number of episodes produced. Characteristic of the situation is the fact that the first Finnish soap opera, *Oi Kallis kaupunki* (1975), consisted of only nine episodes.

Consequently, there seemed to be no systematic typification methods in Finland, which makes the work of a scholar more exciting, but also says

something about the production culture, namely demonstrating the low level of standardization within dramatic production. The situation is now changing. Currently, an ever-increasing amount of programs are determined by the broadcast schedule and by audiences subjected to different formats. As a supertext television consists of the particular program and all the introductory and interstitial materials, also chiefly announcements and advertisements, considered in its specific position in schedule (Browne 1984, 176). Nowadays especially standardization of both scheduling and producing programs draws attention to the industrial systems in the Finnish television.

*Formats* are industrial terms perceived as interactive organizations of television experience. The formats in use by the television industry offer a very practical guide to what is the appropriate time, place and manner of television. In other words, how things should appear, be organized, and acted upon in specific formats (Altheide 1985, 13). Industrial formats give television professionals certain instructions, for example, on how ‘family harmony’ has to be organized within storylines and plots.

Using David L. Altheide’s concept of format, Dan Steinbock (1988) suggests that it provides a productive starting point for program study (ibid. 7). As Steinbock’s own analyses of television series (including *Peyton Place*, *Dynasty*, and *Dallas*) show, format makes it possible to sketch out a basic formula (peruskaava) of a television series, including the appropriate themes and presentation of realism. Moreover, the concept emphasizes the roles of scheduling, filming and promoting in the television industry. However, as Seija Ridell (1998, 17, footnote 2) expresses as part of her social genre criticism, there exists an inaccuracy in the way the concept represents a ‘sense of order’ that seems to be totally independent from politics and ideology.

For cultural studies, generic forms of art and people’s abilities to read genres are always somehow a part of the symbolic, social and cultural world, but the way the genre works within these fields is the subject of continuous debates. As some of my colleagues have already summed up the different aspects of that discussion (for example Ridell 1998, 49-80, and Valaskivi 1999, 49-63), I will only discuss the debate to the extent that is necessary for the context of my study. I perceive genre as a cultural system, a structure of language and an effect of cultural articulation that offers a more social and ideological starting point for study than the mere concept of format. Now, when leaving both taxonomy and format as analytical tools, I will discuss briefly the history of genre criticism in film and television studies and some of the problems related to the concept of a generic and a cultural contract in discussing genre.

### 8.3. Genre as Cultural System

As Raymond Williams (1981) argues, from Greek tragedy to bourgeois drama, social relations, existing in radically different social orders, are embodied in certain forms of art (ibid. 148-171). In cultural theory, popular forms are thought to organize collective material for the experience of social wholeness, a sense of belonging. *Form* is a communicative element and therefore a social process. Form becomes a social product as part of a common understanding fully dependent on the process. To have this common experience in form is the most collective element in social wholeness, according to Williams (1977, 188), and therefore form is also inevitably relational in nature (ibid. 187). Indeed, the cultural theory of social formation offers a productive basis for grasping the whole capacity of television along with specific, assumed properties of the medium, such as a sense of the 'real' or 'contemporariness'.

The Latin word, 'genus,' which lies behind the concept of genre is derived from Greek where it refers to the male gender. However, in Latin this meaning has no privilege and in French the word describes certain aesthetic forms of literature. Williams states (1977, 180) that theory of genres or 'kinds' is the most sustained attempt to group and organize the multiplicity of notations and conventions as specific modes of literary practices. Some scholars, such as Michael Bruun Andersen (1994) and Jane Feuer (1992), discuss the history of genre as a term and explain how genre in film criticism has strongly influenced the latent interest in the term itself. The taxonomic aspect has been the most fundamental function of the category, however, depending on the research orientation, genre receives a variety of criteria. (Andersen 1994, 12)

When the initially unromantic notion of authorship was displaced by the potentially personal creativity of moviemaking in film studies, the individual artist as a natural genius was put aside because of the unique *genre styles* of some individual directors. One of the first genres that interested film scholars was the western, which was accompanied by the development of auteur theory. For instance, John Ford's westerns were exemplified as combining the anonymous Hollywood production process with the artistic work of a single director. (Feuer 1992, 142-143) Finally, those filmmakers whose individual style was supposed to control the artistic elements of genre production by giving a film their personal and unique label were labeled as authors.

Partly as a reaction to the romanticism that reduced the meaning of art to the 'inner vision' of a single artist, film studies shifted from the auteur theory, and correspondingly from aesthetic genre criticism, toward semiotic and ideological theories. The idea of genre became interconnected with the

delineation of systems and structures rather than individual endeavors. What followed were some interesting theories of film genre that have had an influence on how genre criticism has developed in television studies.

As previously noted, the discussion on genres started with an aesthetic viewpoint. According to Feuer (1992, 145), there have been two other approaches to television genres: the ideological and the ritual. Each of these provides a different version of how genre refers to a social construct. (Ibid.) I must add here a fourth viewpoint that is called the social action approach that emphasizes the cultural competence of the audience as having power not only over the text, but also over the agenda (Ridell 1997, 4-6).

Contrary to the aesthetic function of television, the ideological approach, at its extreme, implies that genre can be considered as an instrument through which the ruling ideas of capitalist and patriarchal society are presented and represented. A similar critique would conceive soap opera as a feminine narrative, which produces its female viewers as feminine subjects (e.g. Fiske 1987, 179). The most categorical critique within this approach argues that the ideological problem of soap operas is that the feminine private sphere colonizes the masculine public sphere and constructs a moral consensus about the conduct of personal life (Brunsdon 1997, 14-16). As we will see in the case below, however, the ideological approach is not limited to these fairly extreme soap opera examples. Actually, the ideological approach can be combined with that of the ritual approach offering a new concept of ideology that takes account both generic and cultural expectations working together within the limits of *perhesarja*.

In approaching genre as a culturally driven process and consequently not only as the textual properties of single programs, Steven Neale (1990), makes a distinction between generic and cultural verisimilitude working together within the limits of 'systems of expectations' (ibid. 47-48). Hence genres such as *perhesarja* may be 'dominated by repetition, but they are also marked fundamentally by difference, variation and change'. Furthermore, genre 'manifests itself as an interaction between three levels: the level of expectation, the level of the generic corpus, and the level of rules or norms that govern both'. (Ibid. 56.) Neale's approach to genre is close to Raymond Williams' idea that popular forms organize collective material and are products of the communicative, social process itself.

A good example of this is the history of family drama and especially the difficulties of defining its artistic form, which nevertheless, was widely accepted by viewers. In the first clear definition used by creators, the utility drama characterized those assumed generic features of television series that reminded viewers of the problem-oriented conventions of social realism. In

television criticism the term was brought up for the first time when the continuing British series, *Coronation Street* (1960-1990), came under investigation within academic circles. As Marion Jordan (1981) writes of its history, the serial “was shown at a time when the cinema, the novel, the stage, were all engaged in a conscious effort to achieve ‘relevance’ by treating what they regarded as the social problems at that time” (ibid. 2). Jordan defines the convention as follows.

Social Realism demands that life should be presented in the form of a narrative of personal event, each with a beginning, a middle and an end, important to the central characters concerned but affecting other in only minor ways. These personal events are ostensibly about social problems and they should have as one of their central concerns the settling of people in life. The resolution of these events should always be in term of the effect of personal interventions. According to the convention characters should always be recognized as working-class and should be credibly accounted for in terms of the ‘ordinariness’ of the homes, families, and friends depicted. The locale of these people should be urban and provincial (preferably in the industrial north) and the settings should be commonplaces and recognizable (the pub, the street, the factory, the home and more particularly the kitchen). Moreover, the time should be ‘the present’ and the style should be such as to suggest an unmediated, unprejudiced and complete view of reality. In summary, these characters, their conditions, and personal events should give the impression that the reader, or viewer, has spent some time “at the expense” of the characters depicted. (Ibid. 28.)

These above ways of presenting the lives of characters, their social positions, homes, settings, and the time of actions seem to be uniform in the case of the majority of Finnish family series and serials. What distinguishes the terms ‘utility drama’ and ‘social realism’ is that the former is still used to differentiate *perhesarja* convention, for instance, from artistic plays and miniseries. Producers of popular drama have employed the term *utility drama* when they have tried to distinguish the particular television convention from the artistic conventions of the Finnish television theater. As a discourse the utility drama has not been referred as having a high standard of quality. Instead, it has been considered as a ‘light entertainment’ that by embodying dramatic forms is able to deal informatively with characters and events of the current interests. (See also Rönty 2000, 13)

The discourse of utility drama is perhaps surprising when old continual series are currently attracting groups of devotees, among them former critics. It, however, was indicative of the time when an ‘entertaining’ serialized television drama had difficulties in differentiating itself from platform theater,

which was conceptualized as either high art or humorous folk comedies. In the opinions of some, only the 'serious' television theater was thought to carry these traditions. At the beginning of production of *perhesarja*, a serialized drama was not necessarily thought to represent the dramatic (or theatrical) form at all but was just another television program among others. Of course, over the course of time from the current perspective, also news and weather have a dramatic form as well an informative function. However, it took time to draw this conclusion.

## 8.4. Generic and Cultural Expectations

Theorists have noted that the concept of a contract in the discussion of social order and television genres is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, as a metaphor it suggests that the cultural order results from the free will of human beings outside of class struggle or the oppression of women (or in psychoanalytical terms, women's repression). Secondly, with regard to genre's relation to the 'real' world, it might not be as same to consider genre metaphorically as a generic contract in the study of fiction as it is in the study of news. At least, we should not presuppose that in news disguised as facts this relation is less problematic than in openly fictional genres. Instead, a contract instantly denotes an arrangement that is somehow accepted by all parties and *therefore* has a social nature. Furthermore, the word 'contract' implies particular kinds of power relations (Valaskivi 1999, 57).

It is only analytically possible to distinguish generic expectations from cultural expectations. In relation to the generic expectations of television drama, Katja Valaskivi (1999), explains that the metaphor of contract might be appropriate in understanding the audience's relationship to the news. In the case of television drama, however, which is already supposed to be 'fictional', the generic contract might be less confining with regards the representation of the 'real' world. Valaskivi writes:

Defining genre metaphorically as a contract has its disadvantages, because genre, as the provider of the 'rhetorical mode of address', is always in flux and constantly under negotiation. As a contract, then, genre is never actually sealed, although it is basically accepted or at least recognized and implemented by parties involved. Genre, rather, functions as a shared anticipation and a set of practices in drafting a contract, rather than an actual contract. The metaphor of contract implies a fixed and reciprocal agreement, which might come close in

the case of news, but does not seem to be quite accurate in relation to many other form of television, where 'truth', 'real world' and the ways they are represented have a less self-evident relationship. News is inherently supposed to be about the real or empirical world, about something that has really happened or is going on. It deliberately tries to hide its constructedness and, according to news reception studies, also succeeds in this in an efficient way." (Ibid. 57.)

The argument that in 'fictional' television, the generic contract might be less binding with regard to the relationship to the 'real' world (ibid.) has advantages and requires some extra commentary. It is repeatedly argued that viewers perceive dramas as not representing the 'real world,' whereas the news is more easily accepted as relating to the 'real' because it is supposed to tell the 'truth'. Instead, fictional programs give occasion to critics to accuse them of 'unrealistic' or 'incorrect' pictures of reality. Katja Valaskivi states that this kind of criticism is more likely to occur with drama than with the news and therefore, part of the contract in watching 'fictional' genres is that it is possible to question of their degree of 'realism' (ibid.). After all, drama is a made-up story without any predestined basis in reality. For this reason, the demands of 'realism' in fiction have not exhausted the question of the generic difference. Let me give some examples.

The domestic crime series, *Kylmävierisesti sinun* (Yours in Cold Blood, 2000) sparked debate over the ethically correct way to depict 'real' crimes on television, when it began using direct references to real victims, criminals and their relatives. Almost all of the participants and events of the crime had already gotten viewers attention through having been shown on the television news and in the tabloids. After following the debate, at least one question remained: What motivation calling relation to the real less self-evident in fiction than in the news? Would it not be best to argue that drama genres have a specific relationship to the real because they are implicitly supposed to deal with it in both a different and in the same way as news? The difference between fictional and factual programs is ostensible and viewers can also expect television series to 'realistically' answer the questions about 'what really happen' or 'what in these circumstances typically happens'. In my opinion, this is a most interesting question, which is not exhausted by the argumentation on the different 'reality' relationships between the news and television dramas as genres.

To define genre metaphorically as a generic and cultural *contract* has its historical origin in the ideological approach to film genre. Unlike news, for



instance, a western constructs the relationship between the harmony and disharmony of a social order it represents. Instead, in watching the news social contract involves with regards to accuracy, priority, and topicality and the sensitive balance between harmony and disharmony is continuously in a state of flux. In westerns usually the hero mediates the contradictions between nature and culture in certain ways depending on changes in society at a particular historical moment the western is airing. As John Fiske (1990, 128) states: “The change in the western hero is the part of change in society’s meanings of progress, of imperialism, of capitalism, of good and evil.” As a result, the contradiction of culture and nature creates a solution within a certain popular form that itself becomes a social product as a part of a common understanding which fully depends on an ongoing social process.

From the Gramscian perspective, the whole ‘system of expectations’ that manifests genre is consensual rather than contractual. Just as culture is a whole body of practices and expectations and exists in our senses and in our perceptions of the world (Williams 1977, 108-110), genre is also consensual in nature. In other words, every genre accentuates a set of representations, which are not ultimately controlled, but culturally negotiated by television viewers. *Perhesarja*, considered as a genre, thus means that both its generic and cultural plausibility comes true through the practices of viewers, their performances as subjects. Certainly, late modern themes within the conventions are symptomatic of the social and cultural transformation and they can result in new ‘systems of expectations’ circulating between industry, text and subject (1981/1985, 6). Accordingly, it can be a guide to modify genre with new rules and norms of verisimilitude meaning ‘probable’ or ‘likely’, that is, what is here and now appropriate and therefore probable in genre (See Neale 1990, 46).<sup>2</sup>

In terms of the contract, system of expectations based on those shared experiences (mythic contradictions), which we see in the case of westerns, it is important to note that they can also hide other cultural contradictions from view. This process works in the same way as a capitalist state can represent general welfare for all its citizens, but at the same time control class

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2 Consequently, genre is not a cultural form in a narrow sense, but a negotiable industrial product (See Anderson 1994, 191-215). The hegemonic struggle for television as a cultural form is also discerned in the differences — made in the Finnish public discussion — between American and European television culture. Negotiations, however, do not only occur between television texts or different television cultures (public and commercial television) but also within cultural institutions such as the institution of film and television criticism and their reference groups over the struggle for cultural capital.

contradictions. Less commonly, westerns deal with women's struggle for existence beyond the crisis of masculinity. In general, female characters have been represented either as embodying moral superiority or degradation in relation to male characters. While society's understandings of capitalism or of good and evil have perhaps changed since the Holocaust, post-colonialism and the collapse of Soviet Union, certain basic contradictions have remained untouched. For instance, men's roles are still the objects of domestication by women in popular fiction. Ultimately, this guarantees the 'heterosexual matrix' in culture.

Within the Finnish *perhesarja* genre, it seems that even the most delicate thinking does not prevent producers from falling victim to the trappings of myths and conservative attitudes towards the central institutions of society. Accordingly, only when some theme turns out to be too hazardous for the program's success do producers start thinking about the cultural consequences. In practice, creators and producers rarely articulate their beliefs concerning generic and cultural verisimilitude to be indicative of "a cultural formation or institution in which society's central beliefs and values undergo continuous rehearsal, testing, and revision" (Thornburn, 1987, 161).

The discussion above on *perhesarja* genre demonstrates at least two dimensions of genre; it has been considered either as a format or as a cultural system. For the industry genre as a format offers a way to control the tension between similarity and difference inherent in the production of any cultural product (Feuer 1992, 142). In contrast, genre in academic criticism is usually defined as a cultural system of orientations. What is finally indicative is that in the process of communication viewers do not have power over the agenda (Ridell 1997, 6). The social theory of genre then emphasizes genre as 'one crucial category in the transmission of culture, ideology, the structuring of power, the formation of individual subjects, and the construction and transmission of hegemonic structures' (Kress & Threadgold 1988). Consequently, genre as a product and social process, system and dynamic performance has its function in both reality-maintenance and reality change (Threadgold 1989).

## 8.5. The Finnish Family Stories

As we have seen, taxonomy as a tool for making cultural distinctions between different genres has been one of the established functions of genre. A distinction between artistic dramas and more entertaining family series also implies a gendered distinction, which is mainly maintained by cultural critics,

but also by creators themselves. Therefore, the social theory of genre makes it possible to examine the conditions and circumstances under which the category of *perhesarja* as convention appeared in discussions on Finnish television. Regarding *perhesarja* in aesthetic, ideological, ritual, and social terms, directs one's attention to examine in which ways its conventions and cultural norms, and gender contracts create limits in signifying the modern family and social relations.

Genre is not as strictly limited a convention in Finnish television as, for instance, it is in American TV. Very different types of drama are counted as family series in Finland. There are three narrative qualities, however, common to all of them: Firstly, at the core of the narration of a family series is a family or a group of people related by blood. Secondly, the series assumes a family audience (including children) or broadly speaking a 'family interest'; and thirdly, there is a consensus between authors and viewers that it is *perhesarja*, suitable for a family audience. For instance, in the very first family series it was not appropriate to show any imbibing of alcohol or make any references to the parents' sexual life. Now these issues are no longer taboos. A certain degree of conventionality in the choice of topics has, however, remained permanent. In the first decade of television, family interest in TV 2 family series was connected to the construction of a post-war family life and the series focused on the nuclear family as the focal point of interest for viewers. The next decade expanded the notion of family solidarity to concern for society at large. In the 1980s, family was examined in an ironic way, particularly in comedy series. The next decade placed the family on a pedestal, now as the emotional haven of an individual in difficult circumstances of economic recession and uncertainty.

The strong position of the family series in the Finnish television is also connected to socio-cultural change. These crisis factors are in turn connected with the formation of a civil society. On the one hand, it is expressly the nuclear family that has played a central role in integrating citizens in the development of the modern welfare society. Television series have contributed to the implementation of this project in such a way that knowledge about the developing social state have often been presented through the interactions of the fictional family members. On the other hand, the strength of the Finnish family series convention also has its roots in the 'gender contract' (about the concept see Pateman 1988).

Finnish women have had a special position in relation to the state from the 1960s on. They have had the opportunity to choose between family life and a career, or both, which means that the notion of nuclear family has also been received different interpretations. In the background there were strong

structural changes through urbanization in Finnish society. Families moved from countryside to the towns and cities and in this way old ties with grandparents and relatives were loosened and nuclear family was indeed forming. Many social political reforms took place, for instance, public day-care centers. It appears that the consistent dominating role of family series as a convention is connected with the fact that the position of a family has been continuously reinterpreted within patriarchal capitalism.

The narrative time structure of family series has been and still is typically episode-centered. Even though narrative continuity is recognizable in the development of the characters and the central course of events, it does not mean that this continuity has necessarily been progressing in a chronological, day-to-day-order as, for instance, in soap operas. Even in short series, it has been possible to follow the lives of the characters over periods of weeks, months and even years. The longest series ever in TV 2, *Heikki ja Kaija*, followed the lives of the young couple intensely for approximately ten years. The first series that utilized a continuous plot but followed the logic of a mini series was the exceptional series *Oi kallis kaupunki*. It depicted the lives of a politically powerful merchant family and in particular, their adult son in local politics, as well as his love story. Continuous plot as a narrative effect — manifested in particular as tension between subsequent episodes — was not fully realized before the 60-episode long series *Metsolat* appearing at the beginning of the 1990s.

Since series that focus on telling the story of the lives of families have held a central position in Finnish television fiction, the narration in regard to its themes has also accentuated family-centrality. Appearing at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s respectively, *Kiurunkulma* and *Pääluottamusmies* were clear exceptions to this norm. Both utilized social themes in their narration, such as life outside the nuclear family, whether in school or in the work place. The depiction of more than one central family has also enabled the use of several plots at the same time, which was first utilized as parallel narration and the articulation of theme in the series *Oi kallis kaupunki*, but did not become common before *Metsolat*. Dramas that are located in the kitchen, living room or family business of a single family form a significant part of the family series I describe in this research. Over the years, comedy series have been situated indoor more than family series, except the very first ones, which were shot in a studio environment. Outdoor shootings became common only in the 1970s.

Generally, the relationship of Finnish serial drama to the newly formed family institution and the construction of social knowledge are most clearly apparent through their narration. In the family series of the 1960s, the nuclear

family was represented as the basic economic unit. The series also portrayed the lives of the family members in relation to the emerging welfare state, in which they represented its most conscious nucleus. In the 1970s, this theme was put aside as rhetorics that relied on social rationality began to be reflected in the characters of these series. In the 1980s, in many series targeted for family audience the nuclear family was examined as a dependency between people, at times even an unmotivated one. Moreover, individualism began to flourish in serial narration and confidence in social rationality began to crumble. The end of the decade also brought with it portrayals of Finnish life in suburbia and housing estates. In housing estates people did not live in isolation from each other, but the force of circumstance compelled them to interfere in the lives of others. Via this route, fictional families could be interpreted as representations of a new Finnish society that was also transforming into a 'multicultural' one.

The 1990s brought to the screen new family structures and adults who lacked a mutual ideology for bringing up children, and who first and foremost live through their own relationship in the family. On the other hand, a family series typical of this decade articulated nostalgia for the extended family of agrarian society, in which the community provides its members a shelter against any outside threat. In an atmosphere that emphasizes individualism, a series like *Metsolat* offered an ideal of knowledge that is locally adequate.



## 9. FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF THE 1990s FAMILY SERIES

Christine Geraghty (1991) describes British soap operas in a similar way to *perhesarja*. She states that the British soap opera is only marginally concerned with the struggles of the male hero to unite business and family. Instead, the matriarchal soap opera presents a narrative in which the mother undertakes the burden of being both a moral and practical means of support for the family. Accordingly, the family business usually is under matriarchal control; it is controlled by the mother and not the father or the son of the family.

Unlike female protagonists, male characters are often presented as weaker than their wives, mothers, or girlfriends; at the very worst, male characters can be lazy or feckless and sometimes their only motivating force in the family is a woman. Moreover, older women, traditionally seen as a source of knowledge and support, can take on considerable resonance and power in the soap opera and consequently, grandmothers assert their authority throughout the community. As Geraghty sums up in her analysis on gender portraits in British soap operas, however, they “do not challenge patriarchal authority but bypass it, handing emotional and practical control to the mother.” (Geraghty 1991, 74-83.)

This chapter looks at two examples of family series from the 1990s, which both create limits on genre not only to signify the modern life of family, but its relations to society as well. There are three reasons, which makes this comparison worthwhile. First, both of the family series, *Ruusun aika* (MTV3, 1990-1991) and *Onnea vai menestystä?* (TV 1, 1995) portray troublesome gender relations in middle class families of the 1990s in ways that no other family series have done. Second, and related to the previous reason, the series also offer new roles for both men and women. This leads to the third reason, namely, that these new roles challenge the limits of the *perhesarja* genre. It is especially interesting to look at how the challenging gender portraits intersect with established genre conventions in these two family series.

In this case study, I am not interested in whether these series were produced for the commercial or the public service channels. The goal is to show in detail how family harmony — so elemental to the genre — is articulated in these programs through gender relationships. In this respect, these series definitely differ from earlier family dramas on both channels. Now, women’s rights are central to the storyline, but the new role for men in the emancipation

process is also emphasized. Due to their generic form, however, both series are forced to respect some ideal of the family organization. By examining these series one can see how new family series have dealt with the current relationship between men and women. The differences between male and female characters have been tested in these family series by introducing elements into the lives of the families that threatens their original harmony. In *perhesarja*, harmony has often broken down when the mother of the family does not stay in her traditional role. In turn, this has forced men to seek out new roles, which has an implication of progress. Since there has been no attempt to resolve basic gender conflicts within the family genre, my analysis shows that the family series has had to resort to romantic love for the eventual return of harmony to the family.

The analysis will show that the basic resolutions of the genre have bound themselves to traditional gender ideology. It is interesting to debate whether this is caused by the properties of the genre or the power of gender ideology. Tradition is also important in both cases. What we call tradition is, of course, a selective tradition: an intentionally selective version of past, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definitions and identifications. (Williams 1977, 115.) As my early reception study of *Ruusun aika* viewers (Ruoho 1993a)<sup>1</sup> indicates, the struggle for and against selective traditions is a major part of all contemporary cultural activity. In the present case, selectivity concerns the cultural acceptance (or rejection) of family values and gender roles.

As an introduction to these questions, it is necessary to briefly discuss contemporary feminist thinking on screen images and gender. For this purpose, the following pages place the work of Teresa de Lauretis and her contemporaries under closer scrutiny. De Lauretis is here a central in perceiving that there is a difference between two conceptualization of gendered subject, an individual and a social subject. Through the idea of double subjectification, de Lauretis explains how real women, despite the experience of being opposed to female portraits, still consent to participate within these subordinated media discourses.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For the purpose of the article on *Ruusun aika* reception I interview 18 female viewers who had seen most episodes of *Ruusun aika* during its run in 1990-1991. The interviews took place in February/March 1992, two months after the last episode had been shown. Although representativeness was not a main concern in this case study, the main interviewees represented a fairly balanced sample of different age groups and socio-economic positions.

2 We find, for instance, the notion of the relative power of viewers in television theory where it could be termed 'recuperative' projects in place of victimized ones



## 9.1. Re-articulation of Family and Gender

For Teresa de Lauretis (1987) gender is not only symbolic, but also has a social and subjective implication in the material lives of individuals. Thus, the construction of gender is both the product and the process of representations and self-representation. The process goes through the various technologies of gender and institutional discourses with the power to control the field of social meaning and thus, this signification process produces, promotes, and “implants” representations of gender. Posed from outside the heterosexual social contract, and inscribed in micro-political practices of subjects, different constructions can also have their part in the construction of gender. Paradoxically then, as de Lauretis argues, the construction of gender is also effected by its deconstruction by any discourse, feminist or otherwise. In other words, new gender representations would discard the prevailing construction as ideological misrepresentation. (De Lauretis 1987, 4-18.)

De Lauretis maintains a distance from the most extreme concepts of ideology in which notions of social totality admit only the ‘relative’ autonomy of ideology (Ibid. 8). In addition, she uses the term ‘experience’ to indicate the process through which subjectivity is constructed. (De Lauretis 1987, 18) As a film theorist, de Lauretis speaks about the cinematic apparatus as a gendered technology through which the representation of gender works and addresses spectators (ibid. 13). Although film and television are different media with different mechanisms to address subjects, De Lauretis’ theory can also be applied to television.

De Lauretis criticizes male theorists, including Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, and Michel Foucault for their tendency to define women in relation to men. De Lauretis writes, for instance, that the reason why psychoanalysis does not address, and even cannot address, the complex and contradictory relation between groups of real women and the cultural construction of Woman is because it smoothes out difficulties by using a simple equation: woman= Woman= Mother. This equation might be one of the strongest ideological links among the variety of cultural constructions of femininity (see de Lauretis 1987, 20). Furthermore, de Lauretis argues that male-centered theorists

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(Byards 1988, in *Female Spectator*, p. 111). The recuperative project means that a spectator can invest more in certain media pictures than others because of the excessive nature of them. The notion of investment can be found in the work of de Lauretis and also Lawrence Grossberg (1992) who, however, broadens the ideological analysis of media images to the affective energy viewers’ exercise (ibid. 79-87).

construct Woman as a cultural category and practice as the opposite or complement of Man:

A feminist frame of reference, therefore, it seems to me, cannot be either “man” or “woman”, for both of these are constructs of a male-centered discourse, both are products of “the straight mind.” If the goal of feminist theory is to define sexual difference for women, to understand how one becomes a woman, and what gives femaleness (rather than femininity) its meaning as the experience of a female subject, then the starting point can be neither “man” nor “woman”. Accordingly it can be neither the Man with the capital M of humanism, or the lower-case man of modernism; nor, on the other hand, woman as the opposite or the complement of man: Woman as Nature, Mother, Body, and Matter, or woman as style, figure, or metaphor of man’s femininity. (De Lauretis 1986, 13.)

I largely agree with the way de Lauretis conceptualizes the gendered subject as interpellated by the ideology of gender. Her concept of representation emphasizes gender not as referential, but preferably as *performative* (see also Butler 1990) practices constituted in and through language and discourses. In my view, the term experience is, however, somewhat problematic and requires some extra commentary here. The way de Lauretis uses the concept first appears to suggest the real experience of an individual woman who disregards the hegemonic discourses. In theorizing her subject, de Lauretis claims that there are two terms working together in the process of representation. First, women are supposed to be relatively passive, subordinate subjects functioning within the heterosexual frame. The second subjectification, in turn, portrays women as active, self-representative subjects not self-evidently restricted by the heterosexual matrix. With the help of the theory of double subjectification, de Lauretis explains how real women, despite the experience of subordination, still consent to participate within subordinated discourses in which “the terms of a different construction of gender also exist, in the margins of hegemonic discourses” (1987, 13).

Anu Koivunen (2000) summarizes de Lauretis’s idea of the ‘subject of semiosis’ (ibid. 183-184) by saying that in her conceptualization there are no social subjects who ‘have’ experiences, but social beings, which are constructed in and through experiences. In de Lauretis’s conception social (subject) and individual (subjectivity) meet in ‘experience,’ regarded as “ongoing mediations between ‘outer world’ and ‘inner’ or mental representations” (ibid. 92-93; quotation from de Lauretis 1987, 40). This is a way in which the analytical division between ‘representation’ and ‘self-representation’ can be understood.

Louis Althusser's (1984) notion that ideology works as the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (ibid. 36) is therefore only partial in the sense that experience is also something other than ideological in nature.

While psychoanalytically oriented theories may be successful in perceiving gender identification as a primary cause of subject formation and social division, they simultaneously fail to address the formation of some other kinds of social recognition in relation to, for instance, race and class. It follows from this exclusion that various social groups are theoretically assumed to have the same viewing experience. (Pribram 1988, 2.) Psychoanalytical theories on subject formation can, however, be useful in considering the social subject as determined through family relations and language acquisition. According to a feminist reading of psychoanalytical theory, the ideology of bourgeois patriarchy is not only a dominant but also a monolithically unified and unyielding psychic structure, relegating women to playing out 'the same old story'. (Ibid. 3-4.)

In my view, to the extent that a female viewer has expectation of pleasure and a capacity to recognize her own oppression, she can be considered an active signifier. It is analytically necessary to distinguish this category from Woman or Femininity as a cultural construction, which from another direction could also be active as a 'signifier'. As the soap opera is a gendered technology, a female viewer likewise takes active part in the gendering and formation of the cultural constructions. Consequently, all internal or external practices of production and reception that discursively articulate female viewers with gender images on soap operas are regarded as signifying processes - the processes of gendering. A female viewer is then either extensively or incompletely operating in the field of identification. It depends on how subjectification is thought to operate, whether through gender or other identifications, whereas in practice the situation is more complicated.

As Stuart Hall (1999) states, the suturing of a subject to a certain subject position must be considered an articulation, not a one-dimensional process. Therefore it is accurate to speak of identification as articulation. Furthermore, ideology does not only have a material function for reproducing the prevailing social relations of gender and class, but also a symbolic function in constructing the subject. What we call an identity is then situated in the intersection of psychic and discursive practices. (Hall 1999, 254-255.)

This way of perceiving the notion of subject is not far from Judith Butler's (1990) post-structuralist notion of gender. According to Butler, gender is neither an artificial effect nor a set of free-floating attributes, but the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory

practices of gender coherence. Therefore a subject is always discursively constructed: “(G)ender proves to be performative, that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by subject or agency that might be said to preexist the deed”. Accordingly, “...there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results.” (Butler 1990, 25.)

Butler also states that when reflecting on gendered subjects “(t)he controversy over the meaning of construction appears to be founded on the conventional philosophical polarity between free will and determinism”. According to these conflicting terms, gendered subjects as bodies appear as either an *instrument* through which “free will” determines a cultural meaning for itself or as a passive *medium* on which cultural meanings are inscribed. In both cases, the human body is figured as a place “for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related”. However, as Butler shows, it is better to understand ‘the body’ as a cultural construction functioning as a discourse in analyzing gendered subjects. (Ibid. 8-9.)

Theorists have usually misinterpreted Butler’s argument on ‘performativity’, especially when it is read in relation to free will, choice and the intentional mind. Instead, a performative practice is not an act through which a subject accomplishes things that s/he nominates, but an act through which discursive power, repeatedly yielding the effect, is materialized. It is the continuous power of discourse to produce the effect, controlled and restricted by it. As Hall argues, the crucial theoretical point in Butler’s thinking is the link between the concept of gender and that of identification, and of the discursive ways that the heterosexual imperative provides certain gendered identifications and/or rejects others (Hall 1999, 268). The concepts of woman and man are then identifiable through the position the subject finds her/himself in (Alcoff 1988, 434). The positions are places from where the meaning of gender is constructed, rather than places where the meaning and real experience of femaleness and maleness can be discovered. As de Lauretis might note, these are just those experienced positions where woman is also interpellated as a subject of gender.

## 9.2. The Limits of *Perhesarja* as Genre

Television as a “technology” of gender implies (unlike the term “apparatus”) that gender, both as representation and self-representation, is the product of various social technologies, such as television, as well as a result of institutional

discourses, epistemologies, and critical social and cultural practices. Althusser used the term interpellation to describe the process whereby a social representation is accepted and absorbed by individuals as her/his own, whereas Foucault tries to explain how the representation is constructed and how it is then accepted and absorbed (de Lauretis 1987, 12). Despite its mono-gendered nature, Foucault's term 'technology of sex' is therefore applicable for explaining the *productive* side of power with both the positive and oppressive effects of such production (ibid. 18).

Thinking of *perhesarja* as a gendered technology entails the idea that the makers and viewers of the drama to some extent share cultural meanings with television in general along with the family series and serials as a genre. The 'positive' effect of representations manifested in the popularity of family series does not prevent one from asking how those representations are constructed and absorbed by viewers. An ideological theme like family, for instance, is always socially accentuated and the source of these accents is not essentially individual but inter-individual. The point is that in every ideological sign, Woman, Man, and Family, there are differently oriented intersecting accents. As my study on *Ruusun aika* viewers has indicated, this multi-accentuality of the ideological sign maintains the sign's vitality and dynamism and its capacity for further development (Volosinov 1986, 12 and 22-23).

The fact that viewers 'invest' their recognition or identification more markedly, for instance, in certain discursive positions, social portraits and fantasies offered by the family series than others could be explained, as de Lauretis does, by the relative power, either satisfaction or reward, which that position promises to them. This can be characterized as either a rational, unconscious or purely emotional process (Volosinov 1986, 16). To say, however, that female and male viewers define and shape their entire lives according to these representations is true only in the abstract; there are specific inequalities in relation to the 'cultural capital' in use and therefore in the capacities to recognize or identify all of the representations and positions offered, for instance, in relation to gendered images.

A female villain on a soap opera often becomes the character that women are permitted to hate or paradoxically love. Accordingly, as Tania Modleski (1990) states using psychoanalytical terms, the villainous woman could represent the negative image of the spectator's (that is textually addressed 'viewer's) ideal self, allowing her to transform traditional feminine weakness into the sources of strength (ibid. 94-95). Thus soap operas, while activating "the gaze of the mother" and positioning the spectator as a "good mother", provide in the villainous woman an outlet for feminine anger, which refuses to accept its own powerlessness (ibid. 97-99). A case in point is the mother

figure, which I will return later on, depicted in the Finnish family dramas, *Ruusun aika* and *Onnea vai menestystä?*

In considering both the negative and positive images of women available on soap operas, it is worth noting the difficulty of separating women's images from the meanings of the sexual body of women. Female characters usually represent as the prevailing concept of Woman and they are perceived as an icon of Woman whereas male characters rarely have the same performative position in film or television. This cultural meaning of women's images is theorized in the terms of closeness, the lack of a distance between signifier and signified (Doane 1982, 75). What I am going to argue is that Man in the family series and serials, unlike crime series and westerns, is *forced to* make this distinction between the cultural, hegemonic meaning of Man and an individual character who is reflecting this picture. This stands out clearly in the way that the family drama portrays Man as the father of the family. I will return to this later.

Old images of men seem to be more rigid than those of women in the family drama; new images of women have begun to emerge whereas men's roles remain somehow residual. This fact brings me full circle to the concept of tradition as a selective choice. It makes it possible to argue that Man in the frame of the family drama is constantly selected to remain in its hegemonic, institutional position despite oppositional cultural formations such as academic and non-academic discussion on men's roles. Meanwhile, questions such as a woman's right to autonomy and characters such as career women and sensitive men have become more important in television industry that seeks out viewers able to increasingly consume goods. In order to allow for consumerism to take hold in Finnish society, television industry address programs especially its female viewers who spend money independently, for instance, on clothes, leisure activities, and home furnishing. Furthermore, they are increasingly career women with double-bind situation; they should manage the new role in both their home and workplaces.

### **9.3. The Role of Educated Women**

Compared with their Finnish predecessors, new family series in 1990s are exceptional in their storylines. Unlike the old ones, which usually represented a working class milieu, these newer series told stories of well-to-do families, where both parents were well educated and worked. In earlier family series, this kind of family portrait always had a counterpart, a working class family or two. In the new series, considerable attention is paid to costumes and interior

decor. Even though social realism, with its portraits of working class families, has been very viable in Finnish television series, the series of 1990s also use fantasy as a part of their narrative structure.

The two series under scrutiny, *Ruusun aika* and *Onnea vai menestystä?*, bring both the new role of the mother and the middle-class notion of marriage into the core of their narration and both represent the ideal of family life in an exceptional manner among Finnish family dramas. Corresponding with sociological analysis (Jallinoja 1997, 99), the depiction of marriage in these two family dramas is both modern and prudish at the same time. As Riitta Jallinoja states in her study on the public images of marriage in women's magazines, since the 1970s marital status has come under constant pressure. It has shifted from the institutional articulations, still vigorous in the 1960s, to articulations in which a couple's individualism is a leading principle in public discourses. Thus, especially since the 1990s, it has become common to represent the family and marriage as self-evident institutions. Jallinoja explains this as a *rhetorical* means to bring out a married couple's own opinions, because it is necessary under circumstances where there are already alternatives available. (Ibid. 98-99.)

Both *Ruusun aika*'s Marja (a middle-aged manager) and *Onnea vai menestystä?*'s Johanna (a middle-aged journalist) belong to the baby-boom generation (born between 1940 and 1955). Their roles are meant to be considered as reflections of the cultural transition in Finnish society. Marja and Johanna have risen in rank through education, whereas their mothers were the women of the war and depression (born between 1920 and 1940, Roos 1986, 54) and not expected to have their own careers. As my case study (Ruoho 1993b) of women of different ages demonstrates, the dynamics of gender and generation are largely brought together in Marja's character.

When romantic love appears in a storyline, the role of children changes accordingly. Under these circumstances, children seem to be independent from their parents' guidance whereas adults are represented as partners and lovers. This re-articulation of family dynamics does not alter the Family as the central institution of culture, but the Family's role in society can be seen as thinner. Nowadays fictional families are self-centered units and almost without any visible connection to the community (neighborhood or village). They contain a certain number of individuals whose social networks outside the family can be fairly narrow and, as far as these networks exist, they are primarily represented as friendly relations in the workplace. Whether symptomatic or not, neither of the female protagonists in the two family dramas, *Onnea vai menestystä?* and *Ruusun aika*, have close female friends.

Life in the nuclear family is the central place of permanent emotional relationships for all of its members.

With good reason we can say that TV 2's *Onnea vai menestystä?* (1995) followed in the footsteps of MTV(3)'s *Ruusun aika* in its investigation of gender issues. Compared to the traditional family dramas of TV 2, *Onnea vai menestystä?* had a specific motif: it openly took the new roles of women and men as the core of its 20-episode narrative. This motif makes this *perhesarja* exceptional among other TV 2 dramas and worth the separate analysis presented here. As with *Ruusun aika*, it can be defined as a domestic soap opera, but its narrative form also incorporates elements of the melodrama and situation comedy. In this way, both series substantially differed from their predecessors in the field of family drama.

It is easy to see similarities in the two *perhesarja* not only in relation to the treatment of gender issues and the investment in visual attractiveness such as beautiful home settings but also in their similar representations of a way of life. Firstly, both series tell the story of a well-to-do family living in a city. This has been a fairly uncommon setting among TV 2 family series, which are usually situated in the countryside or in a working class environment. The families in these two series, however, have few economic problems. On the contrary, consuming seems to be an essential part of their everyday life. Secondly, the parents of the two series are well-educated individuals who have their own demanding positions in the public sphere.

This situation alone raises the question of the individual's role in the family context. Each episode of the series represents a certain landmark in a character's personal life: motherhood vs. career, marital problems, jealousy, relationships between adults and children, birth and death. The third similarity between the series is that they both concentrate not only on family life, but also take gender relationships as the core of their theme.

In *Ruusun aika*, the dynamics of gender and generation are mainly brought together in the character of the mother, Marja, but also in the character of her mother who lives for a short period with the family unit before dying of cancer. The grandmother, Senni, plays an important role in illuminating the perspective of selective tradition. The role of Senni is especially important in discussing conglomerate gender ideology. Marja is in a managerial position at her job, but at home she is forced to give her power to her husband, who is a pediatrician.

The Ruusunen family does not represent a necessary economic unit in the traditional sense, but neither is it simply a site of romantic love. The couple is represented as both partners and lovers, and their children are fairly independent, especially the youngest daughter who is the only mutual child



of the couple. *Onnea vai menestystä?* in turn is the story of two authors and their young daughters. The relationship of the parents comes into conflict when the mother, Johanna, has a short story published, and shortly after that a broadcasting company is interested in her radio play. Suddenly, she wants to be more than somebody's wife and wonders whether she has the talent to pursue her own artistic career. Her husband, a highly regarded novelist, at first underestimates his wife's artistic work, but eventually gives way to her new role.

The basic gender conflict between the couple continues throughout the storyline, eventually leading, however, to a happy ending. Throughout the series, family life seems to be out of groove; weekdays are filled with work, spaghetti, and grocery shopping. When a female architect appears on the scene to design a 'room of one's own' for Johanna, family life teeters. The reference to a woman's room of her own presupposes inter-textual knowledge on the parts of the viewers. These references are addressed primarily to the educated female viewership that has knowledge of Virginia Woolf (her book *A Room of One's Own*, 1929) as well as to some Finnish feminist thinkers.

#### **9.4. A Room of One's Own**

Social contradictions, which have tended to simply crush and break women, appear in *Ruusun aika* and *Onnea vai menestystä?* in the form of personal conflicts. It can be said that the depiction of the two women in both series implies a post feminist dilemma that, in short, goes as follows: The gender conflict intensifies when its solution is at hand and there are no self-evident patterns of behavior available. This macro-level dilemma links both the reality of the Finnish women I interviewed for the *Ruusun aika* analysis and the life of the fictional female character in the two Finnish television series. However, *Ruusun aika* and *Onnea vai menestystä?* take up the dilemma in different ways.

Certainly, they both tell the story of a well-to-do family. The mothers are both well educated, resulting in them experiencing problems with their double-bind situation; the tension of having to negotiate motherhood and career, traditional and modern gender roles. *Ruusun aika* depicts its female protagonist as a career mother in conflict with both her domestic duties and career, whereas *Onnea vai menestystä?* focuses on a female character who holds on with hook and claw to her right to a career. Without ignoring the struggles faced by the mother, it is worth noting that *Ruusun aika* also depicts the male character in a way that defies convention, as a sensitive father type. Not taking

the mother's side for granted, the series draws interest from its 'sensitive' father figure, a solution that is exceptional for *perhesarja* convention. Despite the treatment of the mother character, not all viewers of *Ruusun aika* adopted the images of women that were offered to them but, more importantly, the images of women made them angry. For those viewers, who were a minority amongst my interviewees, the mother's situation was very familiar and therefore the father figure appeared to be too idealized.

Within the framework of the soap opera, a new career-minded mother figure may be regarded as a kind of a "villain" (Modleski 1991, 94-98) who threatens the family's balance of power and those traditional family values that are represented by the grandmother. In *Ruusun aika*, the tomboyish youngest daughter, whose Barbie-dolls are poor and ill with cancer, may be regarded as a similar kind of a threat. However, a child is allowed more leeway to surmount the boundaries of gender both on television and by viewers. Instead, a mother's character offers both an opportunity to deal with the repressed anger caused by the feeling of powerlessness as well as chance to channel the anger caused by her depiction as a negative female. In this sense, viewers, through discursive positions, exercise power through the protagonist female character and this creates both pleasure and meanings for the viewers (see Barrett 1991, 135).

In *Ruusun aika*, a man is needed within the home to solve problems and he partly takes on a woman's role as negotiator in the inner conflicts within the family. The family's mother is unable to deal with her ambivalent position in combining career with family and with her wish to "live more". Her solution to this double-bind situation seems hysterical and leads to her victimization both in the series and by the viewers. To the contrary, in *Onnea vai menestystä?* the mother is a typical portrait of a strong Finnish woman who has the ability to manage all of her duties in the home as well as outside of it.

Correspondingly, the egoism of the husband in *Onnea vai menestystä?* represents a fairly traditional male depiction on Finnish culture. When the wife's room is under construction, he falls in love with the female architect. It is the children who take the first steps in bringing their parents back together. When the room is ready, the couple is also reunited, and the female protagonist can, if she wants to, proceed with her career as a creative writer. The major reason for the reunion is shown to be the marriage, based on romantic love and sexual passion. This idea is encouraged by the storyline, for instance, when the daughters purchase red lingerie as a Christmas present for their mother on behalf of their father.

In keeping with the structure of typical soaps, *Ruusun aika* inscribes the viewer in a particular ideological framework with regard to the family.

Furthermore, the series respects the ideal of the traditional family organization (three generations living together) compounded with the idea of the new family (independent and equal children from the new as well as previous marriages) and the notion that talking can solve all problems. The parents represent the ideal of romantic marriage.

The viewers I interviewed frequently explain their experiences and opinions through comparisons and oppositions. In the Ruusunen family, the mother Marja is regarded as the opposite of the father. Marja Ruusunen's adverse character causes most of the negative feelings both within the narrative and with the audience watching it. She is not liked (and discussed in public) as much as the father and many interviewees criticize her quite harshly. Indeed, on the narrative level, Marja is a kind of *dramatis personae*. The career woman vs. housewife syndrome has been a frequent theme in soap operas (Modleski 1990, 86): Marja's managerial position in a major corporation is difficult, and she has to fight for her position both in the workplace and home.

Although *Ruusun aika* features a well-to-do upper middle-class family, many of the interviewees thought the characters were generally very much like themselves. While avoiding excessive generalization, it is possible to see that this observation corresponds with Andrea Press' (1991) study of American female viewers. According to her, middle-class and working class women differ in their views on making a choice between work and family. Working class women seem to be less preoccupied with this choice and more concerned with immediate survival issues (ibid. 75). This seems to apply, by and large, to my interviewees. This similarity encourages expression of some other observations I made with my data.

It emerges quite clearly in the interviews that the received storyline is dominated by emotional structure; many memories and comments focus on images of single characters or the family structure and its dynamics. This emotional structure links up with moral statements, especially concerning the role of the mother in the series, with the result that many viewers compare their own position in the family with hers. Some of the interviewees questioned the emotional reality of the series and criticized it for its lack of emotional depth. Only one of the female interviewees referred to the limits of the genre and said that within its genre *Ruusun aika* presents an idealized picture of the world.

The most symptomatic part of criticism is related to the empirical reality of the fictional family and this criticism often had strong moral undertones. Elderly viewers in particular often felt that family life in corresponding conditions within modern families was quite different from their own experience. Working class viewers in turn might note that the series was a

story of a well-to-do family for whom money was never a matter of any serious concern. Another working class viewer, however, might criticize the ‘unrealistic’ world represented by the series and say that it could be a “good” family story but that it has nothing to do with reality.

## 9.5. The “Brilliant” Father and the Unruly Woman

According to the discourses prevalent in the interview material, the most popular and charming character in the *Ruusun aika* story was the father. Both realistic and metaphorical comments were made about his character: how realistic his character was and what kind of manhood he represented. Despite his possible marital infidelity, the viewers were generally of the opinion that it was the father who kept the family together. Mr. Ruusunen represents, in its purest form, the idea that talking about problems can solve them, which also goes neatly together with his job as a pediatrician. In the series, he has a similar role both inside and outside the home.

The following meta-story can be found here: The man can replace the woman by fulfilling the woman’s role as well or even better than she ever could (Wood 1989, 195). One must say though, that the husband is not shown to be doing more housework than his wife, despite the fact that he criticizes her for not doing enough. Besides, similar to the (male) heroes of police or action series, the husband’s personal existence seems to be completely free from psychological conflicts, unlike that of his wife. Some viewers who had watched *Thirtysomething* (ABC, U.S.) criticized the male characters in *Ruusun aika* as being psychologically empty.

In the *Ruusun aika* family, the mother is the opposite of the father. As noted above, Mrs. Ruusunen’s adverse character causes most of the negative reactions in the story. Her capriciousness seems to irritate some viewers quite a bit. Viewers see the mother escaping her own anxieties by wearing headphones and having a glass of wine in her hand. She can be seen crying and raving at her family or pottering around in the kitchen cooking spaghetti and singing happy songs. On a few occasions the grandmother can be seen criticizing her daughter. Shortly before the grandmother dies, they are looking at old photographs together and the grandmother warns her daughter against reaching out for too much because she already has a good husband and children and plenty of money. The grandmother’s terminal illness symbolizes the power of the unknown and the uncontrollable. In this context, her conventional ideas and attitudes have a more positive value than her daughter’s ethos of wanting something more.

The oldest grandchild adopts her grandmother's point of view most readily and searches for a more ordinary life than her mother. In one episode she criticizes her mother for being a queen whose life dominates the whole family. The daughter is expecting an out-of-wedlock child and later marries a young businessman who is not the child's father. This marriage, however, is unhappy and eventually leads to divorce and to the return of the biological father. As a result, the new traditionalism of the oldest daughter naturalizes the home into a fundamental and unchanging site of love and fulfillment. At the individual level, the daughter's action articulates a post feminist ethos of freedom of choice between home or career, family or paid employment (Probyn 1990 152-153).

## 9.6. The Thief of the Phallus

*Onnea vai menestystä?* departs from the conventional family portraits found in perhesarja. Unlike other family dramas, which usually disguise rather than reveal the erotic life of the parents, we quite often find the parents on the bed kissing and tenderly hugging each other. Symptomatically, both series nonetheless leave the 'real' difficulties of sexual life untouched. A small but nevertheless important change in the convention inspired by the ideology of romantic love seems to occur hand in hand with the lovers' incapacity as parents.

In *Onnea vai menestystä?*, the idea, that parents who are theoretically equal face gender prejudices in practice is considered to be a cultural problem whereas in *Ruusun aika*, the problem is repeatedly confined to the question of who does the housework. The fundamental situations are different in the two stories because only *Onnea vai menestystä?* represents Woman trespassing upon the male-centered discursive order, intellectual work. In neither series are Woman allowed to easily express their desire for autonomy in lieu of family duties. In *Ruusun aika*, the harmony between the genders and within the family returns when the mother, Marja, at least temporarily, gives up her troublesome workplace and finds her new role as a grandmother. Her husband's role does not change in the storyline and remains equally stable from beginning to end.

Instead, in *Onnea vai menestystä?* the family's father, Risto, is castrated in a symbolic sense, when his wife, Johanna, fills her life with creative work. In short, the ideological meta-story behind the series can be described in the following words: Woman (a wife) is in trouble soon after forcing her way into Man's (her husband's) protected territory. On the level of the narrative,

however, using the typical character of another woman, Kaisu, the single female architect who is planning the workroom for the wife and having an affair with her husband, performs the story.

The dramatic gender conflict in *Onnea vai menestystä?* is disguised by Risto's unfaithfulness, his relationship with Kaisu, who seems to offer suitable feminine behavior by boosting his male ego (thought, of course, she is also employed, though not in the same line of work as Risto is). The series of events can be seen as a warning of the consequences of feminism. It is totally up to the viewer, however, to determine how they negotiate the terms of family harmony in this case. The main situation the female protagonist, Johanna, faces in the series is a modern feminist issue; the specific problems created between men and women when society promotes the possibility of women breaking into men's territory.

Although satisfied with the series in general, the writer, Ilse Rautio (Helsingin Sanomat 9.8.1995) publicly complained of some limits in the production. She stated, for instance, that television drama needs to draw high-level audience ratings, and therefore the fictional characters of the series cannot be too insulting. Additionally, she complained about how characters in television series usually need to be cute and vapid. Rautio claimed that she would have liked to write about the life of a sharper character, such as the male protagonist Fitz from in the British crime series *Cracker*. Within the limits of the genre, Rautio could, however, choose as the core of the narrative the world she felt she knew best, namely the ambitious world of journalism.

Rautio claims that the first episode of *Onnea vai menestystä?* originally had an alternative ending in which the family's mother prefers to work late in the evening although Risto wants her to go to bed with him. TV 2, however, broadcast the version in which Johanna *went* to bed and the first episode ends with the appearance of another woman — Kaisu. (Ibid.) This ending may only be an innocent generic solution on the narrative level, but is no less interesting as a cultural choice. Even though there are always alternative options for the endings of episodes in a serial narrative they could also have different articulations of gender relationships. Therefore, it is not insignificant which cliffhanger is finally chosen. As a generic and cultural solution it is thus interesting that the executive team left out or ignored this particular ending that would have raised one of the central dramatic contradictions in the series. Is this due to the genre that they willingly chose to avoid such a marital conflict? Tracking the reasons for all of the changes in the manuscript is almost impossible. However, it is important to analyze the effect of the final choice.

Not just any version of a cliffhanger suits the requirements of a drama that must develop its theme throughout many episodes rather than exhausting

it after the first episode. One cannot avoid thinking, however, that sacrificing a middle-class marriage for the pursuit of a career seems to be regarded as the highest cost of the intellectual work of a woman in *perhesarja*. Accordingly, by not being sexually available to her husband, a wife seems to threaten the deepest meaning of marriage in late-modern society: romantic love. As soon as the female protagonist threatens romantic love and, instead, focuses on her own ambitions, the ‘other woman’ takes her place. It is obvious that when a woman chooses intellectual work in the frame of the family drama, the man, in accordance with the expectations of his cultural role, is forced to undergo a crisis of masculinity, resulting in him crying over his lot while in the arms of another woman.

Woman’s new roles in relation to man are shown as evidence of the true decline of male-centered culture and the negotiation between ‘new’ and culturally persistent beliefs and values run latently throughout the storylines of the two series. Consequently, I do not see a generic, but rather a gender-specific reason why the first episode could not end with the enigma of the Johanna choosing work over the romantic love of Risto. The depiction of the mother challenges the generic convention of the family drama, but it does not necessarily break the basic narrative logic. Family harmony returns in the last episode, which demonstrates that the family drama genre can only deal with problems on a superficial level. The genre mainly deals with problems, which primarily have wide cultural and social implications in people’s life, and which are hard to solve on the macro-level of society, but always find some consensual solution within a single family.

From the perspective of gender, the solutions in the two series are similar, although the source of the problems appears to be different. I describe these similarities and differences between the two series in the following chart. The chart is based on the idea that cultural expectations, namely hegemonic and marginal gender representations, are realized in the form of the ‘lived experiences’ of the protagonists. The problems arise on the narrative level when individuals living together as a family encounter the contradiction between the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ spheres. If we accept that ‘the personal is political,’ however, we have to reject any self-evident opposition between the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ spheres (See Pateman 1987, 121-123). Instead, keeping in mind that the formation of a subject is essentially a process in which the social and the individual are intertwined, we can locate the main sources of gendered disharmony in the family dramas.

First, a woman’s new role can be a source of disharmony, either in the traditional women’s (*Ruusun aika*) or men’s cultural territory (*Onnea vai menestystä?*). Second, harmonious gender relations can or cannot be damaged

by new men's roles either in the traditional men's culture (*Onnea vai menestystä?*) or the traditional women's culture (*Ruusun aika*). All options result in family disharmony and in both cases harmony is reached by the family members; seemingly unavoidable conflicts are shown as solvable through the ideology of romantic love which appear to be primarily the realm of the 'private' sphere in the two series. As a result neither *Ruusun aika* nor *Onnea vai menestystä?* threaten the family genre as a site of conservative beliefs and values, but reproduce the division between the 'public' and the 'private' just as their predecessors also did.

**Figure 5:** The Gendered Problem Solving Mechanism in *Perhesarja* of the 1990s.

### **THE SOURCE OF FAMILY DISHARMONY**

RUUSUN AIKA  
 Career Mother  
*Sensitive Father*

ONNEA VAI MENESTYSTÄ?  
 Writing Woman  
*Selective Man*

### **TEMPORARY NARRATIVE SOLUTION**

RUUSUN AIKA  
 Woman is replaced  
*Man as homemaker*

ONNEA VAI MENESTYSTÄ?  
 Return of Nature  
*Another Woman*

### **THE RETURN OF FAMILY HARMONY**

*Romantic love between the married couples and domesticated men*

In *Onnea vai menestystä?* we can see how the intellectual woman, by "usurping the gaze," poses a threat to an entire system of representation (Doane 1982, 83). In Joan Riviere's (1929/1986) analyzes, the intellectual woman felt compelled to compensate for the theft of masculinity by overdoing the gestures of feminine flirtation (Doane 1982, 81; Cohan 1992, 396). For Mary Ann Doane, however, these patterns of behavior were somehow pathological. Instead, Doane (1982) argues that masquerading can be an intentional play, an excess of femininity, in order to hold a certain distance from women's images or simply to read them better. When holding femininity at a distance,



womanliness is a mask that can be worn or removed. (Ibid. 81-82.)<sup>3</sup>

In *perhesarja* the Mother who has symbolically stolen the phallus by entering into a male-centered discursive practice (or men's cultural territory) is occasionally forced to compensate for this by masquerading, by exaggerating the feminine gesture of flirtation, as evidenced by the end of the first episode, in which she chooses to join her husband in bed rather than work. A similar function is also left to the 'other woman,' the architect, who has been flirting with the husband from the very beginning of the series. In a way, the concept of Woman in the narrative is divided into two meanings: non-feminine and feminine womanhood, the articulations of which are not exhausted by the meaning of any single protagonist. Accordingly, by wearing the feminine mask both of the women compensate for the theft of the phallus, that is, their intervention into the male-centered cultural order.

However, it is possible to analyze the theft of the phallus from the position of the male protagonist as well. Female sexuality has been present both in the masquerade of femininity and in the female body in classical cinema, whereas male sexuality when symbolized as the phallus is largely displaced (Straayer 1990, 263) and examined through female characters. Women, as a phallic female protagonist equipped with both femininity in image and masculinity in action, thereby seems to leave no other alternative model for the phallic male character but the search for the non-phallic female. Namely often fathers in family dramas are fairly stereotypical (and comical) precisely for the reason that the cultural Woman domesticates them. Accordingly, the cultural Man is represented to have a tamed nature, and to him it is possible to break family boundaries only when the Woman symbolically lets him go.

The domestication of men in the family drama is reminiscent of the situation in Hollywood films in which male characters are tested (Neale 1983, 24). As distinct from Hollywood films, the family drama has long ignored both female and male sexuality, and female protagonists are *morally* explored as mothers. Man as a father can also take Woman's place, because the mother leaves that space open to him. Certainly, this solution is temporary in nature

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3 Later Doane (1991) has stated that to claim that femininity is a function of the mask is to dismantle the question of essentialism before it can even be posed. To comprehend femininity as masquerade is a way of appropriating the necessary distance, in the operation of semiotic systems, of deploying it for women, of reading femininity differently. (Ibid. 37.) But the concept of masquerade, in terms of both its historical inscription and activation is by no means unproblematic. Nevertheless, it seems to facilitate an understanding of woman's status as spectacle rather than as spectator and providing a feminine counter-effect to the concept of fetishism, which has dominated the discussion of male spectatorship of film. (Ibid. 38-39.)

and warns of what might ‘really’ happen if Woman continues to upset the family harmony and Men abandon the nuclear family.

As my case study shows, the mother’s role in the family drama has been more socially flexible than that of the father’s. Tested as a father, Man has faced only a few options and among them is the return to (male) nature with the help of ‘the other’ woman. It can be said that *perhesarja* has had and still tries to have an ideological function in socializing and integrating male viewers as members of modern society and into its basic unit, the nuclear family. However, in *perhesarja* this is only when order is re-established through romantic love.

## **Part Four: Public Culture**



## 10. REALISM AS DISCOURSE

Realism has been the most central discourse of discussing and evaluating the Finnish *perhesarja*. Before we begin to examine television criticism, let us direct our look to the complex concept of realism as considered in different television criticism, both academic and non-academic. In academic use, ‘realism’ has usually referred to the historical 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois ideological-aesthetic movement, and to ‘realism’ as the ideology of text (cf. O’Donnell 2000, 215-216). Because the perpetual confusion between different concepts makes ‘realism’ hard to define, one alternative is to make a division between the academic term ‘realism’ and the everyday term ‘realistic’ (Williams 1976, 215; 1989, 226).

In academic use, realism is a flexible convention whether it is regarded as a textual property of a television series or as a political effect of ‘the text’ whereas in journalistic television criticism it has been perceived as the ability of the series to describe and to deal with the reality. Thus in journalistic use ‘realism’ has been nearer to the everyday term than the academic term. The next pages dwell on these two modes of criticism while the following two sub-chapters proceed to talk about realism in journalistic discourses on the American melodrama (1969-1973 and 1981-19985) and the Finnish family series 81961-1996).

### 10.1. Definitions

Although I am strongly in favor of the view of ‘realism’ as an effect of the text rather than as a presence or visibility of reality in television serials, I recognize, along with Raymond Williams (1989), the historical importance of ‘realism’ as a convention whose aim has been to bring a vision of physical and social practices as a basis of artistic and scientific thinking. However, I also recognize, as Catherine Belsey notes, that “(r)realism is plausible not because it reflects the world, but because it is constructed out of what is (discursively) familiar”, writes (Belsey 1980, 47). She states that the logical possibility of expressive realism is put in question by post-Saussurean linguistics, which challenges empiricist ways of understanding the relationship between language and world. As she shows in Saussurean theory, language is a system of signs that consists of a signifier (a physic form) and a signified (a concept). For Belsey “(t)he most revolutionary element in Saussure’s position

was in the insistence that language is not a nomenclature, a way of naming things which already exist, but a system of differences with no positive terms”. (Ibid. 38.)

As the present chapter will show, another important element of Saussure concerns the social nature of language: only social groups can generate signs, and accordingly meaning is essentially public and conventional, not the result of individual intention but of inter-individual interaction. Furthermore, so far as language is a way of articulating experience, it participates in ideology, inscribed in signifying practices — in discourses, myths, presentations and re-presentations of the way things ‘are’ and to this extent, as Belsey argues, ideology is inscribed in language. (Ibid. 41-42.)

Post-Saussurean linguistics, or more accurately post-structuralism in television studies does not deny the existence of reality, as John Fiske (1987) emphasizes in *Television Culture*. On the contrary, what it questions is its objectivity, its accessibility, its representability, and finally its naturalness (Fiske 1987, 42). Fiske continues:

Reality, the argument goes, is only accessible through the discourses we have available to make sense of it. Perception is a process of making sense, and sense is a product of discourse. Nature, or objective reality, does not “make sense” on its own — we have only to look at the vastly different interpretations different cultures make of universal nature to see evidence for this assertion. Discourse, as we have seen, is not only a product of culture, it is also, in industrialized societies at least, the product of society, and the power of political relations within that society. (...) Revealing the *who* within the *what* is possibly the most important task of criticism. (Ibid.)

Due to their referential nature, most realism terms, however, pursue the idea that the serial drama should represent the ‘real’ in some expected way. What follows is therefore an excursion into two notions of realism, *emotional* and *ethical*. Especially interesting is the argument that Finnish television viewers demand realistic TV pictures, which are based on the ethic of Lutheran religion and Calvinist puritanism: life is difficult and therefore is should be depicted as equally hard. Both journalistic and academic discourses of realism are taken under closer consideration. The following pages thus offer a figure, which combines different journalistic terms of realism into a six-field pattern. In its final pages, this chapter turns to deepen the academic and as such even more complex approaches to the term. Now realism is placed in three categories, which depend on how the term is understood in different theories of criticism.

Raymond Williams explains various historical definitions of the word ‘realism’ (Williams 1976, 216-221) in his *Keywords*. What is noteworthy here is that Williams sees the historical significance of realism in its way of making social and physical reality the basis of literature, art and thought. This is a somewhat wider conceptualization than maintaining realism merely as a construct, discourse, method, and convention among others, or, in a limited sense, a set of formal representations in a particular medium, such as television.

As I consider it according to this restricted conceptualization, realism as a method at its “best” describes the characters, objects, actions, situations, etc., realistically so that they seem to be plausible in appearance. At its “worst”, the reproduction of surface and inner reality in appearance make television viewers apprehend the forms of representation as real. Both explanations are still vigorous in discussions on television. However, certain academic criticism of realism usually takes the position that the object of, for instance, television drama, is not the social, physical and psychological reality in itself but by convention and repetition it has been made to appear as such.

These variable definitions go through different *realisms* in the conceptualizations of television. Conceptions include both the kind of surface accuracy and what we expect to happen on the television screen, as well as compromises in comprehending which representations are realistic to us and how successfully the motivations of each event interact with the psychology of individual characters are shown. (Ellis 1992/1982, 7-8.)

However, Raymond Williams’ defense of realism (1989) is a phenomenon that adheres to the conscious, and more often unconscious, social and political intentions of the artistic. While there are dozens of definitions of the term today, this historical and political side of realism can be easily forgotten. We should only take under consideration the cultural ways of presenting “historical attitudes towards society” (Williams 1989, 229) for seeing how realism should be taken as a politically motivated term with a historical mode of address and narration.

The conventional division between empirical and emotional realism is not mutually exhaustive, but overlaps. The use of textual techniques that might appear under the umbrella of ‘empirical’ realism does not revert to a singular definition. It follows that some texts reflect modern thinking and its desire to share knowledge and a moral order of community, whereas the others demonstrate the late-modern ambivalence towards knowledge and morality. Empirical realism as a term is quite familiar. *Emotional realism* as a term, in turn, has been used to explain the affective relation between fiction and its audience. The term assumes that viewers are able to consciously recognize

what are considered to be realistic emotions, psychological behavior, etc. While it is well known that emotional realism is the proportional new term that refers to the omitted 'female' part of an effect of text, it is necessary to emphasize that its gendered nature is better understood as nothing other than articulation. As articulation, emotional realism could be gendered, but only when the link between a certain mode of realism and gender is made. Of course, the condition equally suits 'male-oriented' genres. There are no natural links between realism and genders, but there are discourses that unite them and call upon viewers as a particular viewership.

Not only have empirical and emotional notions of realism been used in discussions of television drama, but also a more complex notion, an *ethical* realism. On the basis of an extensive ethnographic study Pertti Alasuutari (1991), for his part, explains the Finns when they describe, for instance, the world of *Dallas* as "unrealistic":

They are not actually presenting an empiricist interpretation of realism, that is, of how realistically the series portrays, say, the life of oil millionaires in the United States. They are also not presenting at least pure emotional interpretations of realism. The characters in these series and their model of action are certainly identifiable. But nevertheless the world that is represented in these series can be regarded as "unreal" because it does not give a truthful picture of what everyday life is really like. (Ibid. 57.)

Based on the doctrines of the Lutheran religion and Calvinist puritanism found in Finnish TV morality, Pertti Alasuutari (1991) states in his ethnographic study that the Finnish television audience is highly critical of *Dallas* for its failure to give a true representation of what life is really like for ordinary people. According to this morality, TV should provide a more acceptable model of life than overly romantic pictures, which lead viewers to believe that life is too easy and fancy. Paradoxically, the viewers in the study maintained that violent action serials are more "realistic" than soap operas. This indicates the partial judgments on television genres, which exposed Finnish TV morality to be profoundly gendered, namely, representing a male image. (1991, 57-58) Alasuutari's thinking seems comprehensible at least in so far as comparing the American and Finnish television programs.



## 10.2. Academic Discourses

Realism is regarded as a set of pictures and voices representing in one way or another the 'real' world, the settings and experiences of working class people, career women, gay men, etc. More rarely in journalistic writings than in academic discussions has the realism of television drama hidden behind a narrative solution. Thus, for instance, the division between *progressive* and *non-progressive* realism is almost totally beyond the public, journalistic discussion on television. The given picture changes drastically when we turn into academic discourses. Thus, in the academic world the 'progressive' mode of realism could be seen as opposite to a 'doctrine' of characters not allowed to change their environment, which sets into motion an 'experiment' an 'as if' narrative situation (see Tulloch 1990, 117-119).

Sometimes a journalist accidentally draws a parallel between television realism and naturalism regarded as a 'depressive portrayal of everyday life'. Feminist television criticism was among the first to strongly challenge this vision. Dorothy Hobson (1982), the feminist pioneer of *cultural studies*, argues that the television serials such as the British *Crossroads* could at their best offer a message of survival and the ability to overcome difficulties and learn from problems (Hobson 1982, 59-60). As production policy, the possibility that some events of the serial could happen in 'real life' and do happen — if not to a single viewer, then, to other people — is essential in contributing to the viewer's perception of reality. As stated by Hobson, the tension between the 'possible' and the 'fantastic' creates the criteria by which viewers might judge fiction for this relationship to their conception of reality (ibid. 122).

Additionally, Terry Lowell (1981) argues that the British soap opera offers its female viewers certain 'structures of feelings', which are prevalent in our society, and only partially recognized in the normative patriarchal order. It offers female viewers a validation and celebration of those interests and concerns that are seen as properly theirs within the social world they inhabit. As she says, the soap opera may be the opium of masses of woman, but like religion it may also be something else. If the soap opera is not 'the song of the oppressed', a context in which female spectators can ambiguously express both good-humored acceptance of their oppression and recognition of that oppression, some can equally have a good-humored protest against it, says Lowell. (1981, 50-51.)

While not approaching the problems of adequate or fantastic pictures and the feelings of real life, the Brechtian theory of realism draw attention to the *structure of texts*. To be exact, film scholars use the Brechtian theses in order

to criticize a hierarchy of discourses, which compose the classic realistic texts in terms of an empirical notion of truth. (McCabe 1981, 217.) As the Brechtian analysis demonstrates, the relationship of dominance between discourses is accentuated by the fact that films are interspersed with fragments of subjective discourses or narrative of events, some of them more privileged than others in the narrative discourse. In short, the suggestion is that the classic realistic structure is not capable of treating the 'real' as contradictory. (Ibid. 220-221.)

In *screen theory* the relationship between the subject and language and the construction of the subject, is not considered self-evidently controlled by the classic realistic text. Instead, as some analyses of film text show, there are indications of a non-controlled subject also in the classic realistic texts. There is the possibility to escape the control of the dominant discourse in the same way as a verbal slip manifests the lack of control of the conscious subject. Accordingly, the reading subject is not offered any certain mode of entry into what is presented on the screen, but one is offered a certain mode of entry to screen itself. (McCabe 1981, 226-228.)

This is a positive, but a rather different viewpoint than Hobson or Lowell has. The discussion on the different terms of realism thus goes back to the dispute between the above two schools of cultural theory, cultural studies as represented by the Birmingham *Center for Cultural Studies* (in short, CCCS) and screen theory (the name following the journal). Both schools have feminist contributors who criticize male theorists for their gender blindness. Among the conceptualizations of screen theory and the CCCS is the notion of realism regarded as the opposite both to idealism, in addition to realism regarded as a mode of 'false consciousness' as it is sketched by classic realistic text partly introduced above.

In touching on the disputed argument that the realistic convention conceals all of the signs of its own cultural production, the following introduction to the academic discourses of realism finally focuses on realism as *an effect of texts*. Still, the following pages take up for discussion two of the approaches: realism as *a recognition effect* and realism as *a mode of address*. The question of author is also part of the issue. Who needs authors as visionaries or eyewitnesses to 'reality', if realism is thought to be primarily "an effect of text" and not of an individual artist?

Besides, the division between the 'what' and 'how' of realism are still vigorous in television studies and therefore require some further commentary.

*Realism as constructions.* To understand conceptualizations of realism as a discourse of television text and experience of a subject it is necessary to say something about language and the signification process in general, and about

ideology in particular. Starting with the concept of ideology, Stuart Hall (1982) identifies two breaks within the paradigm of ideology in his classic article *The rediscovery of 'ideology': return of the repressed in media studies*. Hall shows how the first break within the paradigm came from the problematization of the concept of consensus. Henceforth consensus was not regarded as the result of social control in the maintenance of the social order. On the contrary, consensus was considered as consent to a particular kind of social order, integration within and conformity to the rules of definite set of social, economic and political structures. A second break, Hall argues, ensured the first one by questioning the reflexive role of the media. It implied the active role of the media in selecting and presenting the 'reality' not only in mirroring it. In these signifying practices, making things mean something, the media were seen to shape of the whole ideological environment by making it appear as universal and natural as 'reality' itself. (Ibid. 62-65.) It follows that the visual discourse of television can be defined not as naturalistic but as *naturalized* (ibid. 75).

New conceptions challenged the idea of reality. Reality came to be understood as the effect of how things had been signified, for instance, by broadcasters. In addition, this process was thought to generate of sort of 'recognition effect' mostly taken as a simple empirical statement. However, recognition was not understood as an identification of the reality behind the body of signs, but as a sort of confirmation of (or in Althusser's words, an imaginary relation to) the self-evident or apparent reality. For example, it has for long been the sort of taken-for-granted situation that the 'family' as a site of personal life which organizes the drama production and underlying premises on which the family as a discourse, in fact, has depended. (Cf. Hall 1982, 74-75.)

It should also be emphasized that the concept of subject was considered in totally new ways when conceptualizing ideology. Uniting with the idea of language as a multi-accentual signification practice creates a fundamentally new approach in conceptualizing ideology, as Hall shows in his essay. Theoretically, it emphasizes 'the dynamic', "third" concept of ideology in which ideology is seen to be constituted through modes of practice. (Uusitupa 1990, 74.) Besides, it opens doors for a subject in cultural studies. Both Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony and Louis Althusser's theorization of *ideology* and *subject* created necessary contributions.

According to Althusser (1984), ideology interpellates individuals as subject; consequently there are no other ideologies except by the subject and for subjects. It is the subject that makes this destination for ideology ultimately possible. More accurately, he says, "the category of the subject is only

constitutive of all ideology insofar as ideology has the function (which defines it) of constituting concrete individuals as subjects". Ideological effects then fundamentally work through subjects via the recognition of (or mirroring of, IR) which makes us react to representations with the comment: "That's true! It's me!" (Ibid. 44-46.) To put it briefly, ideology is for Althusser something imaginary. It is a "representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (ibid. 36).

This imaginary relationship also means that ideology not only depends on language through our expressions usually operate through language. Inevitably the notion of 'imaginary' refers to emotions and the subconscious mind. In Hall's terminology, the sides of imaginary relationships receive minimal attention. He (Hall 1996) specifies communicative practices as functioning discursively, which in his terminology means that the social operates like a language. This metaphor has opened new directions to him and, despite my critique, I also derived an advantage from this metaphor. For example, in adopting a materialistic notion of language it is possible to realize that 'the self' is constituted out of and by difference, and remains contradictory. Similarly, cultural forms are never whole, never fully closed or 'sutured', as Hall puts it (ibid. 145-146).

*Culture as language.* Using the metaphor the social operates like a language, Hall does not perceive language and ideology as an identical process. Ideological discourses surely obtain their ways of representing the world for already-languaged subjects, that is, ideological subjects are predisposed to a range of existing discourses. Therefore, instead of homology in terms, the 'articulation' of ideology is necessary to be considered as work in and through language and discourse (Hall 1982, 80). This formulation does not discourage comprehending viewers as active producers of meaning and media consumption as the site of potentially differential readings. Instead of offering the single, text-subject relation, it has introduced other discourses, which are always playing next to those of the particular text in focus (Moore 1990, 143).

The effect of feminism on cultural studies has attracted increasing interest since the late 1970s. Feminist scholars soon found that "the models of culture employed within cultural studies have remained largely uninformed by feminist theories of patriarchy" producing a number of problems for feminists working in cultural studies. Among them was the Marxist conception of the economic which is unable to account for sexuality, reproduction, and violence. (Franklin, Lury & Stacey 1991, 97.) Another restrictive model situated in this version of structuralism regarded patriarchal dominance as a natural fact.

Moreover, the post-structuralist understanding of cultural processes as texts blurred the “specificity and significance of different kinds of practices” resulting in reductionism. Furthermore, analyzing gender within the model of culture ‘as a language’ seemed to present specific problems for feminists highlighting the objectifying practices within language itself. (Ibid. 98-99.)

A totally different outlook than above is to argue that language as it stands is thoroughly masculine and not capable of reaching the true experience of women or non-masculine men. This matter may be viewed from many angles, but it is the role of the subject that is the essential factor in any discussion on language, ideology, and culture as shown in the fundamental dispute between cultural studies and screen theory. The strong stress is on the notion that all gendered differences among subject positions have a constitutive not an originating character (Laclau 1983, 39). Accordingly, theories of realism could also be divided into a variety of approaches. The following division between the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of realism is important for understanding how the ideology of realism works through the language and discourse of the material of the study.

In proceeding with Stuart Hall (1997), he defines three approaches in conceptualizing the questions “where do meanings come from” and “how can we tell the ‘true’ meanings of a word or image”: the reflective, the intentional, and the constructionist approach (ibid. 24-25). The differences between the three come across by contrasting them with the concepts of other semiotics as will be shown. In the first approach, meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world. Language thus functions like a mirror, to reflect the true meaning, as it already exists in the world. The second approach, in turn, argues that it is the speaker, the author who imposes his/her unique meaning on the world through language. It follows with the argument that words mean what the author intend they should mean. The third approach, instead, recognizes the public, social character of language. It affirms that neither things in themselves nor the individual user of language can fix meaning in language. In short, things do not mean something as such we construct meanings, using the available representational system, concepts and signs sometimes on the margin of the symbolic order.

This third approach encourages us to be alert and not confuse the material world, where things and people exist, with the symbolic practices and processes through which representation, meaning and language operate. It emphasizes that symbolic practices do not deny the existence of the material world, but the representational system is seen to be a throat, which conveys meanings. In other words, social actors make the world mean through the use of the language system and other symbolic signs, which, in turn, enable people to

communicate about that world meaningfully to others. As myths are important part of the ritual model of communication, I will make a short detour through myth as a semiological system.

### **10.3. From the 'What' of Realism to the 'How' of Realism**

In his essay 'Myth Today', Roland Barthes (1972/57) not only offers a short course on the first and second order semiology, but argues that it is myth that gives us natural images of reality by depoliticizing speech. He writes of how semiology has taught us that myth has the task of giving a historical intention a natural justification, and making uncertainty appear eternal (ibid. 142). Barthes departs from the notion that myth is the speech that continues to be considered as a semiological system. Based on the work of Ferdinand Saussure, Barthes argues that any semiology postulates a relation between two terms, a signifier and a signified:

This relation concerns objects, which belongs to different categories, and this is why it is not one of equality but one of equivalence. We must here be on our guard despite the common parlance that simply says that the signifier *expresses* the signified. In any semiological system we are dealing, not with two, but with three different terms. For what we grasp is not at all one term after the other, but the correlation that unites them: there are, therefore, the signifier, the signified, and the sign, which is the associative total of the first two terms. (Ibid. 112-113.)

According to Barthes we can find this tri-dimensional pattern also in myth. However, myth is a second-order semiological system in which the associative total of a concept and an image in the first system becomes the mere signified in the second. Barthes expresses how in myth there are two semiotics, namely the language object and myth itself. (Ibid. 114-115.) Meta-language is a language or symbolic system that is used to discuss another language or symbolic system. Myth is a typical second language, in which one speaks about the first. Realism as a 'reality effect' is part of Barthes's structuralism. He continues by arguing that the function of excess, abundant details in narration is to create the referential illusion. In fact these details only signify, they do not represent what is supposed to be real (1993, 99-108). As Lea Rojola (1993) accentuates, at this point Barthes does not use realism as an element of quality, which forces him to be in favor of one against the other. By being not the referent of reality, but of other signs, text could have different qualities which more or less help people to understand the historical, cultural and social circumstances they live in. (Ibid. 98.)

John Fiske (1986) continues with this idea and states that the structure of both text and society permits a space for resistance and negotiation. Compared to Hall's notion of language and ideology, it could be said that in Fiske's formulation it is narrative that works as a language. He proceeds with the idea by saying that in order to be popular every television program must be an open, polysemic text so that different subcultures can fill in the different meanings that correspond to their differing social relations. Unlike the typical ideological criticism, which usually emphasizes a single television program as a monosemic text, Fiske argues that the polysemy of television lies not just in the heteroglossia of text, but in the ways that viewers in different social locations can activate its meaning potential differently. (Fiske 1986, 391-393)

According to Fiske, the ideology-in-texts works through the form, which prefers certain readings, is implying a power relationship between the dominant and subordinate classes in society. But a variety of strategies used by viewers confronted with authority subvert or reject the authoritatively proposed meanings. (Ibid. 394.) Our very subjectivity, as Jacques Lacan puts it, is formed as we enter the symbolic, the language or meaning system that is always already awaiting us, and that has always already mapped out the subject position for us to occupy. Our material social experience, however, may well contradict our given subjectivity. It may demand meanings of experience that this given subjectivity cannot provide. In this situation we develop a split subjectivity in which more recently acquired and less deeply rooted subject positions can and do conflict with the original, given one. Fiske concludes, "a given bourgeois subjectivity can acquire a contradictory radical one, a patriarchal subjectivity can acquire a feminist one, and a white subjectivity can acquire a black one" (ibid. 404-405).

This same potentiality is argued to include the use of excess in melodramas. Jane Feuer (1994) argues that the discursive excess in melodramas seems to encourage different levels of reading to a greater extent than it does, for example westerns as a "classical narrative" film. In creating excess the melodrama calls into question the male-oriented spectatorship and gender and therefore demands modes of analysis such as psychoanalysis that stress reader-response. In television, melodramas such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty* represent excess in terms of the norms for U.S. television of the 1970s. Their techniques, 'signifying momentary closures', 'zoom-ins', 'close-ups' with no 'happy endings' and 'marriages for love', distill and intensify emotional confrontation between individuals. (Feuer 1994, 555-559)

Realism as an effect of text concentrates a great deal on the 'how' of realism that opens the way for structural genre analysis. However, a certain

amount of the 'what' of realism continually has supporters in television studies. For instance, John Corner's (1992) distinction between 'realism' of different genres gives the appearance of this sort of realism argument. As Corner says, in the case of the news the concept indicates a veracity of reference rather than verisimilitude and plausibility as in the case of serial drama. Conversely, 'realism', seen from the viewpoints of both form and theme, can be studied also within the limits of one genre. As Corner continues, in this way the use of a format can be differentiated from the themes dealt with if and when one talks about realism as an ideological form. (Ibid. 97-102.) Serial fiction, for instance, seldom claims to represent facts, unlike the news. But is it somehow less ideological in its form through which themes are constructed?

I agree with Corner as he considers the news genre as different with its form and theme in relation to serial fiction. But I am not sure he is correct in arguing that the notion of realism varies between them as a *textual property*. At least theoretically there seems to be no reason to make this division between forms and contents at a textual level as far we talk about realism as an effect of text. Corner's conceptualization seems to derive its origin from the already known distinction between cultural (themes) and generic (genre conventions) realism rather than offering any new directions. Is it better to see genre as a culturally driven process, which is not primarily the textual properties of single programs? A more fertile starting point is found in Steven Neale (1990) who notes that the distinction between generic and cultural verisimilitude works together within the limits of 'systems of expectations' (ibid. 47-48).

As an effect of text, generic and cultural verisimilitude operates between broadcasters, the genre, and its viewers. In this process genre conventions are more or less productive elements in organizing material, accounts of events and experiences, by common consent and within the limits of expectations. Therefore one needs to be careful in searching for those cultural and generic elements from the text to argue that there is a point of difference in realism here and there between genres. Realism works like ideology being not the textual precondition of a single television program but the result of articulation in a way that produces consent, for instance, for those different textual and affective elements, which are regarded as 'empirically' and 'emotionally' realistic. In other words, what is regarded as 'realistic' is always under constant articulation and re-articulation. The same theoretical caution applies to journalistic TV criticism.



## 10.4. Journalistic Discourses

As Alasuutari (1991) emphasizes, it is traditionally believed in Finnish television culture that theater performance and parallel fiction forms should prepare people for a hard life and provide them with ethically sound models of life. The spirit of enlightenment seems to have been acknowledged from the very beginning of YLE and throughout its long history, particularly the short period of the 'Reporadio', he argues. (Ibid. 60.) However, what made "Reporadio's" program policy, exceptional in the eyes of TV criticism, was its provocative nature rather than its didactic spirit. It follows that as a peculiar form of didactic television it was comprised of *thought-provoking* materials working mostly through choice and the treatment of themes. The underlining idea of the informational program policy was to present serious problems and topics of current interest without an advisory spirit and only dropping a few hints of possible directions that the viewers could take so that a discussion could ensue over the issue.

Ethical realism is close to the constructions that idealize a *mythic* picture of Finnishness and the history of Finland. As discourses, ethical and mythical realisms more or less openly exploit the mythology of nature, the strong female characters of the national epic, *Kalevala*, as well as a great nostalgia for the 'good old days', the subsequent development of the society in the era of détente, and its herald, Urho Kaleva Kekkonen. Among the popular myths in journalistic writings are small farmers who by working hard give vent to their anger with selfish farm-owners or the sophisticated Swedish-speaking upper class. It is no wonder that these images have been such strong and viable codes until now in both television and the criticism of the medium. In the past Finland's independence as a nation-state was not as self-evident because the country had been part of the Swedish and Russian empires. More recently, its geographical place as a neighbor of the Soviet Union and the foreign policy it pursued were extraordinary political issues also in the international community. All of these narrative images are repeatedly re-produced by television drama. Veijo Hietala's (1996, 107-109) case study on *Metsolat* shows how the protection of national identity is worked through nostalgia for mythic images and national uniformity.

Instead, *redemptive* realism goes even further and is not necessarily rooted in the spirit of enlightenment. I argue that as discourses they are adhered to the political struggles of social groups, the working class, women, the Romany, and sexual minorities. Charlotte Brunson (1989/1997) speaks about redemptive reading, which preceded the cultural analysis on soap audiences

(ibid. 121). The reading can also be found in journalistic television criticism. Redemptive realism means that for some didactic and corrective reason a certain social or cultural group needs extra publicity and treatment. For example, the first long-running television series that dealt with working class life was expected to show how this class could achieve an acceptable social status in the welfare society. Even today both the content and serial form of drama would willingly be thought to serve the topical interest. Currently, we can find several fictive characters on television with an HIV positive status. Though people living with HIV are in the minority, their public stories are thought to touch all because anyone could be a victim or be familiar to this serious disease and therefore television viewers are thought to need a realistic understanding of the subject.

Further, intertextual references are used by criticism in which realism is rooted in the *generic* expectations of hypothetical viewers. It follows that the first serials were judged in relation to other TV dramas, artistic plays, and even films. Just as the strong art discourse, particularly the tradition of the Finnish theater, has been the main intertextual determinant in the earliest judgments on television fiction. It has only been recent that a specific consciousness of television genres has guided journalists in their evaluations. Along with the knowledge of different television genres and formats, the question of *channel specificity* is raised. At the level of criticism this means that every existing television channel seems to have its' own meta-concept of realism depending on how channels have met the expectations of certain desirable viewer groups and channel images.

In summary, these different aspects of realism implied in journalistic writings can be divided into three main categories regarding to their assumed relation to 'reality'. 'Reality' in television fiction is discerned in television fiction referentially, symbolically, or symptomatically. Furthermore, there are three ways in which the 'real' is an object of criticism: reality-object is either an expressed, repressed, or politicized object of criticism. The characteristic features of the discourses of realism in TV criticism published in newspapers is modeled in the following terms:

**Figure 6:** Reading Reality in Fiction.

<b>Reality-subject of Criticism</b>			
	<b>EXPRESSED</b>	<b>REPRESSED</b>	<b>POLITICIZED</b>
<b>Reality in TV Fiction</b>			
<b>REFERENTIAL</b>	<i>Empirical Emotional Ethical Channel specific</i>		<i>Thought- provoking Corrective</i>
<b>SYMBOLIC</b>	<i>Generic</i>	<i>Mythical</i>	<i>Redemptive</i>
<b>SYMPTOMATIC</b>	<i>Post-realistic</i>		

As the figure shows, the ways of reading reality in fiction is mostly constructed referentially and symbolically as in cases of empirical, emotional, generic and channel specific realisms. In these cases television drama is thought to denote or connote the ‘real’ situation either directly or through generic and other specific conventions. A symptomatic relation between the ‘real’ and fiction is an unusual outlook in criticism. Post-realism that might better represent the relation, however, surely assumes that reality is an object of criticism in an expressed way. Ethical and mythical realism represent both the referential and symbolic relations of TV fiction to ‘reality’. However, at the same time, they act on a repressed (ideological) reality-object of criticism. This is particularly clear in the case of mythical realism as a discourse. In this case, television critics affirmatively explain myths by not putting them in the position of the ideological order. Ethical realism is on the borderline; it seems to be more a repressed than expressed reality-object in criticism, though at the same time it implies something that is thought to be expressive. Unlike the previous ones, corrective, thought-provoking and redemptive realisms take a cautious distance from the prevailing ‘reality’ by trying to politicize the ‘real’ representations. Even so, they do not question their own ideological character and remain in the prison of language.

Redemptive realism as a discourse gives more attention to the symbolic relations between fiction and ‘reality’. It tries to open a space for new

interpretations of what is 'real', for instance, to women as spectators. Redemptive reading has been an important factor in legitimating the soap opera as a specific women's genre in both public and academic discussion. Redemptive realism is openly political in relation to its reality-object and it takes a conscious stand on a certain group of people. Redemptive realism as it stands does not avoid those characters, which are apparent for the other realisms: as a concept of realism it is potentially open for the insight that the 'truth' is in some place or another and expressible in fiction.

As the different ways of understanding realism shows, the realism of TV drama has usually been quite narrow in relation to the so-called reality-object. Accordingly, the realism of television series is 'good' if it only takes place in the framework of *referential*. The utility drama, which has otherwise been thought relatively worthless as drama, is precisely valued due to its alleged referential relation to reality-objects. Less often it has been noted that realism also romanticizes the author. This is especially interesting because the critics of mass culture have rarely wanted the author of the serial, and especially American productions. Before we turn to a discussion of the American television melodrama, we take under consideration authorship, an important factor in signifying realism. Both the imaginative and 'real' authors of television series can also be seen as central when considering both so-called encoding and decoding practices in communication. The different concepts of authorship ultimately crystallize the question of where realism eventually is based, either to the TV series themselves or to the process of reception.

## **10.5. Signifying Realism: The Authorship**

It is possible to understand authorship as being an effect of the text in the same way realism is. Moreover, realism has often been connected to the qualities of the makers in the Finnish discourse. Certain writers and directors of serial drama are considered especially talented to make series that portray reality better than others. Understood in such a way, authorship is one central element that produces the reality effect. In the view that worships makers, it is believed on the one hand that the intention of the writer and director is conveyed per se in the television series' way of portraying reality; and on the other hand that the audience interprets the maker's intention more or less per se. As is shown in this brief survey of different theories concerning authorship, it is only by understanding 'authorship' as something that does not achieve its final meaning before its articulated form is outside the production process,

in all practices of encoding process, provides the opportunity to understand its connection to the creation of the reality effect.

Psychoanalytic theory claims that the spectator desires to identify a certain image of the author. According to psychoanalytic theory, the desire to define and find “the author” behind the work is an expression of the individual’s wish for the ideal. This is a simultaneous desire for the same (the human being) and the different (the artist) who, unlike the one who is desiring, is one and whole (Lapsley & Westlake 1988, 128). We probably see something in the author that we lack ourselves, the propensity to see things that nobody else is seeing, the talent to express such feelings, ideas and thoughts that we cannot put into words or pictures. For the same reason the name of the author can promote sales, or some author’s name can be connected with a strong narrative image of a certain kind of personality or way of expression. The names of the authors are eagerly promoted also when one wants to emphasize the status of some cultural artefacts as art (for example, movies at one time and television from the mid-1980s). Individual creativity and “art” are thus combined either guilelessly or with an orientation towards economic gain.

In the field of film studies, authorship has had different manifestations according to how the film has been understood as communication and language (See Lapsley & Westlake 1988, 105-128, Caughie in 1981). The notions of the auteur-author vary from the director personality revealed by the film text or the handwriting of a genius on the mythical constructions used by the same director repeatedly. However, regardless of their differences, these notions assume that the viewer can on some level communicate with the language of the film and that the director’s unique signification is also the starting point for the viewer’s interpretation. According to one view, even in the relatively fixed generic traditions one can maintain individual creativity (compare Thomas Schatz’s division into film genre and genre film based on analogy of langue-parole, 1981, 16).

Different from the above viewpoints, structuralism considers that “the author” is only born as a product of the watching of the film. The viewer’s image of the work’s message or aesthetics does not have a necessary connection to the director’s intention.

In post-structuralist thinking “the author” is “dead” also in this sense. At least it is irrelevant to the text analysis of the work because the final meaning of the film is born only as the film meets the viewer, in other words in the work’s political effect. So “the text” formed by the viewer of the film can tear its roots from the past and galvanize people to barricades but it can also implant them in the old and numb them. In this contradictory way some characteristics and meanings of the film can be combined with *the name* of some author. But

they are not seen to be the result of the efforts of some real author-person; instead they are formed of different symbolic references to a work that is considered to belong to some author. By using the author's name that one can classify and group cultural artefacts and separate them from one another.

The authorship is incorporated more easily into the art than the popular culture. This picture is not yet complete. In the public discussion on *Peyton Place* and *Dallas*, the television melodramas were regarded as the products of the collective author, the American television industry. Instead, when talking about the domestic family series, the situation have been much more complex.

In Finnish television culture the voice of a writer or a director has been as an acceptable starting point in evaluating the drama. According to the criticism published in newspapers, the 'witness' of Finnish culture does not necessarily have to be speaking Finnish as his mother tongue or have to even be born in Finland. According to the critique, it is exactly being this cultural outsider, as in the case of, for example, Neil Hardwick and Carl Mesterton, that makes the writer so skilled in being an expert at Finnishness and its mythical aspects. This view becomes clear in the critique written of *Tankki täyteen* and *Metsolat*. The female authors of the fantasy world used in *Kohtaamiset ja erot*, and especially its writer Sirkka Laine, are praised for the depiction of the imaginary, dreamlike mysticism of nature. At the same time, the reviews repeat on the meta-level the division between culture/nature on the one hand and masculine/feminine on the other.

In public, the narrative image of *Metsolat* was also strongly identified by Carl Mesterton the person. However, this does not prove yet that he would be an auteur-author. He worked for YLE for a long time and adopted the ideology of informational program policy. One even can say that he has been producing the policy through his work. Mesterton's production history in YLE shows his "voice" was already familiar with *Bergströms*, (The Bergströms) in the 1970s. After all it is impossible to show which elements in *Metsola's* particular realism Mesterton himself creates and which elements are part of the ideology of the public service television (including strong demands of empirical realism). As this case of *Metsolat* form the 1990s demonstrates the public concept of author is dependent, not only on abilities of the individual author, but the narrative images (Ellis 1992, 31) of the perhesarja genre, TV2's drama production, and the ideology of YLE.

As we have seen the conventional idea of authorship easily suggests television drama as 'work' and, in so doing, evades the question of television text in relation to ideology. It is, however, quite essential that what we consider as *author* to be recognized as analytically distinct from an individual creator or his/her particular talent. We cannot avoid distinguishing that still in the era

of the modern, consumer-oriented public service — with an emphasis on audience ratings and making judgments on quality from the instant taste of the audience — the question of the cultural values of the indigenous serial drama are easily reduced to the question of successful formats *and* individual authors. The ideological effect of the authorship could then be, as Stephen Heath (1981, 1973, 217) argues in speaking of the theory of subject, the function of unity. Accordingly, the encoding practice of an individual writer or team of the serial drama could be comprehended as work in language, not as an individual creativity independent from the social relations of production.<sup>1</sup>

The ideological authorship strengthens the effect of realism. In this, realism should be understood as meanings of the text (or ‘meaningfulness’, if one wants to emphasize affectivity in addition to ideology) as it articulates into social practices. This is totally different from examining the authorship or realism as a quality that exists in the text as such. This indeed is the case when a family series that utilizes documentary-like narration is seen as ‘a window’ to reality offered by some author. Meanings of the text also do not stop in the immediate reception process of a television series. Thus: What is it in the context of this research that makes fertile the viewpoint that the realism of a television series is seen more as a reality effect produced in the different extratextual practices of a given series rather than as an in-built quality of the series?

Firstly, reality effect understood like this emphasizes the social and cultural dimension of the formation of meaning. A family series that attempts to portray its contemporary time in a realistic way cannot inevitably foresee in what kind of a social situation it happens to fall when it is broadcasted, and how the assumed realism of the series articulates. It can articulate as upkeeping the status quo, awakening of new thinking, or as changing the prevailing everyday activities; there is no end to alternatives here. For instance, with regard to *Metsolat* the writers and directors could not possibly foresee the upcoming deep recession that essentially affected the atmosphere of the time when the series was received, and hence, the public discourses around the series. It that discourse, the discussions about the realism of the series began to produce the way with which both the series and its creator were talked about in the future.

Secondly, understanding realism as a reality effect that is produced in social practices enables the analysis of the critique as an articulation of its

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1 As Emile Benveniste (1971) argues, people constitute themselves as subject through (or in) language (p. 225), and ideology — as Lois Althusser views it — is ‘material practice’ existing in the behavior of people acting according to their beliefs (Belsey 1980; 1996, 57).

own time not only in relation to the world of television series, but also to the cultural and particular practices of the contemporary time. Later, I examine more concretely the relationship of newspaper criticism with other texts that determine writing about television, such as cultural-political lines or conceptions of art in different times.



## 11. DOUBLE STANDARDS IN EVALUATING TELEVISION

Perceiving television as an impartial window to the 'real' world seems to be a paradigmatic cultural form of public service television. The ideological terrain of public service, especially the goal of creating good citizenship by offering balanced information has been an essential framework for defining its aesthetic quality. Commercial television, carrying the same technological capacity, has accordingly been seen as the entertaining mirror of fantasy due to its advertising, picture-sale goals. The commercial principle has appeared to be the opposite of the principle of objective information, and it has been argued to represent the cultural form of 'non-realistic' and therefore 'escapist' television.

This division into two paradigms of television has been a very early phenomenon in discussions on Finnish television. It seems to be still a vigorous source of judgement in evaluating the 'realism' of programs. This chapter continues this discussion by offering analysis on the cultural and aesthetic critique of television realism. The *Peyton Place* and *Dallas* debates in Finland serve as examples of public discussion over the issue. Newspaper critiques under the study were published during the years of 1969-1973 and 1981-1985. This chapter concentrates on these debates whereas chapter 12 deals with the discussion of the Finnish drama realism published in the newspaper's television columns during the years 1961-1996.

Both YLE's and MTV's programs were under the control of the Program Council of the former until in 1992 when the Administrative Council of YLE decided to discontinue the work of the program councils which was replaced by a four member expert organization. Moreover, political parties represented in the Finnish Parliament nominated members of the Program Council. However, the members seldom evaluated programs according to party political interests. Instead, they represented different media political point of views, which were indicated by their political backgrounds. Thus, because *Peyton Place* and *Dallas* were imported by MTV, disagreements led to a point where public service television, the leading part of the duopoly, was seen as the opposite of commercial television. As YLE's monopoly and media political resolutions had been under discussion at time, the *Dallas* debate also called attention to the pressure for and against the ideology of public service.

## 11.1. Against Americanism?

Both of the American melodramas in question serve as examples of the discussion on the aesthetic quality in two important periods of the Finnish television. The debates illustrate how cultural discourses tend to reinforce or undermine such aspects of media and program policy as objectivity, entertainment, freedom of choice, and the conflict between informational and consumer-oriented programming. In these two cases the symbolic struggle over Americanism occurred in different situations.

For the 1960s generation, which had having hostile attitudes toward militarism, puritanical sexual behavior, and favored a progressive community, *Peyton Place* represented something totally opposite: a conservative worldview and social relations. The serial also threatened the principles of the informational program policy just adopted by YLE. At the beginning of the 1980s, the political climate developed in favor of free media market. When *Dallas* was screened for the first time in Finland there were already plans for MTV's own evening news, and the privileged position of YLE was increasingly taken up in public discussion.

Consequently, these cultural and program political fields offered a state of possibilities (Bourdieu 1998, 47) for criticism. At least these possibilities implied rules for conducting critical investigations but these possibilities probably determined the whole system of coordinates which reviewers and columnists had to keep in mind in order to participate in the game (ibid.).

At the time of the *Peyton Place* debate, beginning in 1969, television criticism was a relatively new genre. Nevertheless it was a constitutive part of television in the way that academic discussion was not. As this chapter implies, writings about television have tended to very much be a discourse in search for an object. (Cf. Poole 1984, 47-52.) Even so, as shown, domestic series and especially light entertainment have been the focus of journalistic writings since early days of the Finnish television (Lewing 1970).

How did television debaters in the context of the late 1960s and the early 1980s define the cultural and aesthetic nature of *Peyton Place* and *Dallas*? In what ways did the judgments imply different standards of evaluating television, which may influence contemporary TV criticism? How did public service television (YLE) cope with vulnerable program political situations in which its status as an arbiter of taste was repeatedly challenged?

I read the newspaper material symptomatically, searching for possible articulations of television as an aesthetic and competing medium and modifying certain particular media political and cultural contexts. I entered upon the texts of the single debate in separating each of the newspaper articles

into its constituent elements, text, meta-text, and hierarchy of text. I also analyzed the categorical and metaphoric elements of these newspaper articles. After searching functions and relations of the text, I finally constructed a sort of discursive unity of the columns under the scrutiny. (Cf. Fairclough 1997b, 243-45) In other words, through a close reading I looked for topics of criticism as well as the presuppositions and anxieties behind both debates. If a single column also contained criticism of other television programs, or had a specific media political context, this was taken into account in the textual analysis.

I will proceed to present my interpretations of the discussions in the following subchapters. They are labeled according to the issues that appeared in the debates. These included questioning the nature of television as a medium (activating versus escapist TV), discussing its serial form (the segment versus the flow form), and mass culture (high versus popular culture). Moreover the subtitles indicate the discussion on television as an object of gaze (an aesthetic versus a naive gaze), and finally, as a competitor in the media market (regulative policy versus the free market). In one way or another, all of the subchapters focus on the program political and media political contexts of YLE.

As a result of the analysis I have constructed a body of conflicting standards in the two debates, which I call the double standard in evaluating TV. This body of evaluations is still relevant in the public discussion on television even though YLE's own standards have gradually changed. A list of dichotomic arguments illustrating the double standards will be presented at the end of this chapter.

## **11.2. Activating versus Escapist TV**

In the late 1960s the program political goal of YLE was to “cover social reality in all of its aspects, each under equal conditions, despite the priorities set up by traditional hegemony” (Littunen & Nordenstreng 1974, 23-27). Correspondingly, YLE's purpose was to contribute to a better realization of the original principle of democracy which in order to work properly, vitally needs a well-informed public. Contrary to this informational program policy, commercial mass communication policy was based on the sale of the message and tended to minimize the information content of its message and told its public what it already more or less knows. (Ibid.)

In spite of changed interpretations of the program policy the emphasis on the need to enlighten people has continued to the present in the Finnish broadcasting policy (Alasuutari 1996, 204-212). Therefore it is not surprising that as MTV offered basically something other than the expected public

enlightenment, it was very soon defined as the opposite of YLE. For example, YLE intentionally underlined the domesticity and cultural significance of drama, whereas MTV expected the serials to be successful among the audience.

Critics directed their attention to the success of *Peyton Place*. Among them were many who refuse to deny pleasure of viewers but also those who resisted the serial form because of the pleasure. Public arguments for and against *Peyton Place* often focused on the question of program policy, but they also gave rise to the question of escapist versus activating program content. Arguments against *Peyton Place* emphasized that it lacks suitable role models and the future hopes of a culture where the role model could be realized. As such the critique follows up the corrective mode of realism (See Deming 1988, 154).

This mode of realism means, for instance, that the program is inclined to help viewers in seeing how to correct a real social circumstance and take a turn for the better. At its best it activates viewers to participate as a competent member of one's own community. Thus, instead portraying the bad situation as such and offering unrealistic daydreams the television program can offer encouraging social roles and healthier model of community for its viewers. As an example, the television melodrama, such as *Peyton Place*, could represent a community of the poor and rich, the white and black. In this community the purpose of life would be more than individual happiness. The Pseudonymous Tapu writes:

Something in American society has gone badly haywire, and this is also mirrored in the serial drama that reflects American society. The power of Big Money has obviously spread everywhere like a malignant growth, poisoned the human mind, and become the motive for behavior, a permanent mentality. Therefore it is only natural that American TV-entertainment markets the image of a citizen that makes it in hard competition, who childishly believes in the omnipotence of money, youth and beauty. *Peyton Place* is one way of accepting such a lifestyle — therefore *Peyton Place* is a dangerous narcotic substance to the consumer. (Kymenlaakso 30.7.1969)

Although the *Peyton Place* debate seemed to take off the most extremist realism argument that considered television as a window to the 'real' world, the question of ethically correct pictures nevertheless remained. Even if it intentionally portrayed the life of the white community on the eastern seaboard of the U.S., *Peyton Place* nevertheless did it by using unnecessary violence and representing the wicked habits of its characters, the critique stated. With

*Dallas* the discussion moved from the corrective pictures to the future of the Western civilization and of modern human beings.

According to the commentators, *Dallas* was extremely immoral, but in an ironic way: it persuaded viewers to believe that in comparison to bad characters in fiction the viewer is really a good citizen<sup>1</sup>. Yet *Dallas*, the “new viewers trap”, seemed to lack warmth, kindness, smiles, and the drama of everyday life<sup>2</sup>. As the thematic center in *Dallas* was money, this suggested to critics a barbarian picture of a sick world where morality was out, and action was in<sup>3</sup>. Irma Holopainen states:

Dallas makes unscrupulousness, cruelty and hardness totally acceptable and, on top of it, in such a clear way that even a child understands it. This indeed is the most horrible thing about the series. (IS 11.12.1981)

In the Peyton Place case a matter of criticism has also been the incompatibility between informational and commercial content, whereas the Dallas debate indicated a growing resistance towards the hegemony of the American television industry in the indigenous market. A very common argument was that Dallas represents a model of American life and values, allegedly negative and unrealistic from the Finnish standpoint. On the subject of “made in the USA” it was not only a question of content as such, but as in other European countries, of the narrative style, the packaging of the product, and the treatment of content (Silj et al. 1988, 207-208).

As a part of the aesthetic style the difference between Peyton Place and Dallas was not only on the visual level — some Peyton Place episodes were in black and white — but also on the narrative level. This aesthetic, magnifying the storyline beyond the any limits of truth, exaggerating the qualities of the main characters was soon considered to prove the commercial corruption of television used excess as a narrative strategy (Feuer 1994, 555). It meant that involving more footage of violence and sex, and a more complex narrative style, Dallas was closer to the prime time than the daytime soap (see Brower 1997, 1249).

Compared with the Peyton Place debate, a totally new topic of the public discussion of Dallas was the narrative pleasure of viewing. Those who abhorred the serial seemed to share the view that it was impossible for spectators to identify with heroes like the plotting JR. It could be argue that none of the newspaper columnists or other journalists had an indisputable love for Dallas, but some had more positive opinions than the others did. For example, some

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1 Roope Alfán, *Ilta-Sanommat* 2.9.81.

2 Jyrki Palo, *Turun Päivälehti* 2.9.81.

3 Aku-Kimmo Ripatti, *Kaleva* 30.9.81.

critics pointed out that the serial was a fairy tale and as such a may be a positive form of escapism for adults. Though it did not represent the world from the perspective of those who suffered the most but of those who benefited from this suffering.<sup>4</sup>

### 11.3. Segment Form versus Flow

At a time when public broadcasting had a television monopoly and the two YLE channels broadcast commercial programs, the popularity of *Peyton Place* seemed not only to challenge the mainstream ideology of objectivity, but also break the Finnish fiction contract. Indigenous television series usually portrayed the life of urban families or of conservative country communities. These series dealt with conventional events, which were not too irritating for an average viewer. However, social problems were often taken seriously and usually the series either offered a reason for them or found a solution to them.

Television melodrama was totally unknown in the Finnish television until the late 1960s<sup>5</sup>. Unlike the domestic or the British “realistic” serial drama, *Peyton Place* represented a new television aesthetics, seriality, inconceivable both from a high culture perspective and from the perspective of the informational program policy of YLE. Similar reactions were later published about the “strange” television aesthetics of *Dallas*. These reactions thus continued the discussion on seriality, but also set the agenda for the debate on commercialization and consumerism in the Finnish television.

Seriality is usually connected with television as a commercial medium. Television needs serial programs to fill its season schedules and binding its viewers with promises of new episodes. The American television is a paradigmatic form of the commercial television with number of continual series and serials, the most of them (at least, among the top ten) familiar with the Finnish audience. As a mode of programming and as television experience it corresponds with the concept of flow (Williams 1974, 94-95) whereas the single play and episodic series, familiar with the domestic television, coincides with the concept of segment (See about concept, Ellis 1992, 117-121).

In Europe the serial form, the “corrosive effect of television”, was seen as an indication of the expansion of television schedules, of the limits of national production, and of the logic of the market (Silj et al. 1988, 203). *Peyton Place* was recognized as a mechanism for the turn toward specific television

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4 Irma Holopainen, *Ilta-Sanomat* 11.12.1981.

5 However, *Peyton Place* was briefly screened on Finnish television in 1965, but it was soon discontinued because of its low audience ratings and “bad quality”.

aesthetics in the Finnish television. As a result of criticism the Program Council of the YLE raised the debate over this long running serial which tied “television programming for years in a similar pattern” (Yleisradio 1973). After four hundred episodes, the serial was under the threat of cancellation partly because the politically nominated program council received heterogeneous feedback from both politicians and viewers. At that time the Program Council of YLE approved the schedule of the Commercial Television. A member of the council proposed that YLE should not allow the serial to continue in the following term.

But the Program Council made a decision to either change the serial’s place in the weekly schedule, or offer an alternative program in the other channel at the same time. As stated above, this decision was based on an emerging argument that a long running television drama would encourage certain mannerisms in television watching. Alternative programs offered as counterparts of *Peyton Place* were such British drama serials as *Coronation Street* and *Upstairs, Downstairs*, which represented the genre of “realistic” European dramas.

When *Peyton Place* finally ended in 1973, British serials continued the aesthetic form of the continual serial in the Finnish television. At that time there was also an effort to create a Finnish counterpart to the serial form. As a result, *Oi kallis kaupunki* appeared on the YLE screen in 1975. This serial consisted of nine episodes, which made it a mid-length serial in the domestic context. Its visual and narrative solutions were similar to those of the television soap and melodrama. However, for some reasons, which newer became public, the new aesthetic experiments came to a sudden end. Instead, YLE started the production of historical narratives.

## 11.4. High Culture versus Popular Culture

The sharp division between high and popular culture has time after time been an effect of the symbolic struggle for distinct tastes between elitist and common people. Currently, it is perhaps easier than, for example in the 1960s, to speak about the positive meaning of popular culture. At any rate, the division has not left us in peace. Television has always served as an example of popular culture and the taste of the “mass”.

The reviews published in newspapers show that in 1968, shortly before the *Peyton Place* debate started, the newspapers representing the left seemed to insist on the greater cultural democracy of popular culture than the papers representing the right. Leftist newspapers demanded that entertainment culture

be deemed as an equally important phenomenon as high culture. At the same time, left-wingers nevertheless strongly criticized the bourgeois way of life in American serials and in the corresponding Finnish series (Pietilä, V & K 1969, 78-81). The radical intellectuals not only questioned the unrealistic *Peyton Place*, but they also were astonished by the fact that so many members of the upper and middle classes watched television (Pietilä, V 1967, 396-400). Clearly they did not appreciate television, it seemed to be against “good” taste, but even so, they watched it more than the researchers expected them to (ibid.).

The stubborn question of the joy of watching *Peyton Place* can be summarized as an embarrassing remark that an ideologically suspicious and unrealistic serial could be so popular. Some columnists in my data also made a clear distinction between the taste of viewers and that of the “young intellectuals”<sup>6</sup> and YLE researchers who were critical of *Peyton Place* in their report (Harms, Rand & Savolainen 1970) on indigenous and foreign serial drama programs<sup>7</sup>. On the one hand, the report can be seen as an extension of the informational program policy. On the other hand, it also illustrates the patriarchal, paternal attitudes of YLE toward viewers (see Hellman 1988). The pseudonymous writer Paavo accuses the researchers of YLE of communism by arguing:

They think it (*Peyton Place*, IR) is a lie. A beautiful lie only. They would take the heroes of cartoons to the slums. They would lead the audience to the center of racial segregation. They would march them into the midst of the glaring conflicts of American capitalism. [...] And if they could choose a topic, they obviously would lead the audience to the midst of a family living in a kolkhoz, a place where people love their tractor more than their spouse; where people have been programmed into a state of happiness; where the conflict between work and capital has been removed; where hypocrisy neither blossoms nor bears fruit; where both private and public corruption has been weeded out down to the last detail. Yeah, said the people, that sort of balm to the soul does not interest us. (Savo 29.4.1970)

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6 The young intellectuals here consist mostly of members of the YLE long-running planning committee, including those who wrote the report on the serial drama supply (1970), Joan Harms, Max Rand, and Keijo Savolainen. In addition among them were N-B Storbom (the chair), Yrjö Ahmavaara, Caj Falce, Kari Ilmonen, Kaarle Nordenstreng and Margaret Starck. There were also others such as Pertti Hémanus, a coordinator of programming in YLE at that time, who was visible in public with his opinions.

7 Paavo, Savo 29.4.70, Marita, Suomen Uutiset 6.5.70, and R. Rubin, Etelä-Savon Sanomat 22.7.72.



Approaching the 1980s, the question of popular culture slowly came out in cultural articulations. As a part of this process the *Dallas* debate challenged the ideology of the educational, broadcaster-oriented program policy by offering a new audience ideology, a freedom of choice. Becoming more accepted the consumer orientation, a modernized idea of public service television (Söndergaard 1996, 116) also re-articulates viewership. ‘Viewing’ like ‘reading’ is understood here as a discursive practice through which viewers sometimes are reproduced into an audience with different qualities by theorist or professionals. A good example of this is Habermas’s theoretical concept of public sphere in which participants were expected to be educated readers. (Hartley 1996, 66-67.) In the Finnish discussion on *Dallas* in the early 1980s the individually oriented viewer, capable of accurate emotional identifications conceptually displaced the socially responsible viewer, capable of rational thought and action.

## 11.5. An Aesthetic versus a Naive Gaze

As noted above, the traditional concept of realism included the idea of the informational, even journalistic, content of the drama. Further, it kept the didactic tools in the hands of authors, television writers and directors. In the Finnish context this socially responsible aesthetics often meant an expression of the Brechtian epic theater and its expansion to television theater (Volanen 1985). In the YLE tradition, epic theatre means the activating entertainment; epic theatre does not call upon viewers to identify with the events of television drama but makes viewers observers and awakens their activity (YLE 1967, 59-60). However, there have also been some other views on the specific television aesthetics than this Brechtian one.

For example, Helge Miettunen, a pioneer of the field, adopted ideas from the German aesthetic into his own theory on television. In his book *Radio ja TV-opin perusteet* (Introduction to Radio and Television, 1966) he emphasized the television aesthetics as having both power of immediacy and dramatic capacity. From his point of view, the typical characteristic of the serial drama in television was dialogue-dramatic elements. In this respect it is different from film where it is more typical to have illustrated epic elements. The fundamental arrangement in television is then from ‘individual to individual’, based on close-ups. (Ibid. 172-180.)

In contrast, Miettunen’s contemporaries did not seem to be acquainted with his theoretical background in evaluating television melodrama. However, they were capable of commenting on the curious techniques used in *Peyton*

*Place*. These techniques can be considered to be adherent to the Pierre Bourdieu's (1979) arguments on two distinctive gazes assumed in contemporary cultural discourses (Brunsdon 1997, 114). Accordingly, the naive gaze offered by the soap format is then constructed in and through an opposition to the aesthetic gaze (ibid.)<sup>8</sup> offered by the single, artistic play.

The division between the two gazes is comparable to the difference between 'lisible' and 'scriptible' texts (Barthes 1993, 159-168). One can, for example, argue that to look steadily at the repetitive storyline of *Peyton Place* seemed to offer an exciting and relaxing experience to its fans. Instead, for the scholar preferring to read all texts symptomatically, the techniques used by the melodrama demonstrate the standardization of both television text and gaze of television viewers.

The questions of the "unconsciousness" and the "unsatisfied needs" of viewers were raised as part of a theoretical discussion of *Dallas* in the newspapers. As opposed to the ideological criticism, this discussion emphasized an anti-realistic position highlighting the symptoms of the ruin of the Western civilization and avoiding the arguments of empirical verisimilitude. In *Dallas* these symptoms were working as Freudian therapy to the viewers who, through the serial, were able to open their eyes to the morally dismantled contemporary world.<sup>9</sup> Adopting the concepts of Roland Barthes Dan Steinbock (1986, 108) argues that the viewer's competence, the particular style of 'reading' television is possible to divide into reception corresponding to the 'pleasure' dimension and reading corresponding to the 'enjoyment' dimension, both produced by the text.

However, in the early 1980s psychoanalysis did not have a strong position in TV-criticism most of which still valued realism as a criterion of good TV drama. Even so, it looks as though rational humanism was set aside in the *Dallas* debate and that it was substituted by the dystopic vision of the Western civilization. Dan Steinbock argues:

In *Dallas*, as is also the case increasingly in reality, every human being is a wolf with regard to another. Communal life means business activities which equals expedient and systematic lying, profiteering with rental contracts, the autocracy of monopolies in the struggle for existence.

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8 Brunsdon makes use of Pierre Bourdieu's argument on the construction of oppositional gazes by arguing, " (I)n much contemporary cultural discourses, television is the object of the naive gaze against which the aesthetic gaze is constructed" (Brunsdon 1997, 114).

9 Dan Steinbock, *Helsingin Sanomat* 27.12.81. See also Aku-Kimmo Ripatti, *Kaleva* 30.9.81. who made a myth analysis on *Dallas*. Hilka Vuori, *Kansan Uutiset* 22.2.85, in her behalf, analyzed *Dallas* from a Brechtian point of view.

Anyone who watches Dallas knows, despite and because of the contradictory talks, that this truth is indisputable: civilization is built on treachery and everything else is mere lace-making. (HS 27.12.81)

As a structure of feeling (Williams 1977, 128-137), this dystopic vision corresponded with a “postmodern” affect. This aesthetic shift partly explains why the notion of television as the transmitter of “the real” was almost invisible in the Dallas debate. It is also possible to find the analogy between Dallas and the aesthetic postrealism exclusive of “the unitary moral order that traditionally undergirds the soap community” (Ang & Stratton 1995, 128).

The new, immoral order of the soap opera did not dismantle the assumed contract between the soap and its female audience, culturally signified as a moral community. The textual complexity of the melodrama did not make the genre the object of more aesthetic gaze in the Finnish discussion. Already the Peyton Place debate had disguised the Finnish female audience as the mass audience of television (on masquerade, see Modleski 1991). There were female columnists who at the same time apologized for and celebrated their addiction to Peyton Place<sup>10</sup>. Male columnists as well, who were the majority among the debaters, spoke lively of how a serial like Peyton Place was the favorite program for the female audience<sup>11</sup>.

Judgments took place in comparison of the serial to the reality pictured in women’s magazines, and by metaphorically comparing the textual nature of the soap to pregnancy<sup>12</sup>. Contrasting *Peyton Place* to US action serials, such as *The Untouchables*, the latter was seen by critics to be more real than the “idyllic and sterile” *Peyton Place*. These statements had a clear gender nature, and, as we know, the ‘women’s genres’, soap operas and family melodramas have always had a lower status than ‘men’s genres’, police and crime series. Gendered meanings having a background in modern thought were also contributing to the images of media institutions.

Mass culture and commercialism have also been connected with the cultural meanings of the woman. Consequently, the public discussion on the aesthetic of commercial television was bound with the entertainment and serialization of television, and it was considered as being more familiar to the female audience than the information based aesthetics of the public service.

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10 Pseudonym Marita, Suomen Uutiset 6.11.69, and pseudonym Mettiskä, Pohjolan Sanomat 18.1.72.

11 E. Lavia, Etelä-Saimaa 4.5.73.

12 The well-known television critic Jukka Kajava, Helsingin Sanomat 10.2.72, used this metaphor.

## 11.6. Regulative Policy versus Free Market

As stated above the serialization of television was basically a result of raising and segregating the schedule, the essential part of the economy of television super text (Browne 1984, 180). As was pointed out above, when *Peyton Place* ended the British serials continued this aesthetics in the Finnish television. Ultimately, the debate on the never-ending narrative of *Peyton Place* has been a specific position in articulating the links between form, audience, schedule, and the mode of consumption in the Finnish television culture (see *ibid.* 182).

In 1981 about 18 per cent of YLE's and about 54 per cent of MTV's foreign programs came from the United States (Finnish Mass Media 1995). Therefore it is understandable why the criticism from every quarter was so worried about the success of *Dallas*. This concern focused on the pleasurable viewing of *Dallas* and the power of ratings. Critics who totally disliked *Dallas* argued that the ratings and sales figures, not the quality, determine how long *Dallas* modifies the "needs of the mass".

The *Dallas* debate lived in a media political ferment connected with the deregulation that took place in both television and radio in the 80s. Explicitly, when the debate began, MTV had already been granted the right to broadcast its own television news, which was a big step towards the company's independence.

This process took place in a period of "profound change" in the Finnish society, argues Raimo Salokangas (1996, 195). The *Dallas* debate itself supported, and was surrounded by, reinforcements of the liberal and market oriented policy, which led gradually to the construction of a third commercial television channel (Kolmostelevisio), started at the full volume in 1987. These actions started a competitive period in YLE's history and drove the company into "seeking for resolutions" in its own field (YLE 1988, 14). Among resolutions was the channel reform taking place in the early 1990s and creating a new rivalry between the channels.

MTV, in turn, tried to adopt a new strategy in advertising *Dallas*. At the very beginning the serial was surrounded by an enormous publicity campaign. The main contents of the promotions launched by MTV were that *Dallas* is a barbarous serial with huge audience ratings all over the world. For example, the Finnish tabloid, *Ilta-Sanomat* wrote in 2.3.81: "Today we see the beginning of the most sensational, most watched, most hated, and most loved television serial in the world, *Dallas*, in which all characters are bad, thoroughly evil, or even worse." This narrative image (Ellis 1992, 31) of *Dallas* became, in fact, an important part of the public reception of the serial.

In this way, MTV caught viewers by marketing the serial beforehand and by dynamically creating the sensational image of the serial. The bestseller *Dallas* (Raintree 1981) was translated into Finnish and published simultaneously as the television melodrama began on the television screen. No doubt, this gave extra publicity to the serial, and some newspaper articles were written about both the serial and the book. Later, when *Dallas* faced resistance, MTV continued the campaign by gathering evidence of the serial's domestic and international popularity. During the ensuing debate, the tabloids seemed to be a most willing participant.

The political climate had gradually turned against the overwhelming dogmatism offered by the radical left, and viewers partly found their arguments from this movement. Their letters to the editor spoke of the pleasure of watching *Dallas*, but they also wondered at the efforts of the political left's to deny the running of the serial. In my view MTV partly initiated the support for *Dallas*, but even so, viewers accepted the terms and expressed their public opinions on the "censorship", and the "hypocritical" program council of the YLE<sup>13</sup>.

The politically nominated members of the YLE program council took responsibility for the content of the serial, its supposed lack of humanism, and unacceptable violence. The discussion was first connected with the general discussion on television violence, for example, when some teachers brought up their worry about children's interest in *Dallas*<sup>14</sup>. Soon this discussion was replaced by an anxiety about the direct moral influence of *Dallas*.

As a response, MTV had a Gallup survey made. The survey showed that 67 per cent of *Dallas* viewers "understood the entertaining nature of *Dallas*". In addition, the program manager, Tauno Äijälä declared that MTV controls its programming itself and that the company had already removed two episodes because of their sexual and violent contents<sup>15</sup>. A day before the decisive meeting of the program council, a big local newspaper, *Aamulehti*, published the interviews of three psychologists who, in short, estimated the influences of *Dallas* as "not-so-bad" for viewers<sup>16</sup>.

Contrary to expectations, the Program Council did not cancel the broadcasting of *Dallas*, but forwarded the decision on this to MTV. In their

13 Readers' supportive letters were published, for example, in *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Huvudstadsbladet*, *Kouvolan Sanomat*, *Turun Sanomat*, *Savon Sanomat*, and *Kaleva*.

14 Pseudonym Äidikielen opettaja, *Helsingin Sanomat* 25.9.81; Leo Zimmermann, *Lapin Kansa* 10.10.81; Ellen Salminen, *Vaasa* 11.10.81; Saara Sarkkinen, *Suomen Kuvalehti* 45/81; Leena Sallinen, *Etelä-Saimaa* 15.11.81.

15 Eeva-Kaarina Holopainen, *Ilta-Sanomat* 21.11.81 interviewed Tauno Äijälä.

16 Marja Sjöberg, *Aamulehti* 19.11.81.

meeting of December 1981, only two members of the radical left suggested that the YLE council should complete the decision before the following spring. However, MTV was asked to bring a settlement on when Dallas could be ended in a way that the narrative interruption would not be an inconvenience to the viewers.

In reality *Dallas* was, however, only removed from TV 1 to TV 2 and scheduled to screen after MTV's Kymmenen uutiset (The 10 o'clock news). Under these circumstances the debate slowly calmed down in the following years, and *Dallas* was continued (with an exception of some breaks) to its "natural" end in 1991. At the same time with the process of deregulation MTV's independence from YLE was growing.

Both MTV's successful campaign in promoting *Dallas* and the growing competition in global and domestic media markets turned YLE's glance from program policy to media competition and put the company in a situation where it was forced to legitimate its privileged position by using its competitors' strategies. What followed was that audience ratings became an important factor in programming and scheduling also in public service television.

## 11.7. From the Enlightener to the Cultural Forum

Even though evaluations on the American serials rarely take the aesthetic criteria into their explicit scrutiny, the certain views in evaluating television are still vigorous in the cultural field of television criticism. For summarizing the two discussions of the American television melodramas introduced in the preceding subchapters I will next move on to outline the body of standards in evaluating television in Finland.

The classification was drawn from the journalistic texts in my data, and they mostly concentrate on three topics, the reality, popularity and storyline of the serial. In the case of *Peyton Place*, objects of criticism included dealing with program policy, serial aesthetics, and realism argument, whereas the *Dallas* debate took up for discussion media policy, audience, and television criticism in general. Taking these definite topics under scrutiny I will draw a figure of the abstract positions implying the double standard of evaluations.

The figure illustrates two simple prototypes, not found as such in public discussion on *Peyton Place* and *Dallas*. The proposed dimensions display the extreme positions in the discussion. It is possible to see the right side as evaluative codes of commercial television and the left side as those of the public service television.

**Figure 7: Double Standard in Evaluating TV.**

CULTURAL FORM OF TELEVISION	
Public service	Commercial
PROGRAM POLICY	
Informational	Consumerist
PARADIGMATIC SERIAL GENRE	
Journalistic drama	Soap opera
IDEAL OF CONTENT	
Activating	Escapist
GENDERED TELEVISION	
Male genres	Female genres
DEFINITION OF TASTE	
Elite	Common people
ELEMENTS OF EVALUATION	
Programs	Ratings
CONCEPT OF AUDIENCE	
Citizen	Consumer
PROGRAM POLICY	
Inform	Entertain
CRITERION OF EVALUATION	
High culture	Popular culture
OBJECT OF ANALYSIS	
Content	Form
NATURE OF GAZE	
Aesthetic	Naive
ASSUMED EXPERIENCE	
Effect	Affect
METAPHOR OF TV	
Window: "the real"	Mirror: fantasy
CONCEPT OF REALISM	
Empirical	Emotional

The constitution of comments indicates a shift from the text to the audience, or as defined in feminist research, from the “bad” text to the “good” audience (cf. Brunson 1997, 121). In that way the debates itself give an illustration of the “state of possibilities in analyzing cultural products” — the way in which debaters combine aesthetic evaluations (selections between possibilities) in a specific social and cultural field (Bourdieu 1998, 47-48). According to this logic, the main issues appearing the debates are neither the property of television text or the audience, but the result of symbolic struggle.

As I already pointed out above, the serial’s attractiveness among audiences raised the question of popularity, which finally turned the critics’ glance from the normative, journalistic television to the fantasy, to the serial world of drama. The critics drew attention to the corruptive effects of the medium, violence and escapism, and started to glorify domestic epic and historical, document based drama. Ever since that the documentary perspective has been a part of the privileged realistic function of public service television, as well as a continuous source for criticizing not-so-realistic media pictures.

However, in the *Dallas* debate, MTV took the leading position away from YLE in a competition over the “taste” of viewers. The prestige of the high culture and the idea of the cultivation of the viewers were both still alive, but the policy of the popular challenged them by accentuating the therapeutic function of entertainment. The popularity of *Dallas* among audience has offensively been used as an argument for defending the melodramatic form. Inside drama production the predominant paradigm was changed from the single drama towards the serial one — also in YLE.

With the public discussion on *Dallas* the function of the television as a medium started changing from the enlightener to the cultural forum of dialogic debaters (Newcomb & Hirsch 1994). It was partly caused by the fact that the otherwise innovative idea of informational program policy unfortunately avoided the question of cultural subjectivity, and relied on the discursive concept of the public as politically unified people. Moreover, this concept repeatedly connoted masculinity, whereas, on the contrary, the consumers of commercial television almost exclusively implied female viewers.

Therefore is not surprising that along with the cultural turn in the Finnish discussion, television and its paradigmatic genre, the soap opera (and its sister, *perhesarja*) came to be regarded as a gender specific text. Cultural studies supported this conceptualization. For example, John Fiske (1987, 179) quite simply articulated the “soap opera as a feminine narrative”.

It seems that the meaning of television was gendered side by side with its commercialization. Feminist television studies also argued for the metaphoric definition of the soap text and its audience (Hobson 1982, Modleski 1990,



Geraghty 1991, Brown 1994, Stempel Mumford 1995). Even though these studies helped to understand the political economy of a serial narrative (Hagedorn 1995, 29), they did not pay much attention to the process of making meanings of femininity and masculinity in different television discourses.

It has been argued that the informational program policy of YLE caused its own failure by forgetting the significance of the social and cultural in the constitution of subjectivity. This means that for long YLE understood its audience as the public — constituted of modern and rational citizens, powerless and isolated in their domestic spheres (Hujanen 1995, 261-63). Accordingly, program content was seen as the most essential part of communication, and, for example, “drama and fiction served as a means of expression, having no value of their own” (ibid. 264).

In addition to this explanation, the reformative program policy and its efforts to give rules for programming can also be considered an organic part in the formation of a modern society and its communication system in Finland. This process was widely supported by increasing numbers of intellectuals and other educated people born in the post-war period whose desire for knowledge coincided with the historical change, the developments of the modern welfare state and its emerging cultural forms.

Since the 1980s, the Finnish cultural policy could not be based on an instructional policy organically linked with the constitution of a modern state apparatus. The cultural policy was forced to define its position to and within the consumer-centered market ideology. This new field has been a contradictory one in many ways, not only in its situation at the crossroads of the public and the private sectors, but also because of its requirements to encourage diversity in society to serve different cultural groups. (See Kupoli 1992, 30-33) In the situation where the media market was changing and public service television was facing the legitimacy crisis, YLE created a new kind of relationship between academic and broadcasting research. For some scholars the “normalization” period, that politically restored the informational program policy in the 1970s, was the basis for a totally different research orientation in YLE. It has been argued that reflexivity and social-praxis orientation of broadcasting research has been substituted by an administrative research orientation (Pietilä, K 1978, 222-223).

While public service television seems to converge with its commercial counterparts in relation to viewers and program structures (for the latter, see Hellman & Sauri 1994), public discussion by intellectuals reproduces the double standard in evaluating television drama. Outi Nyttäjä, a professional dramatist crystallized this situation fairly well in her television reviews in

1997. She wrote that she longed for the time when artistic plays, not sitcoms and other low-cost series copied from abroad, were respected in YLE: “Year after year tart-like populism has only increased. Series after series the drama production has turned into either totally colorless everyday drama, you can’t distinguish between, or into awful clones?[[”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Outi Nyytäjä, TV 2:n menetetty maine. Helsingin Sanomat 10.5.1997.

## 12. 'REALISM' IN FINNISH TV CRITICISM

The data collected from the newspaper archive of YLE<sup>1</sup> shows that 'realism' has had many different interpretations in Finnish television culture. What the interpretations have in common is a conception of reality, which the series should readily mirror or bring to the viewer according to journalistic reviews. In another words, the demand of realism for the serials is that they should be close to our everyday thinking to help in our attempt to 'take things as they are'. However, as shown earlier, it is different to speak about 'realism' as a special method or convention rather than as a television reviewer's insight into how the world should be portrayed in a television series.

However, the conventions that describe 'the reality' — to which the majority of Finnish television drama belongs — disguise their own construction. In other words, in its attempt to describe things 'as they are' or 'how they should be', the convention of realism simultaneously constructs itself either as the presence of 'truth' or as its adequate reflection in the television series. According to ideology critique, 'realism' is not the presence of some genuine and unadulterated 'reality' (or, in its extreme, naturalism), or something that can be outlined with eyes and ears, either in fact or in fiction. Views on the realism of television are also ideological. Television critics do not normally question their own ideas of what they consider as a realistic or an unrealistic feature in fiction.

This chapter continues to discuss 'realism' in Finnish TV criticism. My intention here is to consider in more detail in what ways journalistic television criticism, published in newspapers, has seen as important or less important

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1 The newspapers are in alphabetical order: Aamulehti, Eteenpäin, Etelä-Saimaa, Eteläsuomen Sanomat, Hangonlehti, Helsingin Sanomat, Huvudstadsbladet, Hämeen Kansa, Hämeen Sanomat, Hämeen Yhteistyö, Ilta-Sanomat, Kainuun Sanomat, Kaleva, Kansan Lehti, Kansan Tahto, Kansan Uutiset, Keskisuomalainen, Kouvolan Sanomat, Kymen Keski-laakso, Landsbygdens Folk, Lapin Kansa, Liitto, Pohjanmaan Sanomat, Pohjolan Sanomat, Savo, Savon Sanomat, Suomen Uutiset, Suomenmaa, Turun Päivälehti, Uusi Aika, Uusi Suomi, Vaasa. I systematically went through all the writings about programs from 1960 to 1975. I was able to read through the clippings from 1976 to 1998 in folders and collections that were temporarily archived in the Press Department of Finnish Broadcasting Company and which were later transferred to the Central Archive in Mikkeli. I regard the data as representative in view of my own research purpose but it is not necessarily systematic if one wants to examine the writings in a certain newspaper or the writings of a certain critic.

the fact that series in one way or another participate in reality. As indirectly referred to above (Chapter 10), television criticism has connections to the strategic properties of film criticism when one talks about ‘authorship’. However, journalistic television critique as we will be seen has its own special characteristics.

## 12.1. Discursive Practices

The majority of the analyzed critiques build some sort of a relationship between dramas and ‘the reality’ assumed by the journalist. According to representation theory, this relationship can be examined from three points of view, following Stuart Hall’s analogy on language (Hall 1997, 24-25): reflective, intentional and constructionist. With the first view, existing reality is either reflected or not reflected in the TV series. According to the second view the author, for example the writer or director, is considered to have her or his own unique way of seeing and talking about reality that can also be recognized by critics. In this romantic view, one author is better able to describe reality or create verisimilitude than another author and as such, this view resembles that of authorship familiar from movie culture, *auteurism*. In the third case, criticism builds fairly openly its own reality, seemingly independent from the ‘reality’ portrayed in television drama.

As previously mentioned, these hegemonic views, which are critical of realism, are joined by a third, rather rare view in journalistic reviews on television shows, that which takes into account the social and productive aspect of language, and thinks of ‘realism’ as the product of text. This view warns us not to confuse true reality with the material world, where we act with those symbolic practices and processes whereby representations and meanings derived from ‘reality’ operate.

Newspaper critics have mainly had a social approach, concentrating on the content of a series. They have considered the reflection of reality in a series, but surprisingly often, this has been done in relationship to the series authors’ unique relationship with reality. The realism that has been expected from the series has, however, been essentially something other than the empirical, emotional, ethical, pedagogical or historical realism that the critic has recognized. It has been, and still is possible, to combine the demand for reality with the demand for social priming. In other words, the critic expects that the social events in the series be worked over in a way in which they become significant to the audience, and in which they even finally become objects for their social action. This view indirectly contains the idea that a

realistic or unrealistic television series in the end materializes as social action or non-action.

In this chapter, we will first look at the substance of journalistic television critique, and its special characteristics, when dealing with Finnish television series and serials. At the same time, I will create an overview of the data used, which consists of 411 critiques of different kinds. A review can focus on either one serial drama or refer to a number of dramas under investigation. Therefore the number of reviews does not exactly correspond with the number of articles. I will concentrate on analyzing reviews and critiques written about the following series: *Pääluottamusmies*, *Rintamäkeläiset*, *Oi kallis kaupunki*, *Tankki täyteen*, and *Kohtaamiset ja erot*. This chapter makes only passing references to *Metsolat*.

The series and serials discussed in this chapter have been chosen because of their comparability and distinctiveness. Three specialties among the series and serials need extra attention. The first of these has to do with the series *Kiurunkulma*, which was broadcast from 1966-1969 and which, according to contemporary criticism, can be seen as the paradigmatic drama serial of Reporadio. Another drama worth special attention is *Oi kallis kaupunki*, which was first broadcast in 1975 and which criticism treated as television melodrama. The third interesting series is *Kohtaamiset ja erot* (1994), which coincided with the boom of the long serial, and which differed from all previous long and medium-length series by investing in a genre rare in Finland, the fantasy.

## 12.2. Journalistic Writing on Television

The ‘macro institutions’ of television criticism can be divided, according to the model presented by David Bordwell, into journalistic and essayistic writing and academic scholarship (1989, 19-20). Certain media and ways of expression correspond to these institutions, such as newspapers, and professional, academic and club journals. I add administrative and professional institutions to the list. For example, YLE has its own publication series, which from time to time publishes material that can be regarded as program critique. In addition, their internal magazine *Mediavirtuosi*<sup>2</sup> published annual reviews of programs, and the making of programs. Television professionals and only a few researchers wrote the reviews.

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2 *Mediavirtuosi* was published during 1994-2000.

Apart from the publication medium, formal and informal institutions, critic organizations, colleagues, schools of thought and different types of social networks also influence the way in which television reviews are presented. These all shape the critic's routines and practices. Influencing the critic's opinion is made possible by the joint previewing of programs, which also brings the job closer to that of the film critic who writes for newspapers. Previewing gives the critic at least a theoretical chance to influence what viewers choose to watch on television. At the same time it is possible that the collegial banter in previewed shows may have its own influence on how individual critics form their opinions.

It is worth bearing in mind that neither journalism, in general, nor journalistic television critique has some sort of universal character. Journalism has a social and historical nature, and for example, the concept of critique in reviewing art and literature is a product of modern times. As Ari Kivimäki says in his study on movie journalism, there has been strangely little research on the relationship between critique and journalism, although a significant part of (movie) critique has always been placed in the mass media (Kivimäki 1998, 26). What still remains to be considered is the connection between critique and journalism and the modern articulations of enlightenment, progress and democracy, with social control, passivating citizens and the production of consumerism as the connections possible downsides (compare Hartley 1996, 31-56).

This chapter concentrates on the phenomenon I call journalistic television review. I define it as an introduction, comment or critique published in a newspaper either before (preview) or after (review) the broadcasting of a television program. I also examine some writings which probably originally were meant as cultural criticism in general terms, but which can be interpreted as reviews of television dramas. One more distinction I make is the difference between a real review and a puff. The puffs are rather open textual advertising, lack comments and actual reviews, and they rely rather heavily on the channel's press releases and interviews with the makers of the program. Stories that consist solely of interviews have been left outside the data.

The historical place for journalistic television reviews is in newspaper TV and radio pages. Professionals who specialize in this genre and write under their own bylines mainly write TV reviews. However, in the data there are some reviewers who use a pseudonym. According to the characteristics of journalism, the reviews consist of reporting and commentary, and they rather seldom make use of the viewpoints of academic criticism. Sometimes television program reviews are given space in other sections of the newspaper rather than in the TV and radio pages. Big reports and editorials on individual

programs are, nevertheless, rare and mostly connected with some general debate concerning, for example, the production of a television series, and manuscript writing, or thematic issues, such as violence on television.

The above ‘macro institutions’ of television criticism can be compared with Pierre Bourdieu’s familiar ideas about ‘fields’. Journalistic television criticism is perhaps not as canonized as film criticism. There is, however, an ongoing symbolic battle over, for example, the aesthetic criteria between serious and entertaining television production. Nevertheless, the critic may find herself more closely tied with the prospective audience of the newspaper rather than with any particular aesthetic field. Every kind of battle, debate and articulation requires specific cultural capital. In the data, I have examined, a clear distinction is also formed between individual critics.

Merja Hurri’s classification made of cultural journalism works well in describing the television reviews examined here. As Hurri remarks, the critic may be connected with the field of art (aesthetic professional critique), the field of journalism (journalistic or ideologically committed critique), or the audience (popularizing critique). These connections have their pros and cons. If the person who writes the critique is, herself, an artist and committed to this reference group, independent professional critique may, at its worst, be awkward and difficult. A corresponding difficulty arises if the critic is very committed to the ideological stance of her newspaper. A critic with strong ties to her audience is rather seldom found in art criticism, instead she is rather often found in the TV pages of newspapers. A television critic committed to her audience writes in an intelligible way and popularizes the critique according to the presupposed norms of the audience. (Cf. Hurri 1994, 7-8.)

### 12.3. From Combined Reviews to Puffs

The data presented in the table below covers the time period from 1963 to 1996 and the serials I have chosen mainly represent the family drama genre.<sup>3</sup>

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3 Two important family dramas are missing from the data. The noteworthy *Kotirappu* (*Home Stairs*) and *Päin perhettä* (*Against the Family*) remain outside the investigation because there is not enough — minimum 5 reviews — archival material on them to be used as basis for analysis. When all long and medium-length drama serials are taken into account, TV 2 has in total participated in the production of 25 family dramas or other medium-length drama serials that fulfil the criteria I am using. The majority of the serials are family dramas. They portray families or their points of view and assume families or, in a wider sense, ‘family interest’ as their audience. In addition, an eventual agreement between the producers, critics and the audience has been reached that they are all dealing with a family dramas (see in more detail Ruoho 1996).

I have classified the reviews into eight categories depending on how they treat the series and serials under investigation. The largest group, 128, is the group of combined reviews, where more than one television program is written about. In the combined review the series or serial is one program among a number of others, but even so they have a concentrated attention. The next largest group is the group of puffs that concentrate on the series and serials, a total of 122. They portray and advertise the dramas by making use, among other things, of the channel's own press material. There are 59 concentrated reviews, which only write about the drama in question.

Combined reviews, which only *refer* to the series or serials, are in total 37. In them reference is made to the drama under investigation, although the review itself is compiled of reviews of programs other than the dramas themselves. Referring puff (32) differs from the previously mentioned category in that it concentrates on giving free media advertising to some other program than the one it also refers to. There were 18 reviews in the data that concentrated on one other program but referred in one way or another to the researched series and serials. Other reviews, which do not fit into the above categories and which either refer to or concentrate on a program, total 14. The real subject of these reviews is normally something other than programs themselves such as, for example, program policy.

According to the data a lot of the reviews written about the TV 2 long and medium-length drama series and serials can be found in the following papers: *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Keskisuomalainen*, *Aamulehti*, *Kansan Uutiset*, *Savon Sanomat*, *Ilta-Sanomat*, *Turun Sanomat* and *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*. In addition to Jorma Heinonen and Jukka Kajava, most of the reviews (more than 10 reviews in the data) have been written by Marja Sjöberg (*Aamulehti*), Tapani Uusiniitty (*Aamulehti*, *Etelä-Saimaa*, *Ilkka*, *Itä-Savo*, *Lalli*, *Kainuun Sanomat*, *Karjalan maa* and *Pohjolan Sanomat*), A-A Tuominen (*Kansan Uutiset*), under the pseudonym 'Troika' (*Kansan Uutiset*), Aimo Siltari (*Savon Sanomat*), Kari Jalonen (*Turun Sanomat*), Leena Mäenpää (*Savon Sanomat*, *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*) and Hilikka Vuori (*Kansan Uutiset*).



**Table:** The Television Critique Written about the Series and Serials.

<b>SERIES/SERIALS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
Heikki ja Kaija (1961)	55	33	4	3	6		4		5
Kiurunkulma (1966)	30	19		5	2		2		2
Pääluottamusmies (1970)	22	9		10	1		2		
Rintamäkeläiset (1972)	35	21	3	7	3		1		
Oi kallis kaupunki (1975)	24	14		8	2				
Tankki täyteen (1978)	24	5	6		5	7	1		
Reinikainen (1982)	38	10	13	7	2	4	2		
Mummo (1987)	22	3	11	4		3			1
Rivitaloelämää (1989)	7		5			1		1	
Huomenna on paremmin (1993)	6		6						
Hyvien ihmisten kylä (1993)	12		8	1	1	1	1		
Kohtaamiset ja erot (1994)	16		10	2	3		1		
Onnea vai menestystä? (1995)	12	2	7	2			1		
Lähempänä taivasta (1996)	15	1	8	1	3	1	1		
Kyllä isä osaa (1994)	18	1	13	1	1	1	1		
Elämän suola (1996)	18	2	10	2	2	2			
Metsolat (1993)	57	8	18	6	6	12	1	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>

**An explanation of the table follows:** N = the number of reviews (stories) per serial, 1. Combined review, as part of which is a review on the program, 2. Concentrated puff review, 3. Concentrated review, 4. Referring combined review, 5. Referring puff in connection with another individual program, 6. Referring review in connection with another individual program, 7. Other referring review, 8. Other concentrating review.

In the preliminary reading of the newspaper reviews, I have made the following categories concerning the relationship of the reviews with reality: empirical, emotional, psychological, didactical, thought provoking, correcting, generic, ethical, redemptive, mythical and historical. The most common one is the empirical relationship, which refers to the concrete reality depicted in the series and its verisimilitude, genuineness or credibility of events (see Ang 1985, 36-37). Emotional reality is sought in the treatment of emotions and believability of characters. Didacticity thought provoking and corrective relationships (see Deming 1988,154) are connected with the wish to say something or influence the audience's consciousness or actions with certain desired portrayals. Ethical realism is close to redemptive realism (compare 'redemptive reading' Brunson 1989, 121). With either moral, or, for example, gender political grounds, both attempt to expect a certain way in which things or emotions are treated. With mythological realism I refer to the depiction of Finnish mythology, although the serial may have fantasy as its genre. Historical realism refers to both the expected or politically correct depiction of historical events.

This chapter deals with most of the above-mentioned expectations of reality as they have been used in connection with the series and serials in the newspaper reviews. As will be shown later, a number of different expectations of reality can be connected with the same drama.

## 12.4. An Everyday Drama

*Heikki ja Kaija* is written about in data as an everyday drama by which is meant, quite simply, a realistic depiction of everyday life. When they write about *Kiurunkulma*, critics already use the concept of *utility drama*. It is impossible to say where this concept first entered the vocabulary of television critics. I first encountered it when I was interviewing people who were involved in the production of drama series and serials. It may be possible that the concept originates in television productions from where it has been picked up by critics. The concept resembles the derogatory label *kitchen sink*, which has been used not only in connection with bleak everyday realism but also in describing the haphazard way of making a film. Utility drama has contradictory contents: it is connected with both positively experienced empirical topicality and didacticity and with negatively experienced entertainment and overtly contemporaneous feeling.

A television critic writes in 1968: “‘*Kiurunkulma*’ is an educational series, a utility drama, as the term now goes, a topical portrayal of everyday things

(*Iisalmen Sanomat* 9.7.1968)”. Another critic continues: “So far the events have taken place in the safe and sterile environment of the health clinic where two fragile nurses, under the guidance of a stern cleaning lady, give out advice both against tapeworm and for birth control. The personnel of the clinic are the necessary “good” which is connected with educational TV series (*Savon Sanomat* 23.9.1968)”. A few years later when writing about *Rintamäkeläiset*, Tapani Uusiniitty, who has also written film reviews, remarks that

The Tampere known from *Heikki ja Kaija* has been changed to the countryside in the borderlands between Häme and Satakunta, where a small farmer and his family, live in the new series on TV 2 by Reino Lahtinen. Finnish country reality [...] has been used as the backdrop for the events and situations, but at least in the first episodes, the factual elements have been blotted out in favor of entertaining and contrived personal relationships, and problem settings familiar from utility drama. (*Aamulehti* 5.10.1972.)

Uusiniitty adds to his views later:

[...] *Rintamäkeläiset* was even at the beginning of its rerun a commercial mixture of everyday life, and a folk piece. The subject matter is taken from country reality, but it is interpreted in a formal and labeling way. The people are caricatures, their speech slow, and the situations artificial. When problems are presented, statements and self-evident things suffice. There is not even an attempt to find other than facile solutions. (*Ilkka, Lalli and Karjalan maa* 27.10.1974.)

On the one hand, the slow treatment of things that seemed very ordinary irritated especially the contemporary critic who was used to film aesthetics, but on the other, the entertaining aspects were not completely condemned. Uusiniitty, who was famous for his critical writings, was thus able to write: “*Rintamäkeläiset* belongs to those play-like television programs, which in the late hours of Tuesday nights compete for spectators. A fast-made entertainment program loaded with trivia, it is cheap theater but still belongs to the vanguard of domestic productions.” (*Aamulehti* 1.12.1972) That the views seem conflicting in the first decades of television history stems from the difficulties there were in the aesthetic definitions of what constituted fictional television series.

Utility drama in the critique also refers to some sort of aesthetic disposability. ‘Utility drama’, as their makers’ premise, was obviously used at that time to highlight the production of the new form of drama, the television

series. The making of television series and serials in Finland was not really but 'industrial' production, but on the other hand it did not have the same label of creativity that is connected with individual artistic production either. Pertti Nättälä (1996), a director I have interviewed, said that series were regarded as disposable items at the time. It was not thought that the series would have much utility value later. The makers of the series thought that the serials were "children of the day", and that they were not really regarded as belonging to the category of television theater or drama (Rönty 2000, 13).

As a definition, *utility drama* strongly implicates the fact of being time-bound, which is related to the view of television as the portrayer of the present, as a 'window to reality', which works 'here and now'. In this case the wish for *empirical* realism in the drama is strong. Being time-bound also implicates the speed of production and the fact of tackling topical questions, which was typical of the time and perhaps partly inherited from the live broadcasts at the beginning. A television series was not so much thought of as drama but as a program amongst others. A fictional series could also be given clearly journalistic tasks. According to Eero Silvasti (1996), one of the ideas of the 1960s and the early 1970s was the report play, a depiction of the present. They were quickly made outside studios and they had a journalistic starting point. *Palveleva puhelin* (Hotline 1970-1971) was one of the series of this kind. It was written as eight mini-dramas based on the stories and the problems filtered through the national church hotline.

*Social Realism.* The concept of *utility drama* occurs only in connection with the above-mentioned series from the 1960s and early 1970s in the newspaper data I have examined. Yet, for example, the director-writer, Jussi Niilekselä (1996), still uses it when he speaks about the serial dramas of the 1990s. But in these cases, the author emphasizes the nature of the series and serials as less artful products rather than highlights their disposability or their commitment to the present. Apart from the negative interpretations of *utility drama*, the contemporary critics also speak about the above-mentioned programs as "humane, everyday dramas". Such interpretations bring the utility play closer to the convention of social realism.

This convention was introduced in academic television critique by Marion Jordan in her reviews of the British soap opera *Coronation Street* (1960-1990). To sum up her definition of the convention: social realism depicts human life in a way in which the personal relationships of the central characters form the center of events. Although the events mainly consist of social problems familiar to the working class or to groups close to it, they are, according to the conditions of the convention, always experienced individually

and the characters themselves solve them. Despite class ties, ‘ordinariness’ is emphasized in the convention of social realism, be it in connection to the portrayal of homes and families, or with friends. The serials take place in urban environments and provinces and their sets are generic, recognizable places — such as the pub, the street, the factory, the home, or especially, the kitchen. The time perspective is the present and the events are filmed so authentically that the audiences end up feeling that they have spent their time at the expense of the filmed characters. (Jordan 1981, 28.)

*Rintamäkeläiset* was in a class of its own in the history of Finnish social realism. Because of the strong characterization of its central roles, it differed from *Heikki ja Kaija*, which was produced by the same team. It also lacked the educational and partly improvised tone of its predecessor. More was also invested in making the characters believable. The series started in 1972, and shown a few episodes at a time, continued for seven years and recounted the life of a small farmer in an unassuming way without taking sides. However, the central characters represented different political party stances in which the unwavering Agrarian Party views of the farm owner provided an on-going tension. The neighbors were social democrats, communists and conservatives. Municipal politics were still dealt with as a minor sub-plot, among the other preoccupations of the small farmer.

In critiques there are quite a number of remarks about the aesthetics of this serial drama as compared to earlier series. What irritated the critics especially are the strong characterizations; in their minds the people are not completely believable psychologically. Accurate details, such as the bleak country life, are also buried beneath the representation, as the following excerpts from Tapani Uusiniitty and Jukka Kajava show:

The fall season also brought to viewers the new serial play by Reino Lahtinen *Rintamäkeläiset*, which depicts the life of a Finnish farmer family. However, *Rintamäkeläiset* has in its early episodes contained so much ordinary situation comedy and biased superficial humor that the accurate depiction of grim country life has been buried underneath. (*Aamulehti* 29.12.1972.)

According to the critics the show was like a confused combination of four types of play performances. There is the folk performer, Veijo Pasanen’s farm owner, the gossiping comedy hag, Ella Roine, and curiously enough, characters who seem genuine, such as Sirkka Lehto’s portrayal of the wife and Matias Ikävalko’s, Aarne. The sum of all this confusion is that we get TV drama that is intellectually muddling and tastes like theater, where some are disciplined,

and some hop over where the fence is the lowest. (*Helsingin Sanomat* 30.1.1973.)

However, all critics do not agree. Aimo Siltari is in favor of the characters, which he sees as informative, not as realistic:

The people talk with a Tampere accent, and of the two small farmers, one is a social democrat and another votes for Vennamo. The characters are unadorned, but real. Veijo Pasanen's Vennamo-voting type can also be regarded as informative; somehow generalizations are made and these do not have to be based on something or be universally applicable. But it works well. The social democrat is made into a sympathetic mediator, the Vennamo-voting guy is, by his mental make-up, a gloomy and cranky man, the family tyrant, oppressor of women. (*Savon Sanomat* 6.10.1974.)

What is interesting in this review is the mutual exclusion of realism and informativity; neutrality (the 1960s), impartiality (1970s) and offering viewers fact-based material were the cornerstones of the informational program policy. Apparently simplification and characterization were used to achieve what Siltari thought of as the feeling of authenticity, and the adequate degree of generalization, which did not necessarily achieve the universal applicability required by realism. Raija Laroma (presently Oranen), for her part, regarded the strength of the series to lie in its depiction of a way of life, this being accomplished by the use of little details, small everyday things and individual characteristics. All these are features associated with social realism. However, she also warns of excessive adherence to details at the expense of general characteristics. (*Hämeen Yhteistyö* 7.10.1972)

## 12.5. Journalistic Drama

Utility drama receives an interesting articulation when it is combined with a positive didactic aspect, which seems to be something that is expected of serial drama writers and directors as well. Of *Kiurunkulma* the reviewers note how different kinds of problems are boldly brought out, and how advice is given — not necessarily how reality as such is depicted. What was common to all TV 2 black-and-white series in the 1960s was the meticulous background work and documentary expression that was made possible by the ample use

of outside broadcasting technology<sup>4</sup> originally intended for current affairs production. It was programmatic that in the production of the serial drama the makers went outside the studios and used real people, both in acting as themselves and in use as experts in the background. Writer Liisa Vuoristo and director Eila Arjoma used the views of contemporaries and different experts in the construction of the serial world. Their insights were then worked over and became parts of the fiction. They used this method also when they were making the drama *Mustat ja punaiset vuodet* (1973).

The pseudonym, Tee Ärrä, wrote that *Kiurunkulma* represents up-to-date, sharp social criticism. The episode “Horse-trading” depicted orthodox Laestadian belief, which forbade abortion for a mother of twelve children. The pseudonym comments:

We have to get even the stupidest to wake up from their state of indifference, which is so typical of our forest nation. We do not much care to bother our heads, not to mention our hearts, with other people’s difficulties. And it is even harder to quit complaining and start real and effective action. When one thinks about those many acutely interesting subjects that the alert and aware writer could find in the history of our nation, one has to marvel at the banal serial drama that is continuously being shown. (*Päivän Sanomat* 4.9.1967.)

But on the other hand: “If utility drama means that the lesson has to be given more clearly than just pointing your finger, then *Kiurunkulma* is such at its purest; its lesson comes like a fist in the face...” (*Iisalmen Sanomat* 9.7.1968). Or like the pseudonym, Puntari, says:

*Kiurunkulma*, as opposed to *Peyton Place*, has been a completely domestic and relatively little romantic serial drama, which is probably made in the spirit of enlightenment rather than in the spirit of entertainment. Monday’s episode (“Fined”, IR) with its native Maigret variations was an education in the style of beautiful and idealistic books for young people. *Kiurunkulma* has had some very good episodes, and more than *Peyton Place*, it should counter-balance *Tammelat*<sup>5</sup>: teachings in the style of juvenile literature and offering wholesome role models to an already guilt-ridden nation should be limited to only one domestic serial drama. (*Vaasa* 7.5.1969.)

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4 For example director Jarmo Nieminen used outside broadcasting technology when he filmed the serial drama *Hilma* (1967-1968).

5 *Me Tammelat* (The Tammelas) was MTV’s popular family series of the 1960s.

The style of *Kiurunkulma* is close to neorealism (compare Steinbock 1985, 92), which brings up current problems, avoids excessive optimism. Neorealism is typical especially of some Finnish films made in the early 1970s. In the core of neorealism there are social problems, which are often filmed in authentic locations with the use of amateur actors. Markku Rönty finds elements of this style also in *Rintamäkeläiset* that, according to him, and unlike *Heikki ja Kaija*, deals with Finnish society with the eyes of the underdog. This interpretation is exaggerated, however, because ‘the realism’ of *Rintamäkeläiset* lies in the tradition of boulevard comedy. Although information, for example on the benefits of the welfare state has been important in other Finnish serial dramas, they are, above all, representatives of social drama.

Instead, the way things are treated in *Kiurunkulma* resembles that of journalism, and of all the series dealt with in this work, it seems the best representative of time-bound ‘utility drama’. With its affirmation of new things and attitudes, *Kiurunkulma* is totally different from the other series discussed here. In its time, it fulfilled the aim given to program production at YLE, to offer a worldview that was based on “true information and facts”. The guidelines presupposed that YLE has “the right to resist social problems by the means of commentaries, discussions and talks without taking into account commercial, political party affiliations and other less relevant ends” (Guidelines of program production 1.11.1967, 1 §; Zilliacus and Storbom 1968).

The series received praise from the then inspectors of the channel<sup>6</sup> who in their report, *The Worlds of Serial Drama* (Harms, Rand & Savolainen 1970, 155) noted that as the only series dealing with ‘contemporary circumstance’ it has chosen its own path. According to the report, the series takes its material from the reality of Finnish society, the life of the residents being set in the larger social framework. It also attempts to show where problems could be solved at the level of the society. Journalistic reviews also commented on the program policy, as evidenced in the following examples. The examples also show that the channel’s programs had begun to be shown on the so-called national network. It was a time when TV 2’s coverage area was geographically limited and the channel has to fight for its position as a broadcasting channel:

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6 The group of program inspectors which was established at the time of the so called Reporadio found the time to publish one report for public discussion which dealt with the serial drama programs of the Broadcasting Company and the Commercial TV in the early part of 1969.



As a counter-balance to the mainly city-oriented imported programs and the domestic *Tammelat*, *Tarinatalo* and *Heikki-Kaija* its makers have gone into the problems of remote areas, often gone into and drawn the audience's attention, sometimes dramatically, sometimes documentarily, to problems that need to be solved (*Suomenmaa* 29.10.1968.)

Bringing TV 2 into the national network is the most informed of the recent program policy decisions, as long as TV 2 is able to produce serial entertainment, or should one say series contemplation, in the league of *Kiurunkulma*. (...) Once again one has to wonder about that symptomatic congestion that governs our TV thinking. A censorship mood is taken out when it comes to progressive and forward looking programs, but nobody demands that, for example, *Tammelat* should quit now this demand should be made again. Now that *Kiurunkulma* shows what a TV serial can be in its importance. (*Savon Sanomat* 10.1.1969.)

Enlightenment without taking political sides seems to have earned praise for a series, which was produced and broadcast at the time of the so-called Reporadio. Although some factual programs were aggravating and TV 1 Television Theater tried the patience of decision-makers by going against bourgeois hegemony (Salokangas 1996, 217-245), this was not the case with fictional television series and serials. The critics tried to harness the 22-episode *Hilma* (1967-1968) as a part of the informational program policy. A television critic writes that the series "could very efficiently be used to illustrate, for example, the problems of pensioners" (*Turun Sanomat* 2.6.1968).

It is easy to understand how the things presented in *Kiurunkulma* did not aggravate politicians to the same extent as factual programs and some cabaret-style entertainment programs. The politics represented in the series did not appear so much as party politics or as criticism of parliamentary politics, but as conservative attitudes, which the series really tried to shake. In spite of, or really because of, its congenial reception, *Kiurunkulma* will remain in Finnish television history as a paradigmatic example of the original way TV 2 theater productions interpreted the informational program policy. Unlike any other series before or after, each episode contained an individual message, which was meant to make the audience think about what they were watching. In the criticism, the realism represented by the series is not exhausted on the social problems that it deals with, but in the attempt to solve those problems.

## 12.6. In the Middle of Politics

Both *Pääluottamusmies* and *Oi kallis kaupunki* clearly took politics as a part of the lives of the people in the series. *Pääluottamusmies*, which started in 1970, reviewed things from the point of view of the labor union movement. The series, which was located in the Enso Gutzeit paper mill milieu, was talked about in the critiques not only as a representative of social realism but also as an informative series. The episodes dealt with the work of the union steward, the internal problems of the labor union, industrial democracy, collective agreements, wage policy and occupational safety. As the TV 2 press release on the replay of the first five episodes shows, the makers of the series meant that “Above all, a better society calls for internally changing and more enlightened people and undoubtedly every union steward — whatever he may be seen as and in whatever position — will become convinced of this in his own position of trust” (TV 2 1971).

The representation of party politics, and especially that of the communists, was regarded as biased and suspect in the critique published in the leftist newspapers (*Kansan Uutiset* 28.10.1970 and *Kansan Tahto* 14.8.1971)<sup>7</sup>. According to the reviews, the writer has “placed in his manuscript elements which unequivocally do not lead to the strengthening of the workers’ cooperation in the workplaces” (*Kansan Uutiset* 2.11.1971). At the same time, the depiction of the workplace milieu and the topicality of the subjects handled were praised without restraint. Apart from the praise, the series was also criticized for being “too” entertaining. Taisto-Bertil Orsmaa wrote:

It has been exceptional to see in TV, which is colored by bourgeois values a series in which things in a large industrial plant are seen from the point of view of workers. The problems the union steward faces have been convincingly truth-like. All this has clearly been a plus. Apparently the makers of *Pääluottamusmies* have wanted to find an entertaining “package”, and therefore there are irrelevant sub-plots tied up in the story. Such was the love story between the owner’s son and the daughter of the communist worker, which in the last episode was solved forever after in a happy marriage. The ending was a clumsy compromise between two opposing social classes. In spite of these sub-plots *Pääluottamusmies* has been an important step on the road to informative and interesting serial drama. (*Savon Sanomat* 30.7.1971.)

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<sup>7</sup> The serial was re-run quickly in 1971-1972 and it is because of this that the reviews published at the time of the re-run are also part of the data.

In the TV critiques the makers are praised, both the journalist from Kotka, Jorma Savikko, and his familiarity with the world the series depicts and the director Rauni Mollberg and his “profound setting for the subject, capable handling of the milieu and expert way of treating the actors and especially, the amateurs” (*Turun Sanomat* 26.10.1970). According to Jorma Savikko himself (1996), in background work for some of the episodes, he really interviewed people whose lives and environment the series depicted. This was made easier by the routine adopted in a journalist’s work, and also in local knowledge of the labor union. In some of the critiques there are references to Savikko’s and Mollberg’s earlier, successful co-operation in the filming of Toivo Pekkanen’s novels. Ahti Sala describes the authenticity of the milieu and the topicality of the subject matter in *Päätuottamusmies* in the following way:

It opens the gates for the viewer to a less pleasant environment: a noisy world paced by extremely fast work. In this anthill, the union steward is the key person, the representative of the workers, through whom words are exchanged and negotiations made with the employer. The play is set in an important time period, right now is the time for collective bargaining. Now resolutions are made of things, which are of vital importance to the workers. Now in all production plants and factories union stewards and workers face important problems. (*Hämeen Yhteistyö* 27.10.1970.)

In the journalistic writings of *Päätuottamusmies*, the main importance is given to the views on the authenticity of the series. The things dealt with in the series are hardly criticized, although the way they are treated may give cause for differing views. According to the critique, this is where realism in the series can be found: in the depiction of actual milieu and of real things, in showing things ‘as they are’.

New broadcasting guidelines came into force in the same year as *Rintamäkeläiset* started, in 1972. One of the central concepts in the broadcasting policy declaration was ‘objectivity’, which replaced ‘impartiality’ in the 1967 guidelines. YLE was supposed to, “in as many-sided a way as possible, bring out in its programs ‘different opinions, values, ideologies and other social phenomena’ in proportion to how they actually occur”. However, objectivity was understood in a wider sense in the guidelines, so that, for example, mere achievement of a balanced political viewpoint was not enough to fulfill the license guidelines. (YLE, Broadcasting Policy Guidelines 1972, 2).

The information warfare, which in the early 1970s concentrated on broadcasting policy<sup>8</sup>, showed that the struggle for political hegemony had become an increasingly important part of the debate surrounding YLE. According to one interpretation, cultural radicalism, which paved the way for the early years and the founding principles of the so called Reporadio, tapered off in the late 1960s as left radicalism, and in television culture the turn of the 1970s meant a turn towards right-wing politics (see Steinbock 1985, 91). However, television criticism written about either *Pääluottamusmies* or *Rintamäkeläiset* shows little serious indication of a battle over hegemony. From the point of view of realism, their depiction of politics is, above all, expected to be *redemptive*; all political movements have their place in society. The changing social situation gradually starts to be interwoven within the debate on television serials, such as in reviews written on *Oi kallis kaupunki* show.

*A Finnish Peyton Place.* The serial, which openly depicts municipal politics, tells in its nine filmed episodes about the municipal politics of a medium-sized city, views the town of Lahti, about the leaders and their supporters. In a press release available from 1975, the intention was to make a portrayal of people in the 1970s and of their relationship with those who held power. The press release says that originally the series was meant to have dealt with this issue from the vantage point of a party secretary. However, they gave up on this idea and chose a citizen, and more specifically the inhabitant of a municipality, as the spokesperson of this world. The series is said to be “a TV film that tells the story of a young conservative businessman and pop singer, and his development from a jet setter to an aware citizen of society”. (TV 2 1975)

TV criticism pointed out the blurring boundaries of cinematic TV serials and serial drama (*Etelä-Saimaa* and *Kainuun Sanomat* 20.2.1975 and *Itä-Savo* 1.3.1975). *Pääluottamusmies* already resembled a film more than a TV series if the criteria were the pictorial aesthetics of *Heikki ja Kaija* and *Rintamäkeläiset*. In addition, the main character’s relationships with women, the internal conflicts of the family, the political horse-trading and the overall speculation in municipal politics gave *Oi kallis kaupunki* with continual plots its own formal characteristics which are different from the earlier TV 2 serial drama productions.

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8 See for example the handout “Information Warfare in Finland 1970-1971” — a collection of newspaper articles dealing with mass media policy. University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Media. Handouts 5/71.

*Oi kallis kaupunki* is compared in critique with the television melodrama *Peyton Place*, bought by MTV. (*Liitto* 5.4, *Helsingin Sanomat* 8.5. and 5.6., and *Uusi Suomi* 7.6.1975). Newspapers said that “unfortunately life is quite a peyton place around the world: climbing towards the top with a glint of money in the eye and the song of the cash apparatus in the ear” *Turun Päivälehti* 14.6.1975. This sentence illustrates well the ‘reality talk’ characteristic of television critics to which I will return later.

What is remarkable in the critiques of the serial are the remarks related to the continuous plotting and huge cast, which take attention away from the discussion of how realistic the serial is. On the one hand, the serial, which is broadcast every other week, is difficult to follow (*Ilta-Sanomat* 26.2.1975). Hilikka Vuori (Democratic League of Finland), who was a member of YLE program council at the time of the *Peyton Place* debate, wishes that television never had ‘discovered’ the serial film idea. At the same time Vuori would have preferred that, with a limited number of episodes, the serial *Oi kallis kaupunki* should have been constructed upon a clear and fixed plan (*Kansan Uutiset* 4.3.1975).

Critics accuse television of flirting with the masses, and even its psychological realism was now being more clearly challenged than before. For example Eeva-Liisa Väänänen reflects how “the idiot” represented by the protagonist can in fact develop into an aware and independent citizen:

It just happens that the whole premise is very artificial although I guess it could happen that even a man with such a very good background can think. We have seen the episodes where the ground is prepared for the character and background of Aatos Eerola’s (Kim Floor). We have even gone through his women, and received from Raija Koivula (Liisa Paatso) a glimpse of his obviously mandatory sex life (...). It is actually rather a pity that the series so obviously flirts with the masses and simplifies things. It scares me to think how, within this framework, we are soon delivered political horse-trading and “losing touch with healthy thinking” when, until now, we have made do with *Peyton Place*-like melodrama. (*Liitto* 5.4.1975.)

Affairs with women have brought into the serial an emotional dimension that, at that time, was exceptional in series describing politics. The serial is seen as describing a certain type of a person, an ordinary person, who has become dedicated to politics (*Savon Sanomat* 23.3.1975). However, some critique pays attention to the realistic depiction, the contemplative style, the treatment of real and impressive problems, and the fairness in the portrayal of municipal politics:

Jorma Savikko seems to denude all political parties of their masks of complacency and piety. The declarations announced and the songs sung in the heat of council elections are high-faluting, but they do not keep what they promise. Particularly in the fourth episode I thought I discerned a note of general anti-political and anti-politician attitude. I hope this note was temporary because all-over negative attitudes can hardly be used to heighten the social awareness and knowledge of the television viewing audience. (*Helsingin Sanomat* 27.3.1975.)

*Oi kallis kaupunki* did not attempt a very deeply cutting revelation. But maybe, because of this, its degree of generalization is higher. Similar observations can be made in the municipal politics of all smaller cities. The educational task was more important than the critical. *Oi kallis kaupunki* portrayed the making of politics as interpersonal action carried out by people which, in principle, is no dirtier than any other work but in which there is a yawning abyss between idealism and realizable practice. (*Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* 7.6.1975.)

However, vacillation, which is typical of municipal politics, should not be reflected as such in the development of a storyline, which, when used as criticism, refers to generic realism which expects that the genre handles reality in a particular way. Aimo Siltari writes: "Savikko knows what he is doing, but such a crawling way of developing the plot blunts the edge and makes TV evenings tedious. Besides, as the episodic serial continues, there are some obvious plunges into pretentiousness." (*Savon Sanomat* 10.4.1975.)

For his part, Jukka Kajava is irritated by the fragmentarization typical of continual serials. The drama reminds him of *Coronation Street* in which there are a lot of people and a lot of detail: "The scenes are extremely short and continuity debatable with the narration jumping from one scene to the next" (*Helsingin Sanomat* 8.5.1975). Finally he accuses the script, the casting and direction, "which is satisfied with only elementary acting pursuits", for the failure of an inspiring program idea: "And this is how we end up with a domestic Peyton Place whose characters pose in pretty interiors, eternalized by the controlled use of the camera. (Juhani Heikkonen's camerawork is, by the way, the best working component of *Oi Kallis kaupunki*)" (*Helsingin Sanomat* 5.6.1975.)

Different from *Pääluottamusmies*, which dealt with trade union politics, the serial provokes increased criticism from the left. The treatment of political parties and working class families "with all its fairness" does not convince all reviewers in left-wing newspapers. Reviews of *Oi kallis kaupunki*, published especially in the newspapers of the minority branch of the Finnish People's

Democratic League and the Finnish Communist Party are clearly different from others. Hilkka Vuori, who is a columnist in *Kansan Uutiset* thinks that the serial is burdened with “gross prejudice of working class families” (*Kansan Uutiset* 4.3.1975).

*Hämeen Yhteistyö*, in turn, accuses the serial of “social democratic propaganda” which in his opinion undermines the credibility of the characters and plot. He thinks the workers seem very stupid and the communists are depicted as suppressors of leftist co-operation. The writer, L. Varras also finds it funny that “the film” talks about leftist co-operation although it contains, in his opinion, “the strongest anticommunist propaganda in many years, notwithstanding perhaps the election campaign of the Metalworkers’ Union”. The writer’s open Taistoist<sup>9</sup> sympathies become evident when he says:

When two sinister looking men huddle together in the corner of the meeting room you can be sure that they are Taistoists plotting away all dreams of leftist co-operation; in the next scene they are bound to vote against the common endeavor.” (*Hämeen Yhteistyö* 15.7.1976.)<sup>10</sup>

The depiction of reality is thus accused of political favoritism especially in the mid-1970s. It is interesting that the same serial can evoke comparisons with both American television melodrama and social democratic propaganda. The narration of serial drama was temporarily moved to the domain of so called official politics (political parties, the trade union movement and the parliament). Although *Rintamäkeläiset* also portrays political figures and their seemingly inevitable stereotyping, the events still take place in the domain of homes and the semi-public (restaurants, schools). Narratively things change when the camera is focused on the clubs, chambers and secret negotiations of politics. Parliamentarianism was put to show its darker side in fiction.

## 12.7. Flexibility of Convention

After the medium-length situation comedies of the early 1980s there began to be a demand for long serials towards the end of the 1980s. The production culture in TV 2 also started to change in connection with the establishment in 1987 of the Drama Group that is affiliated with entertainment programs. This

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9 The minority movement within the Finnish Communists Party was called “Taistoist” according to its leader, Taisto Sinisalo. The movement was relative powerful among university and college students in the beginning of the 1970s.

10 The serial was re-run in summer 1976.

boom coincided with *Metsolat*, which was paid for by extra funding, and *Kohtaamiset ja erot*, which was shot in rapid succession on location.

Despite, and because of, various production problems, *Kohtaamiset ja erot* was an attractive serial idea to its makers and it was worked upon longer than usual. A realism of its own kind was sought in the production of this serial by getting to know the locations, and by investing especially in the costumes. The press release compares the serial with its literary role models, Aapeli, Maiju Lassila and Maria Jotuni in the following way: “The setting — an insular village which gets a healthy draft of fresh air — is one of the most popular in literature, and in a similar vein, central have been the settings of the “wild goose chase”, “wasted work”, “who teaches whom?” and “somewhere over the rainbow” kind. Flap door Kärntämä in Karelia represents the present-day edge of Europe, with all due respect to individuals and their backgrounds.” (TV 2 1994)

*Kohtaamiset ja erot* is loosely based on Sirkka Laine’s (1989) collection of short stories by the same name. In the serial the village is centered on the local bar that is at the same time the grocery store, the betting shop, the post office and the service station for problems of the heart (see *Savon Sanomat* 21.9.1994). The people of Kärntämä village have been portrayed in all their strangeness, with their ragtag notions and ideas. The language overflows with brogue and even mysterious things happen in the serial. However, according to Veijo Hietala, as a depiction of the countryside, the serial does not represent a similar “purity and innocence, time before the fall” as in *Metsolat* (*Turun Sanomat* 22.11.1995). It looks as if Hietala would like to say that one should not make a comedy of country people, that they should not be too typified. The criticism resembles the demand to describe reality while bearing in mind certain ethical principles.

The narration, which is rich with symbolism, does not in the first episode appeal to Leena Mäenpää:

The first episode is gone for a good part before the first word is uttered. Places are filmed — for example, the felt boot factory. At the same time a melancholy tune is being played. A red cottage, the grocery store, and a view of the rapids: they are apparently central places in the serial. The wild boar is also an important character. Maybe it even has symbolic value. A man and a woman drive in a car. One looks at the other, then the other looks back and green fields surround them. Nondescript movie language. (*Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* 21.9.1994.)

The critiques written of the serial are, maybe because of the advance publicity, mainly anticipatory and positive. References especially made to the American



1990s series *Northern Exposure* (CBS) are noteworthy in the critique, which is mainly focused on the first episode in my sample. The author Sirkka Laine says in the channel press release that the genre is somewhere between melodrama and comedy: “I think that my sense of drama is a mixture of human nature at its most naked, passionate emotions and close family ties and quarrels on which humor descends.” (TV 2 1994) Both the time and the physical environment, “the borderland” was an essential element in the serial according to its author. In the end it gave her a mental picture of timelessness, of the borderline between the old and the new, and of a mixing of cultures.

In the criticism, *Kohtaamiset ja erot* is compared with earlier and ongoing family series and thereby the generic realism of the serial is challenged. In other words, the reviewers have an idea of what the realism represented by the *perhesarja* genre should be like (about the genre, Chapter 8).

The serial is compared with *Metsolat* but the reviewers are quick to point out that “It is more fairytale-like, with more humor and even tragedy. It is not pure everyday realism. A dog may get wings, a dressmaker’s dummy can come alive, and people sometimes behave totally against expectations.” (*Kansan Uutiset* 21.9.1994) The reviewers note the geography of the serial and the meaning of locality: Kärrtämä village is situated between North and South Karelia. One reviewer sees a hint of “the mystical grace of Finnish folk tales and lots of quiet humor hidden beneath the melancholy exterior” and praises the serial because it is “extremely carefully and imaginatively staged (Mari Skogberg)”, and that “Ilkka Järvinen’s camerawork brings nature so close that you can almost smell the wind, redolent with thousands of scents” (*Ilta-Sanomat* 21.9.1994) Jukka Kajava first shuns the mixture of styles but then says that he has become used to it:

You can be sure that *Kohtaamiset ja erot* is different. It may look a little bit like any old serial with its strange characters but it is not that, it has its own unique style, which is a combination of a number of styles. However, sometimes you feel like saying: not like this, my good people, no — so extremely different and of various kinds, all dumped into the same package. After having seen two episodes I have to admit that my eye and my mind have become used to its kaleidoscope because there truly are human beings inside all the characters. (*Helsingin Sanomat* 21.9.1994.)

In the end he calls it an ambitious “folktale” which has been edited to be too fragmentary and which has become a “freak show” of too many different kinds of acting styles. He ends by noting rather bleakly: “The makers have

watched too many episodes of *Northern Exposure* without understanding anything of its charm.” (*Helsingin Sanomat* 22.10.1994.)

Jorma Heinonen, who wrote a number of critiques, sees the serial as “meandering between comedy and tragedy”. According to him the drama’s carrying force has been humaneness, a combination of different attitudes towards life, Finnishness, tension and “draftiness”. To Heinonen, *Kohtaamiset ja erot* is “soulfulness and intensity activated by contradictions” which he seldom remembers to have seen in television (*Keskisuomalainen* 21.9.1994) He is also not disappointed as the serial goes on:

Even if the serial written by Sirkka Laine and directed by Kristiina Repo seemed to be too much for some people at the beginning — “a strange business” I have heard some people say — the whole thing has been kept well under control. And this means that everyday life has been depicted as a comedy and as a tragedy.” (*Keskisuomalainen* 25.1.1995.)

The TV critic Aila-Liisa Laurila begins her article on the serial from Euro-Finland and goes on to discuss the themes of serial drama in more general terms. Unlike Veijo Hietala, who started with a similar kind of disposition, she is amazed by the worldview, “rural re-population”, depicted in the serials including *Metsolat* and its contemporary, the TV 1 drama *Kovaa maata* (Hard Soil), which she sees as at odds with the country’s new international position. Laurila is astonished by what the authors and viewers can find so attractive about men in old-fashioned trousers who walk the village road and go on and on about how nothing comes of nothing. She also wonders what the viewers can find attractive about hay barns, wooden cottages and the village grocery store, where the action takes place. Laurila writes:

There would now be a demand for a domestic TV serial that lives in the same world as the majority of the population. It could have as its starting point everyday life in the countryside, not just idleness or a misty dream, and life in the city, not only as bankruptcy money, and human relationships. (*Aamulehti* 3.12.1994.)

The writer thinks that neither the portrayal of the countryside nor city life mirrored in the serials are realistic. This portrayal does not fit into her view of how Euro-Finland should be portrayed, and she goes on to say ironically: “Finland is such a Paradise that it is really a pity that we must become members of the EU, even if it doesn’t mean any significant change to the pace of life”

(*Aamulehti* 3.12.1994). In her critique Laurila hardly appreciates the mythical Finnishness of the serial.

The critique written of *Kohtaamiset ja erot* largely conforms to the spirit of the press release. Special attention is paid to the tragi-comical point of view and expression in the serial. Finnish television morale has been seen as demanding everyday realism of fictional serials where life is shown as exactly as hard as it is in 'reality' (for example Alasuutari 1991, 57). In this sense, *Kohtaamiset ja erot* does not seem to have disappointed the critics. The serial is "good-natured", although with its human relationships angle it resembles American soap opera (*Savon Sanomat* 21.9.1994). Being good-natured refers to expectations of not only ethical but also of emotional realism. Rising from the dead and other mysticism of nature are not sidestepped in the critique. Apparently, the tradition of social realism that is articulated in the television critique is in this sense both selective and flexible.

In summary, critiques published in newspapers show that they did no longer expect similar educational, finger-pointing stand from family series than for instance in the 1970s. Moreover, sticking with the truthful and hence empirically credible narrative that was seen characteristic to realism had to give way to other things. Television critics expected fantasy and emotionally credible human portrayals from family series. Serial quality was principally taken for granted. Only few criticized serial quality from artistic points of view. Yet, writers did not see serial drama as providing equivalent experience to the audience than for instance classic drama. There is a will to grant popular culture its own value. Along with a younger writer generation grew genre-awareness. Family series convention does not arouse similar passion to get a grip of its world than for instance Finnish unconventional serial drama that portrays the singles lifestyle. A writer can now note in an understanding tone of voice that the worldview of family series is conventional expressly for the nature of the *genre*. Hence, genre-awareness has had an effect that both increases the understanding of television culture and dilutes criticism.

Nowadays, series are not called upon to take a stand for society's underdogs in the same extent than before. In this sense, expectations for social realism to describe in detail the prevailing social conditions have nearly withdrawn from television critiques. One of the central notions of informational program policy, that is, that YLE is a vital, active and intentionally discussion-provoking element in the society, is seldom brought up when TV 2's family series are discussed. Realism discourse has gradually shifted from the demand for empirical reality portrayals of the 1980s more and more clearly towards demands for emotionally kindling stories. In this sense, a central dimension

connected to utility drama, seizing topical questions, is only seldom brought up when family series are discussed. Rapid production was at its time another dimension of the utility drama discourse. If the concept 'utility drama' was used in television series reviews, the end result would most probably be criticism of 'cheap production'. At the same time, the introduction of industrial television serial formats in the production of series in Finnish language has been amazingly little criticized in comparison to the cultural critique that the long serial form of *Peyton Place* aroused. The attitudes towards the third discursive dimension of utility drama, that is, description of everyday life, are contradictory: 'Everyday realism' is nearly a curse word, a metaphor for tedious portrayal of people and milieus.

## **Part Five: Authors and Their Work**



### 13. COLLECTIVE OR LYRIC TELEVISION?

This chapter directs its attention to the interviews of TV 2 producers, writers and directors in order to illustrate the subjective consequences of the changing production culture. At the time of the interviews in 1996 there was a transition process going on in the TV 2 production culture. In this transition process a new producer-based culture was emerging alongside the traditional director-centric culture. Some of the program makers were therefore confused while the rest maintained a clear stand either for or against the new trend. Even though the change did not lead to what at the time was still only intention, this anticipated change sensitized the interviewees<sup>1</sup>. The transition process led some writers unfamiliar with the producer driven culture into awkward situations, which also were discussed in public.

Most of the interviewed directors come from inside the company and the rest are more or less experienced freelancers. Most of the writers come from the outside and they are appointed to named projects. In the category of writers the dramatist working for YLE are also included, and, at the time of the interviews, one story editor hired for a specific project<sup>2</sup>. In addition, interviews with the company's long-term production assistants have been used as background material. Each interview is individual and largely structured around the profession in question. As a researcher, I have targeted the discussions above all at the production of series and serials in whose production the interviewees have been involved. From this direction, I distinguish three basic polarities in discussing the writer's and directors' role in different production cultures: the *mass* vs. the *literary public*, *craft* vs. *art*, and the *director-based* vs. the *producer-based* project.

Interviews of program writers and directors are usually considered to be a good method in analyzing a production. However, there are certain problems that one should bear in mind. It is difficult for the authors themselves to

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- 1 All interviews were confidential. Since my research covers nearly all mid-length and long television drama series of the channel, it is impossible to totally maintain certain persons' anonymity. However, I did not see any particular reason to protect the anonymity of the chiefs who create the general policy of the channel. Yet, as far as they are concerned, the study avoided using only the interviews as the source of information.
  - 2 One can read more on the different job titles related to script writing in Merja Turunen's chapter TV-käsikirjoituksen mahdollisuudet (The possibilities of TV script writing) in *Mediavirtuosi* winter 95/96.

analyze works that have become “their second nature” (Newcomb & Alley 1983, xiv-xv). There is also the problem of the reliability of informants; program makers give their own explanations for the events and their own roles in the production process. Also, a researcher may seek reinforcement for his/her own preliminary conceptions through interviews. Moreover, an outsider that can be recognized as a researcher can find it hard to gain the trust of the production team, which limits the reliability area of the research results. Furthermore, an interviewee may have their ‘canned’, familiar responses to the questions asked. (Newcomb 1991, 100-102.) Before turning to the interviews themselves it is, however, necessary to say something about the notion of “producer’s television” and especially about creative writing and directing in a TV-context.

### 13.1. Choric Television

Producer’s television resembles the Greek *chorus* as it expresses the ideas and emotions not of the individual but of the group. In this way television concentrates on the widely shared, remembered and the conventional socially tested notions of heroism, epic event and collective memory. Television, dependent on recognizable “types” rather than hard to define individuality, transmits corresponding general experiences within which to couch new problems and issues. (Newcomb & Alley 1983, 31.)

When one talks about popular entertainment it has been especially hard to talk about creativity because its very popularity has been thought to signify *lack of* creativity. However, later on many works can be cited as masterpieces. I agree with Newcomb and Alley that our understanding of creativity is tied in with the sociology of taste, the definitions of art and to ephemeral and sometimes even arbitrary distinctions. Television serials ill suit Western ideas of art both as an act and a product if artistic value is guaranteed by its authors’ creative loneliness, individual freedom of expression and original point of view. The making of television serials is compared with skills, craft and industry rather than with art. (Newcomb & Alley 1983, 34-35)

The dichotomy of high art versus mass entertainment (see also Tulloch and Alvarado 1983, 173-180) is alive and well in our understanding of television series and serials even though in television productions one producer, writer or director may have artistically a more privileged position than another. Independent of the characteristics of the product it can be a permanent or temporary freedom to make things in a different way than usual, for example by resisting the convention of social realism. So for example in the European



television tradition one can from time to time talk about *lyric television* in connection to individual writers and directors (Newcomb & Alley, 1983, 42) and about authorship that is based on a highly individual perception and realization. On this principle “lyric” television is represented in the TV 2 theater productions by the works of writers who have a literary background and directors who have strong individual convictions — *Rauta-aika* in the early 1980’s and later for example by *Kiimaiset poliisit* (Police Officers in Heat, 1993), and apart from these a number of other short series written for television.

The esteem for serial drama has always been ambiguous. However, it seems, that an evaluating dichotomy between the TV series and serials was created early. For example in the 1973 contract<sup>3</sup> between the YLE and the Union of Finnish Writers, a drama series is defined in the following way: A drama series is a program consisting of more than one show whose episodes are not tied together as one entity with a continuous plot. Drama series are, at the same time, divided into the so-called family series and the so-called factual series — this division cannot be found in later contracts. “Family series” tell about the life in a family or neighborhood in a limited area; the problems are mainly on the personal level. “Factual series” are generally connected with a historical or social event or background and each episode forms an entity of the one-off play kind. Drama series are different from “serial drama” which is a program consisting of a number of shows and whose episodes are tied together with a fixed plot and whose planned length can be defined in advance. In this old contract the royalties are the most expensive in the last mentioned category and the lowest in the so-called family dramas.

In the contract “serial drama”, as it is described, refers to mini-series rather than continual serials or the seasonal serials of the present. There are no series or serials in my data that would have been archived as “serial drama” at their time and the concept does not occur like this in later contracts. It is revealing that family series that tell of “a family or neighborhood in a limited area” have been the least valued drama genre. Taking into account the time of the contract it is clear that it is used to refer to such series as *Heikki ja Kaija* and *Rintamäkeläiset*. The term was used to refer to the fact that the series were tied in with their time and in this sense disposable. The concept includes the connotation that the production has been economical; they were shot quickly

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3 The contract is dated in Helsinki on 12 June 1972 and it is undersigned by Eino S. Repo and Matti Anderzen (from YLE) and Anu Kaipainen and Liisa Vuoristo (from the Union of Finnish Writers). The contract has been filed in YLE’s collection in the central archives of Finnish businesses in Mikkeli.

with multiple cameras and mainly in studios. However, nobody questioned, for example, Reino Lahtinen's abilities as an author or Jorma Savikko's skills as an author and journalist only because they wrote serial drama. On the contrary, at least according to the journalistic TV criticism, writing for television demonstrated the author's diversity at that time.

The question of authorship is always finally returned to the ongoing debate in the cultural field in which different artistic positions and attitudes battle with one another (Bourdieu 1988, 55-58). But it is as important to recognize this, as it is to see that authorship is something other than politics and social power relationships. It is writing manuscripts, dramatizing, directing, filming and editing. It is human, real and often experienced as quite ordinary action. Therefore it is important to analyze those obstacles and opportunities that the authors themselves experience in their work. In the end such an analysis helps to estimate the factors connected with the quality of the action and the production structure. Because, even if we are shunned by the director cult and would like to take away the value of the production team by appealing to the limits of the format we cannot deny their existence or their experiences of their role in the production process.<sup>4</sup>

We can try building a picture of how producers, writers and directors working in television production at different times think about their own work and what subjective significance working as a part of the apparatus has had for them. The key research material consists of the program policy documents and annual reports of YLE (YLE) and of interviews with TV 2's directors of theater and drama programs, and with producers, writers and directors<sup>5</sup>:

What enduring ideologies, conflicts and ruptures can be found in the interview data as compared to the issues and views arising from the literary sources at my disposal? When looking for answers to this question one should pay close attention to the aesthetic and cultural policy connections and social tendencies that are evident in the *interview speech*. In this sense the interviews have been read by looking for discourses that complement or exclude one another, for contradictions, and for emerging problems. Discourse has been

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4 Of the theoretical discussions surrounding authorship see Lapsley & Westlake 1988, 105-128 and Gaughie's anthology 1981. An interesting insight also into television is offered by the discussions surrounding the author's film and finally "the director cult" related to the reconstruction of Finnish film culture which started in the 1950s (Pantti 1998, 131-142)

5 I chose 32 interviews for a more detailed analysis. The interview framework was written in the project, *Women, Men and Television Evenings Nights* (Naiset, miehet ja televisioillat) in which I had been a project researcher (Nikunen, Ruoho & Valaskivi 1996).

understood as meta-speech, as philosophical premises, assumptions and ideological anchors of the speech, which can be, interpreted either from what has been said or what has been left unsaid.<sup>6</sup>

Although the interviews were made in 1996 and since then, for example, the new head of Drama, Juha Rosma has transferred the position of long serials in the production philosophy, the picture of the authors' thoughts and views given by the interviews can be regarded valid. They describe the situation of the mid-1990s especially well.

### 13.2. The Mass vs. the Literary Public

In the interviews on serial drama and its reception, two discourses describing the audiences are formed: the mass audience and the special audience. Producing for "the masses" or for special groups that foster artistry does not seem to have been a significant problem in television in the early 1960s. Serial drama was at first produced clearly apart from other theatrical programs (the live recordings of plays in theater). The characteristic of entertainment in the series and serials was recognized. By the beginning of the 1970s the situation had already changed and taking on the production of *Rintamäkeläiset* did not happen without problems. The Theatre Department was founded in the mid-1960s. In the end the production of *Rintamäkeläiset* was started although it was funded variously from the budgets of Entertainment Programs, the Theater Department as well as the director's own budget.

The convention of entertaining serial drama had editorially been built on the basis created by *Heikki ja Kaija*. The competing program unit, commercial MTV, also produced its family dramas apart from other theater productions and in connection to family programs. The special feature of TV 2 was, however, its strong regional outlook and the pictorial commitment to social realism. The creator of the series Pertti Nätilä had become familiar with *Coronation Street* and he had been thinking of what kind of serial drama would fit in with local TV that *Tamvisio* in effect was. The Theater Department

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6 It is undoubtedly problematic from the methodological point of view that some of the interviewees talk about the past and some about the present. The data covers serials from *Heikki ja Kaija*, which started in 1961, to *Elämän suola* that ended in 1998. It is easy to think that time has gilded the interviewees' memories, at least when it comes to the more successful serials. But similar "blindness" can also occur when one talks about the present. I try to keep in mind at all times the different times of narration in my analysis and concentrate in the interviews especially on things that have been supported by other interviewees and documents.

had gradually formed ambitious, factual goals in whose light *Heikki ja Kaija* started to seem strictly “only” as entertainment.

Instead, on the management level of entertainment programs (Jarmo Porola) ideas were developed in the early 1980s according to which there was a social demand and a clear space for an entertaining comedy. It was thought that the audience needed these kinds of programs. With hindsight one can say that *Tankki täyteen* was a symptom of the nostalgia that was felt after the massive relocation of the Finnish people from the countryside to the urban setting. In any case the interviewees working in TV 2 at that time raised two contradictory needs: those of “the mass audience” and the needs of the so-called “literary audience”. The latter are expected to tire in front of the serial drama, which is calculated to satisfy mass audiences, and, the former are expected to shun the high culture productions.<sup>7</sup>

The juxtaposition between the mass audience and the literary audience is broken down by such ways of talking about the viewers where “the mass audience” of television series and serials is claimed to be too under-appreciated. Excessive carefulness prevents unconventional solutions especially in family dramas and audacious unraveling is compromised. A writer expresses his own views of the general atmosphere and character of Finnish serial drama in the following way: “Some craziness and boldness should be kept, they are the juicy bits, that richness... It is also the besetting sin of Finnish series and serials that they become serious and grim as hell that nobody’s life is that serious and grim.”

The concept of audience is widened by the different understandings of target audiences, especially those of young adults and the themes they are interested in. TV 2 was thinking of young audiences when it produced such medium-long serials as *Heartmix* (1996), which takes place in San Francisco and *Kalapuikkokeitto* (Fish Stick Soup, 1998), which depicts student life in Finland. The talk of audiences that is separate from individual programs is, on the basis of the interviews, either worried about the viewers’ “faithfulness to the channel” or, quite the contrary, about “the ratings terror” brought on by quantitative audience surveys. These contrary discourses are evident in the way the professional nature of serial drama production is seen especially

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7 What is interesting in this setting is exactly the fact that one excludes the other. In any case “the mass audience” can be expected to contain some of “the literary audience” and vice versa. In principle, both the members of the cultural elite and the so called ordinary Finnish television viewers can watch serial drama as well as go to theater or watch one-off plays written for television. It is rather a question of how one feels about serial drama as an artistic work and what expectation one has of it.

during the change from director-oriented to producer-oriented production culture.

### **13.3. Craft vs. Art**

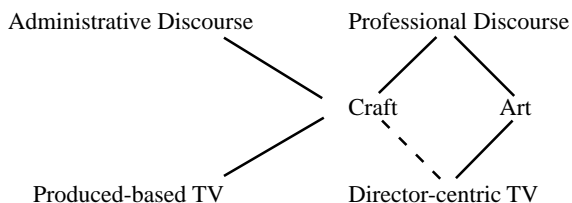
The idea that they are producing serial drama as part of some production apparatus evokes conflicting thoughts in all professional groups. “The apparatus” is interpreted in different ways and people avoid using it by, for example, talking about “efficiency” in general. Two completely contrary discourses can be found in the interviews: the administrative and the professional. The latter could be further divided into modes of speaking that emphasize craft and art. In the administrative discourse natural topics are the competition between channels, ratings, product development and efficiency. The professional craft discourse makes direct reference to the actual making of the serial, work organization and each person’s part in the teamwork even to the extent that it compromises the speaker’s ideal and individual artistic views. In this discourse particularly there are thoughts about the organic nature of teamwork, production-specificity, the commonly agreed division of labor, commitment, personal skills and the importance of good interpersonal relationships. (Cf. Elliott 1972, 128-129).

The industrial nature of production can be downplayed also in the administrative discourse. In these cases, however, references are made to the fact that the people have little experience of “the apparatus” and some part of the production process is still being seen as “craftsperson like”, as looking for its final form. Craftsmanship has thus two meanings in the administrative and professional discourse: it is either the antonym of individual artistic work or it indicates the lack of industrial tradition in the production culture. Especially in the administrative discourse people avoid associating industrial production with deteriorating “quality” which is probably the most common argument against “the serial apparatus”. Some domestic mini-series can be mentioned as an example of good “quality” serial-like production even though they hardly correspond to the production of long-term serials that go on for years. Even within the professional artistic discourse there can be a favorable mention of some individual British or American serials.

The people interviewed are well aware that the British or American “quality television” are not commensurate with domestic serial productions if only for the fact that their marketing area and, what is more important, the money put into their production is many times more than the money used in Finnish productions. The administrative discourse keeps reminding that the company,

which is mainly financed by license fees (about 80 %), shares out a certain amount of money that is used to make a certain number of program hours. In addition, there are weekly slots for certain types of programs including serials. According to the administrative discourse this creates “efficiency”. The point of view is financial but at least on the level of mode of speaking it defends national productions. By acknowledging the same reality, the professional discourse combines “efficiency” to the human manner of realization, of people doing artistic work and even of rather large production apparatus. The acceptance by the audience, which is measured by ratings or other public recognition, is here too treated as a taken-for-granted reality rather than a thing worth thinking about.

So far, there have been demonstrated two basic discourse and the main lines in the interviewees’ as speeches, from which the different meaning makings toward the production cultures can be led. The following figure clarifies the logic of the speeches:



The professional artistic discourse, which is contrary to the meta-discourse emphasizing craftsmanship, is the most author-oriented. Although the same person may possess both discourses emphasizing craftsmanship and art, the latter is more clearly against the audience-oriented production philosophy. The overlap of the discourses is reflected in the fact that the serial drama writer or director can keep on dreaming about his or her serial drama, which is clearly his or her own work. An interviewee who writes episodes on the basis of someone else’s idea can therefore even use such a concept of her or himself as “a rank and file writer”. Conflicting discourses of the author’s own role as artists and of their audiences are, on the basis of my data, typical of the forming producer-based production culture although the question of the artist’s freedom of expression on the one hand and pleasing the audience on the other seems to be the eternal dilemma in art.

Let us look at the above figure more carefully from the point of view of two *production cultures*.

### 13.4. Director vs. Producer-based TV

Especially in the early decades of television, when serial drama was still looking for its form, the director's skills as a dramatist seem to have had a special importance. Although *Mustat ja punaiset vuodet*, for example, was made in episodes, its scriptwriting already used the newer techniques, which are still being taught in scriptwriting workshops. In the hands of the authors, who had been educated abroad, the script moved through different stages before it reached its final form. The job of the producer-level dramaturgy, such as looking for writer talent, was left for the editor.

Two different kinds of meta-discourse of the cooperation between writers, directors and dramatist can be found in the interviews: one emphasizes director-centricity and the other producer-basedness. It is clear that these are associated with different production cultures. Director-centricity seems to have been self-evident in the earlier productions. At that time it seems to have caused problems mainly for the directors. Copyright reasons have prevented the directors from adopting such scripts in whose production they have fully participated. According to the interviews the director and writer have, especially in the first two decades of production culture, formed an ideal partnership that may have worked on a number of different types of drama together. They have often fed each other with ideas, especially in the pre-production stage and the director may have commented on the text already at this stage. Usually the actual production stage has remained the director's domain and s/he may have revised the text together with the actors.

Later came the writers in comedy and family dramas who wrote the texts and directed them themselves for television. Such writer-directors in my data are Neil Hardwick, Jussi Niilekselä, Pekka Lepikkö and Carl Mesterton. Only Jussi Niilekselä belongs to the TV 2 staff. The situation is, of course, less complicated from the point of view of the busy schedules in industrial production if the writer can freely revise the text at the direction stage without extra consultations with the writer. The close cooperation between writer and director has continued at least in some of the productions that have concentrated on the production of long serial dramas. This situation has had its flaws in those productions that have been interfered with by other people than those belonging to the original creative team. This started to happen more frequently as the production transferred to channel-specific program planning and producer culture and the ensuing increase in efficiency thinking.

Producer-orientation is a complex production culture from the points of view of both writers and directors. It emphasizes the significance of the script (especially with the fact that the script should be as complete as possible

before the production starts) but gives nevertheless the last word to the producer who is in charge of the project both artistically and financially. In the new system even the director should respect the views of the artistic producer. There are many writers and directors in long serial dramas: an individual director cannot say that it is his own project any more than an individual writer can. It is the work of the artistic producer although in copyright terms the work belongs to the writer. In the 1990's the old-time pairs of directors and writers were followed by teams in which the writer did not necessarily even meet the director and the script editor worked as the mediator between the scriptwriting and directing.

The discourses in favor and critical of producer orientation in the end return to such questions as the writer's right to the text s/he has written, the ability and willingness to write and direct in a group and a certain serial format. Most of the writers felt that this was a challenge at the time of the interviews. In other words, they had tried to learn to "produce material", to become a writer among other writers. At the very least they had the disposition to understand the character of team working and the importance of artistic flexibility in the producer-led production culture. Those who had been writing for television at the time of the director-centered production culture as well as the new writers noticed very soon that producer-orientation demanded of the writer quite different qualities than of the so-called traditional writers. It seems to be especially difficult if the text is modified without the separate permission of the writer. In the director-centered production culture this mainly took place with mutual agreement. In that case the individual director and writer were a team like whereas in the present culture there are many directors and scriptwriters and there are separated. When the producer is responsible for the production, the individual scriptwriter is probably more far of the decision-making than in the director-centered culture.

The writer's right to 'own' text appeared in public controversy in two cases during the 1990s. The new writer, Anita Malkamäki was among those ten people who went to the USA in 1990 to learn how to write television series. As shown earlier in Chapter 6, the framework of *Autopalatsi* was made within this Austin project and the first ideas of the series were taken up for discussion in workshops abroad. Later Malkamäki publicly expressed her disappointment with the process of writing the "mainstream-sitcom", as she put it. She argues that the two writers made several versions of the script without receiving the necessary feedback on their work. She criticized TV 2 for underestimating of the writers' skills in the serial drama production. Malkamäki felt that "it is frustrating to constantly hear accusations by producers hurled towards writers while there exists a great unwillingness of



producers to accept the writers' experience in the field." (Helsingin Sanomat 28.11.1996)

Shortly before that Annukka Kiuru (Helsingin Sanomat 19.11.1996), a writer, had accused the producer and three directors of *Lähempänä taivasta* of altering the original script and idea and of changing the order of episodes. She argued that the result does not corresponded to the original script and should have required a consultation with original writers. Kiuru also pointed out that the new writers ultimately displaced the original ones. Kiuru's article raised the question of the authors' rights in the production and in a way showed the very nature of the producer-based medium. It expects a single author to adjust to the requirements of the television industry and prepare to express him/herself within it. The next chapter continues with these themes in valorizing the makers' view of the use of realism in making the utility drama.

The interviews that form the above study material took place principally in 1996. At the time of the interviews, there were several ongoing producer-based projects, of which the interviewees could tell their thoughts and experiences. The era of director-based projects seemed to be history. However, there was so little experience of the new type of productions at the time that it is best described as a transition time. This becomes apparent particularly in the attitudes of the makers of serial drama towards the new production culture. This producer-based culture had both its opponents and followers. For some interviewees, participation in the production process of multi-episode series was a unique situation, which in itself was a significant experience. In any case, this experience was seen as an advantage also in the future.

As was described before, expressly the administrative and the professional discourse take opposite positions in the interviews. The latter can be further divided into the discourses that emphasize either the art or the craft of the makers. If the discourse that emphasized the art of the makership is connected with the strong discourse critical of administration, it probably signifies the separation of serial drama from individual quality drama, as well as the comparison of the audience of family series with a mass audience. On the other hand, if the interview underlines the maker's artistic ambitions combined with the administrative discourse, it probably indicates the interviewee's leading position in the production process. A responsible producer who speaks from inside the administrative discourse may emphasize script writing of a long serial drama expressly as an artistic process. Correspondingly, someone who wants to emphasize the maker's professionalism may talk about the writing of a long serial drama expressly as good craftsmanship, without

giving the value judgement of a serial drama neither as a genre of a literary audience, nor mass audience.

However, the crossing of an interview speech from one discourse to another gives room to the assumption that the 'maker' — who in this research is accentuated expressly as a collective, not as an individual maker — has a certain value hierarchy in mind. In this, 'serious' art still positions itself as the opposite side to the less serious family series convention. Discourse that brings up craftsmanship must be seen as giving legitimacy to the work done in the serial machinery. On the one hand, the speech emphasizes the significance of an ongoing production as accumulation of skills needed in the production of long serial drama, or the thought-provoking quality of the empirical and emotional realism represented by family series from the perspective of the audience. On the other hand, it is possible to simultaneously bring up expectations and desires connected to the future to make something of one's own that is of high quality; something that expects more from oneself and the audience than a traditional family series.

## 14. THE MAKERS OF TELEVISION SERIES AND ‘REALISM’

In this chapter, I deal with the practitioners’ concepts of television realism. Throughout the interviews, the research attempts to describe the ways the makers perceive the relationship to be between fiction and reality, and the audience relationship that thereby takes shape. Even though I quote word to word the speech of some interviewees, I do not individualize the interviewed people. This because the articulations of ‘realism’ are productions of a larger collective rather than only of one maker. I also try to protect the anonymity of the practitioners if possible. As the chapter shows there are number of sociocultural aspects, which have been in the background of the development of the *perhesarja* genre and the ideology of realism: rural depopulation, the social reforms of the 1960s, the Finnish ‘gender contract’, etc. These aspects must be taken into consideration when examining the speech of the makers.

Moreover, the interviews contain indirect references to the policy changes that have taken place in politics, changes in cultural thinking and cultural policy lines, as well as changes that have taken place in the relationships between high and popular culture and the fluctuations of television policies. The analysis concentrates particularly on the *perhesarja*. Focusing on the *perhesarja* enables reflection on how conceptions of ‘realism’ that have arisen in TV 2 have changed within the genre. The analysis starts from notions concerning the differentiation between fact and fiction. This is necessary because it is expressly the making of difference between fact and fiction that has up to the present time preoccupied both journalists writing about television series and television companies.

### 14.1. Fact and Fiction — Serious and Entertaining

In the program policy of YLE, the relationship of factual material to fiction has been one of the central questions since the policy guidelines of the 1960s all the way up to the broadcasting norms that were endorsed twenty years later (YLE 1992). In the program policy lines of the 1960s, no sharp distinction between fact and fiction was made. On the contrary, at their best, fact and fiction were seen to merge with each other. In the work *Yleisradion suunta* (The Direction of YLE), it is stated:

There is no reason to draw a strict line between entertainment and factual programs. A good cultural program is also entertainment in the best sense of the word, and a well-done entertainment program is also cultural. The principal objective of these closely connected program types is the same: to provide edifying phenomena and experiences to their viewers. For instance, programs that make a stand on issues in one way or another can also function well as excellent entertainment. Entertainment should not be understood to consist solely of programs that aim at just killing time; that kind of activity does not have much to offer in the sphere of public broadcasting activities. (Repo et al. 1967, 15-16.)

This quotation manifests the notion typical of the program policy of the time regarding the stand-taking quality of programs, as well as the activation of the audience. The expression of opinions is seen as “excellent entertainment”. It is assumed that the viewer enjoys programs that provide experiences. At that time, the main objective of public broadcasting activities was to provide “a worldview based on factual information” without “shunning away even from the shortcomings of its society”. (Ibid. 13.) The principles were tightly maintained until the reform of the regulations regarding a public serving activity that was carried out under political pressure in 1972. The regulations emphasized the impartiality of the personnel of the broadcasting company and the party-political even-handedness of public broadcasting activities. At the same time, alongside this arose a clear distinction between fact and fiction as a new norm. (YLE 1972, 3) The accuracy of the distinction was discussed on a broad scale for the first time in 1983 in the staff publication of YLE. The publication, for instance, considered the idea that through the means of fiction issues can be discussed in a way that addresses the audience in a more thought provoking way than authentically presented so-called facts.<sup>1</sup>

The still-valid regulations of 1992 that concern public broadcasting activities repeat the distinction between fact and fiction expressly as connected to news broadcasting, but also more generally as a norm that directs public broadcasting activities. The regulations state:

The audience must be able to distinguish facts and their backgrounds from material consisting of opinions and fiction. Moreover, sound and vision must be used truthfully. This principle does not limit the choice of journalistic genre or form. (YLE 1992, 6.)

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1 The theme of the staff publication *Teemalinkki* was Fact and Fiction.

The new regulations did not make a differentiation between factual programs or entertainment, as long as the facts were clearly distinguishable from fiction. It was assumed that, for example, serial drama must clearly make its own fictionality visible. The makers of serial drama nowadays must make the distinction when there is a question regarding the broad exploitation of ethically sensitive documentary material, such as criminal law reports, in constructing fiction. This does not stop critics from claiming that a particular television series has obscured the line between the true and the fictional. However, the excessively documentary-like quality of programs was not a problem for the drama makers of the 1960s.

The makers of *perhesarja* have hardly ever needed to justify using factual information in the ideas of their series. A peephole into family life does not raise a similar kind of ethical discussion, as do crime series that are based on real life events. However, according to their makers both genres utilize life stories and societal material, which they have discovered in real life. The accusations of too little or overly excessive documentarism have their roots in the socio-cultural character of the genre. The notion that the genre represents different social and cultural elements explains, on its part, this socio-cultural nature. (See Neale 1981, 6) In regard to Finnish genres, this means that their development, survival and change are tied into the circle of production and reception. The circle rotates in between the overall structure of serial production, the narrative of the series, as well as among the makers and different public and private recipients.

To put it simply, the question is that of the consensus, which is culturally formed between the makers and the audience, and this kind of consensus determines how fact and fiction can be appropriately mixed in programs.

## **14.2. Negotiating the Images of Reality in Different Genres**

How makers and viewers experience the difference between fact and fiction is time-bound and connected to the phenomena represented in serial programs. The fact that 'reality' is chosen to be represented in *perhesarja* in a more detailed way is bound up with the changes in society and the aesthetic development of television. In the series of the early 1960s, makers relied on empirical lifelikeness. The structural changes in society, the migration from the countryside to the urban environment, and the reinforced status of the nuclear family connected with wide-ranging political reforms raised pressures to inform the audience of the changes and reforms that had taken place. The introduction of television in Finnish society specifically corresponded to the

era of this structural change. Television was to be the tool in building the modern society. The appearance of well-educated baby boomers floundered because of the informational program policy that raised the desire for knowledge as the central factor in the construction of the new society.

The series *Heikki ja Kaija* that was started along this phase relied on the charisma of its actors who were well-known from the theatre. This familiarity succeeded in making the everyday portrayed by the series interesting to the audience. Reforms concerning social insurance, the building of their own owner-occupied house and the purchase of a car guaranteed the 'realism' of the contemporary image of the series. The makers considered carefully whether the young father of the family should drink beer taken from the fridge or not. The conventionality of the series reached the point where the makers of the series had to justify their decisions to the makers of a notch more daring drama on the same channel. Fearing the audience's reactions, the makers of the first *perhesarja* of TV 2 had to be careful when choosing the factual material that would represent the modern lifestyle. The caution that the genre of the series suggested became the culmination point for the accusations that were later made from the position of informational program policy regarding the superficiality and entertaining quality of the series. In a certain context, the ethos of reformism in which social change was presumed to be similar to evolution within the capitalistic social order was articulated into the notion of 'superficiality'.

The *perhesarja* as a genre is then connected to the socio-cultural change described above. On the other hand, the strength of the *perhesarja* genre has its origin in the 'gender contract'. (See Pateman 1988) Since the 1960s, Finnish women have had a special relationship with the state. They have been able to choose between family life and a career, or both, when the nuclear family has also been given new interpretations and required its 'interpreter'. It appears that the perseverance of the *perhesarja* is connected to the fact that the position of the family must be re-interpreted over and over again in patriarchal capitalism. The most problematic relationship in the gender contract falls on the man; he has not had this agreement with the state. Indeed, it is particularly the fathers and husbands that have until today appeared as outsiders in Finnish family drama. It is also interesting that romantic love did not carry any special weight in the *perhesarja* of the 1960s. It was represented only in the 1990s, when the savior of the nuclear family was specifically romantic love between spouses.

As the 1970s grew closer to documentarism in television, aesthetics were given a new interpretation in YLE. The reportage play that applied the idea of informational program policy became part of topical, journalistic representation.

Documentarism and journalistic question setting that raised even radical social discourse were seen to have an important position in fiction. The emotional, thought-provoking portrayal of characters appeared as if simply a byproduct of the process. In TV 2, this new type of play was represented above all by the series *Kiurunkulma*, *Palveleva puhelin* and *Pääluottamusmies*.

The idea of a reportage drama was to portray concrete social ills and ossified conceptualizations. This task was contrary to the series that ‘addressed’ family communities and produced dreams of social mobility to the viewers. The Drama Department of TV 2 stated that its task was to make TV drama from original, Finnish manuscripts and represent the current times and near past of Finnish social reality. The idea was embedded in a distinction from the serial program production of MTV commercial channel, which at the time was considered entertainment that markets commercial messages. TV 2 series had to have their roots in the Finnish reality and society, in other words, in the life destinies of Finnish people. The journalistic point of departure in the production of television series signified the direction out of studios, towards a fast visual tempo and documentary-like quality of content.

### 14.3. From Documentary into Fiction

The debate about fact and fiction went on also in the program policy seminars of TV2. In the seminars, for instance, the question of what is wrong with fiction was under discussion. The discussion progressed through a fourfold table<sup>2</sup>. One of its dimensions was precisely fact and fiction. The other dimension was entertainment and so-called serious program content. In this table, entertainment was understood as something that “draws people along with it” to analyze both factual and fictive program contents. However, the first dimension requires “journalistic innovation”, whereas in the latter, storytelling and the production of dreams have an important position. What is interesting in these notions is that even fun and sentimental dreaming were not shunned. Rather the opposite; the idea was that one must give in to dreaming and construct better dream-creating television series than the contemporary *Heikki ja Kaija*.

The social aspect was seen to be conveyed through the “poor man’s opera” represented by the local editorial office in such a way that temporally, the programs reached back only to the 1930s. The editorial office was supposed

2 Originally presented by Eero Silvasti in TV 2’s program seminar (January 7-8, 1971, in the Tyrväntö program political seminar). I thank Silvasti for handing out the outline of his presentation.

to operate in the era of people's natural lifespan and their memory-based experiences. It was thought that a credible portrayal of society and such human destinies, which are rooted in the society, could only be created from one's own contemporary history.

Fact and fiction was combined by empathizing with social problems similar to *Kiurunkulma*. On the level of storyline, this meant an effort to combine social and personal plots; to entwine the private and the public together. The makers of *Kiurunkulma* had the urge to point out and correct shortcomings and social ills. Characteristic of its time, *Kiurunkulma* was seen as promoting social welfare and equality. Simultaneously, the perspective of an individual fate was preserved in the narration. The makers allowed it to be understood that form did not matter all that much. Whether entertainment or documentary — the principal factor was that the issue got through to people. However, documentary was the principal style in the times when the so-called entertainment programs of YLE were first and foremost informative in nature. The realism of *Kiurunkulma* was thus sought also through aesthetic decisions. Fictional material was boldly combined with the interviews of real-life experts. Later on, the same makers added documentary film inserts into the historical series *Mustat ja punaiset vuodet* (The Black and the Red Years) that described the near past and raised nostalgic feelings. Through interviews, the makers became familiar with the era they described and the human destinies within it. The blend of individual and public was realized, for example, by intertwining a love story and a portrayal of the general strike that took place at that time.

One way of thinking was to see the matter as “making fiction out of documentary”. This meant that the material found in real life that was also suitable for news material was exploited in the construction of fiction. This fashion was particularly well represented in *Pääluottamusmies*. One episode of the series was based on a sitdown strike in a certain factory in which also the chief shop steward participated. Another episode, on its part, is directly based on the televised interview of a certain labor union activist. In the 1970s, makers could spend time, for example, in a paper factory in order to familiarize themselves with its atmosphere and to bring an ordinary, and in their opinion, the right kind of look to the series. The ideology was an important part of the motivation of making a series:

All and all, in this kind of serial production, I think that the makers should be expected to have a kind of vision concerning the issue. The writer and the director should have a clear view on a certain topic, which then will be realized. If this does not exist, there is kind of a lack of motivation.

Principally, the series *Pääluottamusmies* and *Mustat ja punaiset vuodet* functioned as a channel for their makers to bring a strong social dimension to



the serial drama. They were also the last black-and-white series of TV 2. The channel's first color series was *Oi kallis kaupunki* (Oh Precious Town), which was exceptional for the 1970s. This was followed by the historical series *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* (Men of War and Peace) based on wartime documentaries, which were labored on for many years. However, *Oi kallis kaupunki* continued the mixing of fact and fiction in such a way that the documentary excerpts were no longer inserted and the narration was transferred more clearly than ever before to an urban environment. The series was intentionally a multi-plot narrative, which also gave space for dreaming, which at that time was perceived to be part of entertainment. At the same time that the process of the development of the main male character and his private life were portrayed, the political credibility of the description of local politics was strictly maintained. Portraying politics and an individual through the means of drama without a direct, clearly identifiable reference to topical documentary material made even this lengthy series exceptional in the 1970s.

Some of the makers perceived the transfer into color film as a weakening of the sense of 'realism'. Along with the documentary *Sodan ja rauhan miehet*, serial drama production moved on to a new era. A clearly dualistic division within drama production took place in TV 2. According to some makers, the Drama Department continued with their brutal realism projects, whereas the Entertainment Department began to mix serious and comical material in their situational comedies. In TV 2 serial production, this signified the shift of the perspective away from content more clearly towards the dramaturgical decisions, the form, set by a certain genre. Narration emphasized the linear construction of a gag rather than the message itself.

As a conclusion of the relationship of the TV 2 serial drama of the 1960s and 1970s with reality it can be said that at that time, the so-called modern intellectual, who's role was bind to the welfare state, attempted to have his/her voice heard in serial drama. This took place by exploiting the format of the utility drama through the ideology of realism. Later on, the intellectuals as guardians of certain social values disengaged themselves from the modern state. This is the other side of the mirror. In fact the political technology developed by the modern state made the services of the intellectual redundant and forced them into a submissive role. (Bauman 1999, 10) A new power stepped up which the intellectual could no longer regulate: the market. According to a sociological explanation, in the postmodern society the role of the former legislator is changed into the role of an interpreter. To this interpreter, reality and society is a meaning which is interpreted but which is no longer possible to control. (Ibid. 108-116.)

## 14.4. 'Finnish Reality' in Situational Comedy

In the 1980s the media market gradually opened to the competition. An indicative of this tendency the makers came out as individuals, not as the ideologist of the welfare state. Obviously it was easy to make new openings in this situation. While there was a vacuum for comic in TV 2 some new writers entered in the field. Above all they wanted to break taboos they thought have been elementary in the Finnish television. The manifestation of conscious breaking of taboos appeared in three TV 2 comedy series, *Tankki täyteen*, *Reinikainen*, and *Sisko ja sen veli*. The choice of topics demonstrated a kind of bravado by, for instance, using disabled people in roles that were usually reserved for the so-called healthy. One episode of *Sisko ja sen veli* is indeed specifically dedicated to dealing with this issue. However, the presumed limitations of the Finnish sense of humor had already lurked on the background when the series *Reinikainen* was made. The extraordinary behavior of a police officer during an incidence of death is handled in one of its episodes:

IR: A little more about *Reinikainen*. How did it become clear to you that you were dealing with something that was not supposed to be dealt with? Interviewee: It was conscious. I began to write... I was thinking of the very typical situation that a police officer must tell somebody that... in a funny way. You very well know yourself (the maker, IR) that you are crossing some line, because in Finland this matter is not handled through the means of comedy. It felt kind of thrilling, the idea of crossing a boundary. Yet it was not based on any research, but just on the knowledge that in Finland one does not laugh at death.

The makers desire to question the limits of making comedy in Finland was connected temporally to the initial disintegration of the traditional television culture. This articulated the criticism connected to the position of the monopoly of YLE, which has also been seen in opposition to 'paternalism' in the broader discourse on television culture. (Hellman 1988)

Already *Tankki täyteen* reflected the shift towards portraying the liberation of an individual from binding regulations instead of the earlier social ties. *Reinikainen* concentrated even more on individuals and how their experience of the surrounding environment differs from their fellow beings when relying on one's own ethical norms. On their part, the characters of the series *Sisko ja sen veli* were already nomads: they identified themselves with nobody; neither did they care about social pressure. They switched their identities according

to the situation. Their longing — if and when it manifested itself — was tied to affects. This emotional structure found its first connection in the notions of postmodern television realism (Ang & Stratton 1995). In this kind of ‘realism’ the viewer is not provided with a uniform moral order or model such as in the series *Heikki ja Kaija*, but ethical choices are left for the viewer to make.

In the episode that described the lives of disabled people *Sisko ja sen veli* continued the fashion of mixing fact and fiction that was adopted in TV 2. The series brought real life people to the screen to pose as themselves, at least referentially. The background notion of this was to confuse the audience rather than appeal to their confidence by providing imagery resembling reality. One of the ideas of the series was to show to the supposedly prejudiced Finnish viewer who has no sense of humor what the life of disabled people in ‘reality’ is like. Yet, the above-described ‘Fincoms’ brought a new way of dealing with issues to Finnish television. They mixed serious and comical perspectives, which previously had come together principally in the tradition of boulevard comedy which actors brought to television from the theatre. Later on, the mixing of different ways of dealing with issues was in the interviews called stylized realism and in the makers’ way of speaking it was positioned as the counterpart to such realistic drama, which was sourly called ‘drama for dummies’.

## 14.5. Stylized Realism

The 1980s was a time of the production of more or less comical *perhesarja*. At the same time, it removed the informative content and the arrested the urge to deliver a message. The series *Kotirappu* made an exception, even though it also cannot be considered a continuation to the informational program policy of the 1960s. It already represented modern, so-called full-service public broadcasting in which knowledge, education and entertainment was no longer set against each other. There were fresh studies on the Finnish way of life in the background of *Kotirappu*. The contribution of the research was included in the program policy as YLE attempted to find new ways of approaching its audience. The use of lifestyle research shows the change of the role of a social intellectual from legislator into interpreter. However, in the viewer satisfaction survey conducted by YLE the role of the audience changed from a cultural subject launched by lifestyle research into a ‘consumer’ of modern public service television (See Kytömäki & Savinen 1993.)

The experience of the viewer became part of Finnish television discussion. Makers partly threw themselves at the mercy of this experience. The most

surprising thing is that the makers hardly questioned their own role as the keepers of the *perhesarja* convention, which was based on consensus. While the viewpoint shifted from delivering a message to merely the making of a program, the narrative limits that the genre set were accepted at a face value. In the YLE research policy not later than on this point, the ritual model of the communication began to displace the transfer model of the communication, which has bound itself to the ‘message’ realism. Also the idea of realism began to change. Instead of ‘realism’ offered by the socially and culturally credible pictures it was emerging new ‘realism’ that should be *experienced* individually.

A maker of comic *perhesarja* explains his/her own philosophy about the borders of the genre in the following way:

All and all, I don’t think in the way that I’d begin by trying prove a point or to show people something on particular issue. These are comedy series, these *perhesarja*, a kind of situational comedy, which is based on the fact that nothing ever changes. The people don’t develop their characters in any way, but there is a certain setting that is twisted and turned around and made into situational comedy, an attempt to turn things upside down and.

It becomes apparent in the quote that even though the maker sees how the genre sets limits to the development of issues in serial drama, according to the laws of drama there is always some embedded premise in it: the superficiality of modern life, the outsider role of a human being, an individual’s rights in a community, coping with difficulties, and so forth. Along with the genre-awareness, the attention of the makers was shifted to the presumed problems of television narrative. Stories were written in which a lot of fast-paced things *happened*, and the time reserved for the story was not used for increasing authenticity, for instance by prolonging a shot of a sharpening of an ax.

This was ultimately manifested by the makers’ aesthetic turn in relation to reality images; the significance of real-life based stories is not to place a documentary on the screen but to dramatize them more clearly into televisual works. Combining comedy and realism remained as a genre. References to true life events, real communities, as well as incidences and attitudinal atmospheres in the series represented the basis in fact. Yet, the makers’ own concrete experiences came strongly forward as motives for writing for television.

The testing of the limits of *perhesarja* began in the 1990s. The change from true life-events to the portrayal of human relationships as well as the

shift from the nuclear family to blended families took place. As I have shown, the major series *Metsolat* attempted to combine both of these in its narration. Where the perspective had previously been strongly that of the lives of the rural small farmer population or the urban working class, now also social classes that had earlier been less portrayed were given space in the narration: large-scale farmers, private enterprises, the upper middle class, even the intelligentsia. Society did not altogether vanish from the narration. From this time on, it appeared as general awareness of topical issues, the agenda of which was determined in the cabinet of the power. The portrayal of a credible political world in which fictional characters would have a public citizenship of some kind no longer suited the new production culture, even if there had been a desire to show it. In the TV 2 tradition, series like *Päälouottamusmies* would require outside shooting and shooting on location in order to be adequately credible according to the ideology of realism.

Stylized realism refers to the combination of different conventions, but also to 'artistic expression' on a certain level. Realistic narration was combined with the comedy of fantasy. In the series *Elämän suola*, comic episodes that took place in the restaurant Seurahuone, owned by the matriarch of the family, were combined with the family's 'realistic' story:

...a tad bit stylized, one notices it just on the level of dialogue, no cursing, stylized, a little artistic touch and then this wacky Seurahuone, which is a kind of a Never-Never-Land that is not realistic at all, despite the setting. There can be comedy or tragic drama. This is very special. Such blending and shuffling. It has gone surprisingly well. It is apparently that relying on and under the guise of realism lets all this other stuff slip in through the back door.

In regard to its realism, the series was thought to distance itself clearly from *Metsolat*. There were swift twists of the plot and the urban quality of the series was devised to be clearly visible. The original intention of the humor in the series was meant to cut through the otherwise melancholic emotional structure. Through the means of humor, the incessant bickering and quarreling between the characters, which was seen as inherently connected to the Finnish television series world, was avoided. Combining two different genres was also tied to handling issues from different perspectives. For instance, the characters of the family's daughter, Salla, and the restaurant manager, Pyry, were seen to approach the importance of the family from different angles when the unmarried maintenance man who worked in the family factory died:

In a way this is kind of a theory, which still isn't — well, it does become substantial in some episodes rather than in all of them — that the Seurahuone restaurant is a sort of a stage to deal with the same theme in a bit of a different way than what takes place in the family. A good example is episode five where the concept of family is discussed a lot. In that episode, Salla contemplates the possibility of having children, and then this maintenance man dies and it is revealed that he doesn't have any children. Next year, we continue dealing with the issue through the turn in the plot where Pyry brings his dog to Seurahuone to be looked after. And that the dog is his family.

*Kohtaamiset ja erot* represented another kind of stylized realism. In the series, the narrative was complemented with elements that indicate visions and dreams. They were thought to lead the narrative from realism to the absurd:

In this, there was constantly the attempt with regard to the genre that... I don't want realism. At the stage when one began to develop new episodes and it turned out that there was so much space, that I wanted to bring it away from realism, that extraordinary things can happen and... there is more humor and absurd and mysticism... as the writer, I somehow pointed towards that direction.

In this connection, juxtaposing realism and absurdity indicates an objection to realism as a hegemonic narrative rather than realism as an *ideology* of narrative. In the latter case, the narrative indeed would programmatically bring forth its own structures, as Brechtian epic theatre does. However, the makers had no such intention in mind, at least not as a team. This becomes apparent for instance in the contradictory manner with which they fret about the old-fashioned costumes of the series which were thought to refer too much to the past rather than the present times. Yet, the symbolic level was emphasized in the narrative of the series; people living at a border both literally and metaphorically in their life decisions.

## 14.5. Genderized Emotions?

The series *Onnea vai menestystä?* also approached reality on a symbolic level. The writing of the series began with the notion that the conflict between the genders has become “a problem of the modern information society”. In the series, a woman struggles in the field of literature, in which man has

traditionally been the divine and immortal ruler. The choice is symbolic in the sense that the portrayal of any other subject connected to the information society would quite probably have produced the same problem. As a portrayal of a family community the series is unique. Juxtaposing man and woman in this fashion challenged the entire ideal of the *perhesarja*, as I have shown elsewhere in this work. From the perspective of the ‘realism’ of the series, the set-up overturned those cultural roles that members of a family community are usually given. In describing the problem, the writer utilized her own experiences as a female author. In other words, she exploited the “milieu and topic” which she was familiar with in her writing process. However, the writer does not term her point of departure as a particularly “feminist perspective”, though she talks about the not-so-equal situation of two equal human beings as “a modern feminist circumstance”.

However, it becomes apparent in the interviews that female makers, who have increasingly participated in the production of serial programs in the 1990s, emphasize issues that are connected to the ‘intimate economy’ (Veijola & Jokinen 2000, 103.) Everyday rituals and attitudes towards the questions of life and death form part of it. The portrayal of emotions specifically positions itself partially as a challenger also to “realistic or documentary-like” narration, which in the case of *Metsolat*, for example, signified a conscious intention to teach the audience. Though this point of departure was not rejected per se, the maker saw it as important to also deal with human relationships as well. In the production team, this task, at least in retrospect, fell particularly on female writers of *Metsolat*:

On the other hand, it can also happen that the artistic contribution suffers at times from this realistic or documentary-like quality; that it becomes too gray with too much emphasis on facts and issues. In my opinion, it may have been good that there were us, the two women, who operated more within these spheres of human relationships.

On the basis of the interviews of makers that represent newer series, a ‘realistic’ description of the field of emotions is seen as a kind of an ‘economy of emotions’, which in the series are represented above all by their female characters, but also male characters that demonstrate their feelings. It is interesting that the components of the economy of emotions and the emotional realism connected to them is, on the basis of the interviews, usually linked with the matters that the female characters raised in the series. As the interviewees spoke about emotions, new conceptions about Finnish viewers again emerged: they are not able to watch tenderness. At first, this was even

considered to be a dividing factor within the audience in addition to the popularity of the characters:

Another thing that divided, and it was intentional, was that in the beginning they smooched and touched each other, such things that was not seen in Finnish characters, and the idea that the conflict was coming upon them... people were divided into two, they either liked or didn't like it. For instance, it was not seen as plausible. A Finn cannot watch (tenderness, IR) in a Finnish series...

The increase in the portrayal of human relationships in drama series has brought elements connected to emotional life into them. The assumptions about how they are tolerated in Finnish series are linked not only to their amount but also to the gender of the character. However, in addition to the culturally produced 'feminine style' emotions should be connected be factors that are linked with 'masculine style' (on the conceptions, see Ibid. 24), such as big talk, depression, or, more commonly, 'rationality' in which emotions and reason are strictly separated from one another. If emotions are detached from the factual material of the series and only linked with one of the sexes, the question remains that of *genderizing emotions*.



## **Part Six: Conclusion**



## 15. FORTY YEARS OF TV 2 UTILITY DRAMA

Until now, I have investigated the specific aesthetic qualities of Finnish public service television, particularly of TV 2's utility drama, along with the public reception of a dominant genre, *perhesarja*. In addition, I have explored the ways that the writers, directors, and producers of these serialized dramas comprehend their roles as authors within a changing production climate. This chapter summarizes the analysis. The concept that connects these three areas of research — programs, their reviews, and practitioners' interviews — is realism.

The most important point is that the utility drama is a discourse with different articulations. According to my study, there have been three different discourses of the utility drama. First, articulations of the utility drama can be read from the ways that *perhesarja* of different eras have dealt with actual subjects and addressed their audiences as social actors. Second, the utility drama as discourse can be read from the critics of these family series in relation to some concept of realism. In those cases, the credibility of a series has been central to legitimating the utility drama. Third, the utility drama as discourse can be read from the ways its makers have explained their fast paced work in the field of serial drama. *Perhesarja*, which have mainly dealt with real topics, were thought to be disposable by nature. Moreover, the concept of 'utility' has also been a way to justify to their colleagues and to themselves why they participate in the production of 'entertainment'.

These three discourses are connected to the ideology of realism, which is tied in with the ideology of public service. According to this ideology of public service, 'realism' connotes to informative and worldly in nature. The term 'worldly' signifies either a person's participation and concern for common matters *or* his/her membership in the community, which is exclusively made up of individuals.

To date, the ideology of public service has crystallized itself in the program policies of YLE. The changes that have taken place in the ideology can be evidenced in the policy makers' definitions of how the spectators were perceived. The primary purpose of the informative and thereby realistic drama has been to speak to the spectator as a citizen. Accordingly, since the late 1960s citizens were thought to respond intellectually to the drama. Nowadays, citizenship has come to be signified by consumption rather than concern for common matters. At the same time, the role played by television as promoter of national democracy has vanished to the background. Discursively, television

has become a cultural forum that connects ‘equal’ consumers. Today’s television drama no longer has the intellectual function that it had in the early articulations of the informational program policy.

Moreover, the dominant journalistic articulation of the concept of realism has been a referential one. Likewise, from the very beginning, the practitioners’ views of realism have also been referential, though symbolic expressions have cleared the way for a new aesthetics of the utility drama. There have also been double standards in evaluating television. Accordingly, the opposite of the ‘good’ public service television has been defined as a ‘bad’ commercial television. This division is rendered explicit when discussing American TV serials and is implicit when Finnish programs are reviewed. The creators of utility drama identify themselves with the good television camp based upon their idealization of realism and the emphasis on the ‘Finnishness’ of their product.

This chapter begins with an overview of the tradition of serial drama production on TV 2 and an exploration of the available possibilities of producing the family drama under changing conditions at YLE and the emergence of a market driven media system and their combined impact on informational program policy. Then, the chapter clarifies the various meanings of the utility drama in both critics’ and the makers’ discourses and identifies the significance of gender in the production of family series. Finally, the chapter discusses the utility drama as a site of cultural modernity as well as of YLE’s attempts at audience orientation, which has given rise to cultural and political problems in the public service sphere.

## 15.1. The Production of *Perhesarja*

As my analysis has shown, the editorial managers of the different departments and powerful directors have determined the production of serial drama more than any single writer. The matriarchal<sup>1</sup> family drama became YLE’s property

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1 By “matriarchal” I mean that the strongest characters in the serials are women. *Me Tammelat* (*Us Tammelas*), which started at approximately the same time on the commercial MTV is clearly more patriarchal when compared with *Heikki ja Kaija*. In a matriarchal serial, the woman is depicted as stronger than the man and she is also usually in charge of the family money. Older women play a central role in the community, whereas the younger women’s role is usually tied up with the family. The proliferation of matriarchal family dramas, however, does not mean that the power related to patriarchy is challenged, but rather that it is bypassed by giving the control over emotions and practicalities to the mothers in the family (see Geraghty 1991, 74-8b3).

when the broadcasting company bought Tamvisio. There is conflicting information about the number of episodes in the series. At the time of Tamvisio, the episodes of *Heikki and Kaija* were shot live and there are no copies left. The taped episodes were made in 1963-1964. The Theater department of TV 2 was founded in 1966 and its first director of programs was Tauno Yliruusi. *Heikki and Kaija*, however, continued until 1976.

While in charge, Tauno Yliruusi also wrote a series of one-off plays with the title *30-luvun mies*. The setting for the series was the editorial offices of a liberal-humanistic newspaper. However, Tauno Yliruusi was more of an author than a director. He was followed by Eero Silvasti, who was appointed as the director of the Theater department in 1972. Silvasti had come to the company in 1966 as a so-called headhunter (special reporter) whose role was to ensure the maintenance of Finnish cultural heritage despite a growing concern for profit within the television industry. When he transferred to the job of director in charge of program planning he participated in the planning of dramatic programs with directors Matti Tapio, Pekka Koskinen and Eila Arjoma. The Theater department at TV 2 wanted to distinguish itself from the Television Theater of TV 1 through more than just their creation of serial dramas. Television Theater relied on classical texts and world literature. In keeping with Silvasti's goals when he took over the directorship of the department, the TV 2 Theater department chose to focus on Finnish manuscripts and dramas that were written especially for television.

Based on the model set forth by the production of *Heikki ja Kaija*, the Theater department saw significant financial advantages in the making of serial drama: The serial could be shot in studio at a rapid pace one episode at a time. Filmed inserts shot at exterior locations were then edited. Moreover, when the actors were able to rehearse at home, there was little need for studio rehearsals and the episodes could be shot entirely in one day - usually on a Monday, which was the weekly day off from the theater for the actors in Tampere.

While most of the histories that have been written about the YLE usually brings up its relationship to the Television Theater (TV 1) directed by Timo Bergholm and especially the theater disputes of 1969, they overlook the special production characteristics of the TV 2 Theater department. Different from the Television Theater and its capital orientation, TV 2 was regionally oriented and its programming, while rather moderate, was infused with social commentary. Without openly resisting the bourgeois hegemony, the programming was, to borrow from the language used at that time, "reformist" in character. With hindsight, one can say that the channel produced nearly

paradigmatic theater programs, which corresponded with the Reporadio's ideology of informational program policy.

The manifesto of YLE in the late 1960s (Repo et al. 1967) makes a Brechtian juxtaposition between “dramatic theater” as a form of entertainment that pacifies its audience and “epic theater,” which engages its audience. The book demands that this latter category of entertainment be prioritized among all the different types of programs produced and broadcast by YLE. According to this view, entertainment programs are characterized differently than they might normally be: as potentially encouraging activity, personal reflection and commentary from their viewers. The dissemination of information was associated with ethical principles such as the desire to alleviate people's social alienation and to improve their capacity for social exchange through better forms of communication. (Repo et. al. 1967, 59-64.)

Episodes 7-25 of *Kiurunkulma*, which were broadcast in 1968-69 and *Palveleva puhelin*, which was broadcast in 1970-1971 are especially indicative of programming that combined fiction with a touch of journalism. There are separate film inserts in *Kiurunkulma* in which experts give social factual knowledge. *Palveleva puhelin* was reportage drama that was purposely shot quickly outside the studio and which tackled general social problems through a focus on individual citizens. Before this, the journalistic approach had only been used in Swedish language television theater. Its director and later manager Carl Mesterton specialized in documentary dramas<sup>2</sup>.

In *Heikki ja Kaija* the setting was a house in a suburban neighborhood. *Rintamäkeläiset* (1972-1978) took place in the countryside. In *Kiurunkulma* the choice of subject matter dictated the locations. For example, the stairs of the Parliament framed the speech against tapeworm given by the then Minister of Health, Alli Vaittinen (nicknamed Worm-Alli). Exterior shots were taken all over Tampere. In *Moreeni* (Moraine, 1972), one of the industrial building sites still left standing from the Second World War; the war scenes were shot in the yard framed by wooden houses and the machine-gun rounds were shot against a wall. *Mustat ja punaiset vuodet* (1973) also concentrated on the landscape of a working class neighborhood in Pispala. The wedding sequence in the drama, however, was shot at the community hall.

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2 According to Carl Mesterton (1996), documentary dramas would, for example, reconstruct court cases on the basis of legal documents. The 24-episode family serial Bergströms (originally named *Nog blir det väl bra*), created by Mesterton, which originated in the social list delivered to every household was realized according to the same documentary line. See also Mesterton's interview in *Theater Magazine* (Klemettilä 1995, 10-11).

Still in the early years of theater productions, yet another chapter to in the depiction of milieu was created by the social serial dramas written by Jorma Savikko. The first of these was *Pääluottamusmies* (1970-1971) and the second was *Oi kallis kaupunki* (1975). *Oi kallis kaupunki* utilized a quick-paced camera technique and represented a shift in serial dramas from black and white to color. *Pääluottamusmies* was shot in an Enso Gutzeit factory and, when necessary, also in other real locations. Some shots (for example, a supermarket in Hämeenlinna) of *Oi kallis kaupunki* were also filmed in settings outside Tampere.

## 15.2. Most Important Artistic Goals

There was very little studio space available after the founding of Tamvisio and TV 2. At first, the sets for *Heikki ja Kaija* and later the set for *Kiurunkulma* were located in the Frenckell building. Color cameras became more popular at the time of completion of the Tohloppi television center and they complicated production by requiring exact color definition of takes and scenes, which increased the demand for precision in filming. Until that time, many of the takes done on film had been somewhat grainy, but the fact that they had been shot in black and white had made the images appear more even. Color film had an effect on the atmosphere communicated by the serial dramas. According to some authors it lessened their documentary effect. This paradoxical statement is probably explained by the conventions of documentary filming and the quality of color pictures at that time.

*Rintamäkeläiset*, whose last episodes were shot in color, finished in 1978. This heralded the beginning of an almost ten-year break in the production of family series by the Theater department. Such massive productions as Matti Tapio's *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* (1978-79), which was a drama based on the negotiation documents of the Winter War, and *Rauta-aika* (Iron Age, 1984) written by Paavo Haavikko and directed by Kalle Holmberg focused the department's resources away from other productions apart from one-off plays and a couple of mini-series. According to the channel's philosophy at that time, there should be at least one significant and serial-like work under production at all times which would give rise to public debate and which would be given more generous resources than the other productions. Clear quality criteria were given to serial drama. Artistic goals were talked about more than ratings.

The director of the Theater department Reima Kekäläinen, who was elected in 1975, had been working in the TV 1 Television Theater since 1967 as a

director and dramatist. He continued the work of his predecessor Eero Silvasti. The foremost place in the repertory was given to original manuscripts written for television. Kekäläinen was not particularly keen on family dramas or entertaining serial dramas in general, although one was also produced in his tenure. The making of series and serials had been regarded as a relatively cheap way of doing theater. *Rauta-aika* and other such serials were easy to justify because of their artistic quality. According to Kekäläinen entertaining series and serials ate into both the diversity of theater programs and viewing time. He thought that entertaining television series misused the professional competence of drama authors. (Hotinen, 1985, 4-6.)

Both *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* and *Rauta-aika* emphasized the role of the author. They also demanded a lot of preparatory work such as sets, costumes and milieu. For instance, *Sodan ja rauhan miehet* was shot in authentic locations such as the Prime Minister's office.

While artistic goals were most important for the Theater department, the social demand for an entertaining family drama also survived. The entertainment programs took up this challenge. The editor Jussi Tuominen and the scriptwriting director Neil Hardwick together with director Esko Leimu made *Tankki täyteen* (first episodes in 1978 and the later episodes in 1980-1981) and *Reinikainen* (1982-1983), which was based on *Tankki täyteen*, and these were designed to make people laugh. In these programs, the ridicule was not the 1960's and 1970's court jester, the politician or the general authority figure, but the village idiot and ordinary Finnish men and women in their everyday surroundings (cf. Seppä 1983, 45). These situation comedies were later joined by a third comedy series, *Sisko ja sen veli* (1986), which Hardwick produced independently, under his own company name.

By now, there was a quarter of a century's experience in making family drama according to the tradition of social realism, to go along with the historical epoch dramas and the situation comedies. According to the development guidelines for program production, TV 2 was divided into fact and fiction departments in the mid-1980s. When serial dramas did not fit in with the established policy of the Theater department, the so-called Drama Group was founded in the entertainment programs in 1987. One of its aims was to develop the production of long serial dramas.

Leading up to the founding of the Drama Group were the changing program policy guidelines of YLE, which were developed in a new competition-oriented environment and an accompanying academic turn. YLE started to conduct audience research in partnership with MTV and the Organization of Advertising Agencies. The aim was to form a viewer panel that would number 350 households. (YLE, 1985-86.) Towards the end of the 1980's, an ever-increasing



competition for electronic media markets could be felt in the ongoing debate surrounding YLE's monopoly situation. When the commercial MTV was granted permission to broadcast newscasts in 1981, television had already moved from a planned to a competition economy. When program planning became committed to an environment of competition, individual theater programs gave way to serial drama. In the mid-1980's the commercial MTV's artistically ambitious Theater department was closed, the actors were fired and the commercial MTV drama was created. In TV 1, YLE's actors who work in both radio and television replaced the Television Theater's actors.

### **15.3. Culturalization of Everyday Life**

*Perhesarja* from the early 1960's still clearly represented the studio era (1961-1967). These productions show remnants of the moral economy, of the belief in the people's willingness and ability to help each other in accordance with the role of enlightenment. Between 1968 and 1979 the productions are documentary in nature and their making is defined by the effort to influence society with information. In 1979 utility drama moves for a while to entertainment programs as the Theater department concentrates on artistic productions. The golden age of comedy concentrates on entertainment programs especially in the years 1980-86. At the same time YLE prepares itself for the era of competition and there are growing pressures to find a unique profile for drama on TV 2.

The year 1987 marks the switchover to the creation of sequential dramas, all the while the production of episodic comedy series continues to grow. The first stage of constructing the serial apparatus continues until 1991 when the Drama Group and Theater department merge. The second stage of constructing the serial apparatus is in fact the preparation for and survival of the channel reform, which lasts until the year 1993. At this time, many entertaining family dramas are produced. The shift towards a producer-oriented system and towards experimenting with different serial formats begins in 1994.

In 1997 Juha Rosma was appointed the director of theater programs when the previous director became the director of the Drama 2001 development project. Rosma, who has specialized in movie direction and education, has also directed the 4-episode mini-series *Vaarallinen kevät* (1998) by Tove Idström.

Since 1998, TV2 and the whole company have lived under conditions of ever increasing competition from two commercial television channels. In addition, the company has started to prepare for the shift to digital television.

In spite of the stepped up competition, TV 2's audience has remained at its targeted 20 percent. As the long 60-episode *Elämän suola* (1996-1998) ended, the series and serials started to shorten under the new management according to the principle that each program has an ideal form and duration. As the turn of the millennium was nearing YLE's market share was 42,3 percent for the two channels (YLE Audience Report 2000, 24).

Up to the late 1980s the lack of defined format policies has guaranteed authors a relative freedom in their search for cultural expression. For serial drama, this has meant from time to time either big investments in historical epoch dramas, experimental forms of expression or producing original mini-series. The new strategy formulated in the mid-1980's, which favored dialogue-based serial drama in theater productions, also meant an ideological shift away from the paternalism associated with planned economy towards a view of individuals who produce cultural meanings quite freely. In the end, this kind of emphasis on cultural meanings has compelled all television companies to conduct ever more detailed target group analyses when they are creating their programming. YLE's predicament is crystallized in the YLE Act (1993), which itemizes its service mission with the targeting of very different and disparate audiences.

## **15.4. From Intimate to Nostalgic Television**

This study shows that, unlike the soap opera, utility drama has not had an industrial format to which it has adhered. The form of the utility drama has been created as a result of different demands. These were, for instance, expectations related to television as a medium, which were expressed by the authors themselves, their colleagues, as well as channel managers. As a concept the utility drama has emphasized the topicality and temporalness of the drama. Its production process, which has been quicker, but also cheaper than the creation of single tv-plays, has also justified the concept. On the basis of the analysis, the most important factor in its development has been the informational program policy with the result that the present utility drama resembles many of its predecessors in its recreation of a supposed reality. Accordingly, its creators still rely upon the credibility of the locations, characters and events depicted. At the same time, the means of expression have enlarged. Along side the traditionally understood definition of Finnish realism there has emerged a so-called *stylized realism*, which utilizes fantasy and comedy in its narration.

In the previous chapters we have become familiar with these realisms as they have come to be represented through different television aesthetics in TV 2: intimate (1961-1967), journalistic (1968-1969), consensual (1970-1977), comical (1978-1986), sociological (1987-1992), and nostalgic (1993-1998).

The *perhesarja* has been a dominating genre among fictive television series and serials. Hence, the home and the family have been the central focuses of these series. Predominantly, the lives of the different family members have been depicted through their work and by their hobbies. Usually, however, dramatic events have been depicted as private matters, which are thus freed of their social consequences. The series that aired during the late 1960s and the early 1970s introduced characters who had a relation to the politics of the era. Similarly, in the 1990s, the events of series enlarged from the enclosed circle of the home to the society at large. However, society was no longer defined as the sum of the actions of its individual constituents. On the contrary, society now appeared in the series either as the guardian of the individual or as a boring set of institutions whose services the individual nonetheless had to utilize.

*Perhesarja* have not really threatened the normative function of the nuclear family. Though the roles of the family members have changed and the Father partly relegated to the traditional place of the Mother, the family has retained its position as an ideal social unit. There have been several subject positions available to the character of the husband of the career-minded woman. In the 1990s he adopted the strong father's role, in which case the woman's position in the family hierarchy changed drastically. The male figure deprived the mother of her traditional family duties by replacing her. For her part, a modern, emancipated woman, was aroused by a world normally dominated by men. In those cases, the order of the family was threatened not only by the new woman figure, who deviated from the rules by crossing over into the male dominated business arena, but also by the figure of another woman. As the analysis of two family serials revealed (Chapter 9), the family harmony was restored in both cases only by domesticating the man. This, however, was only made possible by arousing the pair's romantic love, which guaranteed the preservation of the family genre.

*Perhesarja and Reality.* The above-mentioned television aesthetics have demonstrated a special relation to reality. In the early 1960s, television was seen as a window onto ideal modern family life, whereas later on in the decade television was thought of as a means to construe the Finnish families. The early utility dramas did not hesitate to take a stand on the issues. In the 1970s, aesthetics were more descriptive avoiding political commitments.

Throughout the forty year history of TV 2, the trajectory and function of the utility drama has repeatedly been bound to changes in the informational program policy of the station. The demand to inform viewers became an objective of the so-called Reporadio (1966-1969). The dissemination of information seems, however, to have been a natural part of the development of modern television. This explains why program policy has survived; it has been part of the Finnish modernization project. For example, even the first family series already contained information about social security. It was discussed in such detail that it could not have been unintentional.

As the 1990s approached, the role of television as a social legislator changed and it was thought that television now served as a cultural interpreter. Along with this shift in emphasis, a coherent definition of Finnishness also became impossible. Finnishness was not denied, but rather it was believed that it was evoked differently in the lives of different cultural groups. The informational program policy was still alive in the 1990's. However, it no longer maintained a concern for the civil society and the ideals of democracy that might be fulfilled through TV programs. The strong demand for reality was now manifested through nostalgia. As my case study of *Metsolat* shows (Chapter 7), the present was viewed nostalgically through the lenses of the past.

*Heikki ja Kaija* (1961-71), the prototype of intimate television, especially offered spectators a peephole onto the world. It was thought that television was reflecting reality. *Heikki ja Kaija* was typically a series that was located in the kitchen and the living room of one family. This kind of surroundings were seen also later in comedy series that portray a family (*Päin perhettä, Kyllä isä tietää*; both of the 1990s). However, in those the family was not portrayed as the basic unit of the society but as a relatively free union of its members. Spectators of *Heikki and Kaija* were shown images of a domestic and familiar environment, the nuclear family, in which a young couple represented the dreams of the postwar big boom.

*Kiurunkulma* (1966-69), the prototype of journalistic television, focused on social problems and their reformative solutions. It was the utility drama, which exploited journalism and a documentary style of expression in its narration. Moreover, the utility drama tried to prove — adapting the idea of the modern project — that adequate rational knowledge frees human beings from their chains. *Kiurunkulma* has, however, remained a curiosity in the history of TV 2: It represents the paradigm of informational program policy, multiplicity of voices, and intellectual activating of the audience. The series left behind the patriarchal family ideology that was based on the man's responsibility for providing for the family and concentrated on breaking

reactionary ways of thinking on a more general level. During the 1970s, a normative interpretation of program policy came into effect. The utility drama now tried to serve viewers impartially. *Pääluottamusmies* (1970-71) attempted to democratize the relationships between family members, and was the first series to bring up the ideology of equality between sexes particularly in working life. In its portrayal of social agents it represented the drive for balance of voices and impartiality.

At the beginning of the 1980's, when the entertainment department of TV 2 began to produce television series, *perhesarja* were re-modified. The situation comedies, which humorously attempt to define Finnishness, differentiated themselves from traditional family portraits. In *Tankki täyteen* (1978, 1980 and 1982), the individual and his inventiveness were now given center stage. At the same time, a black humor came to *perhesarja*. The comedies dealt with death and disability, in attempting to break the taboos of the homogenous Finnish society. *Tankki täyteen* cut the politicizing of the family institution and rather examined the family community in an amused way as a shared life between absolutely incompatible types of people. Gradually, in the 1980s, television took on the role of cultural interpreter. The interest that began in the 1980s in sociology on life in housing estates and life style studies became apparent particularly in the series *Kotirappu* (1987). This prototype utilized a form of sociological research on everyday life. It observes suburban lifestyles and social relations.

In the 1990s, portrayals of families became more versatile; new family forms, single-parent families and women as breadwinners rose next to the nuclear family. *Metsolat* (1993, 1995 and 1996) in its turn re-elevated the family on its pedestal as the basic unit of the society, and as the eternal security system of its members. The nostalgic television of the 1990s could emphasize the significance of the information concerning the everyday life, while avoiding *messages* that might bind it to any social reform. *Metsolat* tried to convince viewers with the accuracy of its details and its socially credible characters. The serial yearned for a world that had already past, and which still believed in the power of the family/community. The theme, which carries the story, was survival. *Metsolat* thus offered up a form of therapy to Finns living in difficulty during the depression of the 1990s. Similar nostalgia has been represented by another series, *Hovimäki* by the same scriptwriter, Carl Mesterton.

In sum, realism is ideology in which observing the reality is central. Realism can be seen in a poststructural way as an effect that a family series produces in its audience — an effect, which simultaneously produces its audience a way of analyzing reality. In the serial drama production of TV 2

the notion of realism has from the outset been connected to the belief of the omnipotence of the mind, as well as to the desire for factual analysis of reality. The idea of informational program policy was to provide the audience drama narration with multiple voices rather than theatre of one truth only. According to television reviews, this aim was successful still in the 1960s. The politicizing 1970s brought along discordant notes and the demand of balance also in critiques published in newspapers.

The union between realism and social activation of the audience was broken as we approached the 1980's. There was an increasing expectation towards television as a cultural interpreter, rather than as a voice of a narrator who believes in the modern rationality. The 1990s deepened this direction of development, even though some individual series might have believed in the victory of rationality. However, as an articulation connected to rational seizing of reality, realism has always been ideological by nature; it has been used to attempt to lift the ignorant masses from its misery, to make social inequality visible and to create modern nations - capitalistic as well as socialistic. In this sense, realism has also had an effect of binding large groups of people together. Also television family series and their critique articulated into a continuation of this project of modernity.

## **15.5. Referential Criticism**

While the utility dramas themselves were modified according to program policy, it has been the public criticism that has focused attention on the concept of realism. This has primarily been expressed through critical concern over the relation of the programs to reality. Often, the critics own particular definition of reality was used as part of the criticism. It is especially interesting that reviewers openly talked about their own relation to the 'real' life outside television.

From the outset, television reviewers have written about *perhesarja*. With time, however, the nature of the criticism has become more and more promotional in nature (as Chapter 12 has shown). At first, criticism was concerned with artistic questions and only later shifted to critiquing the plausibility of the series' content. In general, criticism has never questioned whether utility drama was anything other than entertainment. Rather, the categorization of a program as a utility drama has even prevented criticism of it according to the criteria of art. Reviewers have, instead, evaluated the series and serials according to how reality is depicted in them. In this study, these

evaluations are examined through their three relations to the supposed 'real': referential, symbolic, and symptomatic.

When making reference to the 'real' world, popular understandings of Finnish family life has been the most common way of critiquing the characters and events of depicted on family series. Television criticism has participated in the production of the different articulations of Finnish realism, and in connection with them, the convention of social realism. Selective as it is, the convention has maintained its strength and with some exceptions (such as *Kiurunkulma*, which resembles journalistic drama), even appears to have become more entrenched. The authors of these dramas are associated with a specific 'Finnish realism' and are labeled as witnesses and prophets, even in the television critiques published in the 1990s. When it is understood in this way, the emphasis on the author resembles the idea that the reality is reflected in the writing, direction, and finally, in the filming of the television drama.

Usually, authorship has been used to justify the credibility of a given series, or to explain the new visions of reality presented therein. Authorship also serves as an important marketing tool. According to this extreme view, the author has not only been the source and creator of the text but also has been a special 'witness'. As Toril Moi (1985, 8) ironically writes: "the humanist creator is potent, phallic and male — God in relation to this world, the author in relation to his text." In Moi's opinion, history or the text becomes nothing but the 'expression' of this unique individual: all art become autobiography, a mere window on to the self and the world, with no reality of its own.

The named authors have usually been male writers or directors. However, authorship was not thought to be gender-specific. The gender of the writer or director was rarely spelled out in the public criticism or practitioner's own views, which only strengthens the position of patriarchal authority. If gender has been foregrounded in the criticisms, it has usually been the female gender. In those cases, it has been posed as a question of particular artistic expressions, which have traditionally been connected to femininity in our western culture, such as emotions and subconscious mental activities.

One can also examine television criticisms according to how the critic defines 'reality'. This reality can be of three kinds: expressed, repressed, and politicized. They also valorize different rhetorics of realism used by the reviewers in the study. For instance, referential discourses such as empirical, emotional, ethic and generic realism were usually supposed to express reality whereas mythic realism seemed to require an insight into a repressed reality. Some way or other, these referential discourses have dominated the public culture throughout the Finnish television history. The appreciation of the hard life in *perhesarja*, in turn, revealed the existence of the ethic realism criterion.

Moreover, redemptive, corrective, thought-provoking realisms have uncovered the critics' desire to politicize reality in order to act on it. Redemptive ways of reading reality have been associated with feminism. Accordingly, some sides of reality, such as the position of working mothers, have been brought out into the open so that the subordination of women has obtained visibility.

Corrective realism was typical in the writings of the late 1960s. The Brechtian thesis on the epic theater crystallized best the idea of thought-provoking television entertainment. The thought was to prevent the pleasure and to offer tools for the changing of the world. Bertolt Brecht was not always needed for correcting of the world; it was enough when *perhesarja* brought the social problems straight to the screen.

What about if realisms as special forms of critique have attempted to control the possible worlds of family series? These questions can be analyzed in relation to the family ideology. Prototypes of family series can be divided according to their family ideology into the following: series that emphasize the privacy of the nuclear family (*Heikki ja Kaija*), series that activate the family to be socially responsible (*Kiurunkulma*), series that extent social reform into the internal order of the family (*Päätuottamusmies*), series that depoliticize the family (*Tankki täyteen*), series that bring up the cultural lifestyle of the family (*Kotirappu*) and series that support nostalgic family ideology (*Metsolat*).

The critiques have seldom paid any attention to describing the family as such, not even to mention about bringing up any viewpoint that would question family ideology. In this sense, critique has principally had the point of departure that family must not particularly placed as a target for criticism. Part of this accepting attitude can be explained with the increasing genre-awareness. Certainly, exceptional families or characters have been seized by the critiques, providing that the series have visibly offered such types of families or people in their narrative (as, for instance, did the series *Onnea vai menestystä* of the mid-1990s). Also *Kiurunkulma*'s ethos that attempted to be thought provoking and corrective was at its time prominently brought up in newspaper writing. It was much later before the symbolism in family series was given any attention to. For instance, *Metsolat* was seen as providing a mythical image of Finnishness.

These referential and symbolic way of reading the texts have not been notably enriched by views in which the way of family series to deal with its topic is read as a symptom of something much more general phenomenon that is indirectly referred to in the series, such as globalization or the lack of a shared moral order. This kind of symptomatic way of reading has only appeared when the American serials drama *Dallas* has been discussed. Is this



a tell-tale about the strength of the traditional realistic, referential way of reading? On the basis of the material I researched the answer must be positive. This way of reading has also had a function of controlling family series. In television reviews, series are still expected correspond with reality, be the question about credibility in regard to empirical details, ethics or emotions. Family series are susceptible for being accused of conservatism and manifestation of the values of the Finnish backwoods, while at the same time they are expected to better mirror the present, as well as the hectic Euro-times.

From time to time, the critique is colored by the 'reality rhetoric'. The critic does not write about the utility drama itself but of 'the reality', which he assumes the series or serial is depicting. One can talk about reality by referring to life in the countryside, its people, manners etc., but the talk may also refer to assumed cultural pictures. Both have been typical of Finnish television critique ever since the 1960's. 'Reality rhetoric' begins somewhere in the writer's preconceived ideas of how he sees the world outside the drama, its human relationships, the things that are central both culturally and socially, and the particular Finnish mindscape. 'Reality discourse' is strengthened by the writer's view of how events, people and things are customarily dealt with in earlier pictures, and especially within the particular genre. From this point of view the writer finally ends up interpreting the world constructed in the television series and serial.

The way television critics write their interpretations of the serial drama, of the things it portrays and of its authors, is in its essence, similar to academic television critiques - which my chapter also represents - in which television fiction can always be related to a certain meta-discourse (Morris 1990, 22) and a certain anatomy of interpretation of that discourse. The meta-discourse can be sought, as in the cases I have analyzed, in a certain conception of reality, such as the empirical, the didactical, the generic, the psychological or the ethical. The so-called 'reality discourse' is also such a meta-discourse. It also has its own anatomy in those conceptual starting points with which the critic signifies reality in general, and its portrayal in the television program. What is most interesting about it, however, is its transparency; the critic is either completely or partially separate from the object he interprets and from the task of evaluating the serial drama and writing another, parallel story.

*Double Standards.* Analyses conducted, particularly on the basis of American, commercial television, have functioned as genre-typical gauges of television research. Special local characteristics, such as different communications ideologies, cultural politics or the mutual social political relationship of genders

remain on the margins in this kind of standardization. In countries like Finland, where public service broadcasting has had a central position, television programs and program types have taken a different shape aesthetically from such countries where commercial, industrial points of departure have dominated the television culture. It can be said that in terms of form, there is an original prevailing consent between the program makers and the audiences, which reflects the Finns own unique positions with regard to communication, culture and social political features.

This becomes very apparent in interviews with the program makers. In addition, it also becomes apparent that the program makers have been faced with a commercially competitive situation that has been particularly hard in recent years. The tightening competition between the channels challenges the national conventions of serial drama, and even replaces them with program ideas brought from abroad. These popular formulas become a threat to national television culture, though, when the original conception of Finnish television, for instance regarding gender roles, the distribution of welfare, democracy and the collective memory in general connected to past events (which naturally is not one and undivided, nor is the nation itself), begins to separate from the subjectivity-breeding identity work that is connected to the everyday lives of the audience.

Double standards still prevail in the review of television programs, which are connected to the value judgments placed on both commercial and public television, as well as on the conceptions of the cultural backgrounds of individual genres. Double standards connected to the value judgments of television production reflect two different ideal-type relationships with television: that of high culture and popular culture. This becomes apparent in the cultural background of genres, for instance in that the American serial drama is discussed in a different way than its British equivalent. The former still represents the metonymy of Americanness, which in addition to its broad program importance, has been both beloved and objected to in the Finnish television culture from the very beginning.

The same double standard is seen in the division between women's and men's programs. This can be called the gendering of television. It is problematic to essentially link women and *perhesarja* together, even though originally the question was about reaching target consumer groups. As directed towards women, the soap operas have been connected with underrating. Feminist television research has done its best to challenge this mindset. As it increases and shuffles the borders of, for instance, family and crime drama, the genre has finally been considered as representing the feminizing of television. Respectively, in the tightening competitive situation, the television

companies of the public service sector have been labeled as news-oriented and masculine in their image of representing high culture.

This genderizing of television has been exploited in the battles over different political line put forth by various programs and over audience segments, to which 'women,' as a special consumer group, supposedly belong. The same gendering is also apparent in the discussion of television program reviews. The television pages of the tabloid press are seen to functioning as 'the Imaginary,' unlike, for instance, the critic's columns of specialized magazines and journals, which are seen to function as the Law of Father (Poole 1984, 59-60).

## **15.6. The Practitioners Views**

The interviews conducted for the purpose of this research especially describe a situation in which the production culture was changing. More specifically, they tell of the double standards of television criticisms and the worries of the practitioners. As the analysis of the two American TV melodramas has showed (Chapter 11), the criticism is divided into two strong evaluation criteria. 'Bad' commercial and 'good' public service television are distinguished from one another. Realism and production of the citizenship are expected to belong to the latter, whereas the former is seen as resulting from commercialism and as a representation of consumerism.

According to interviews, practitioners perceived themselves as representatives of the public service. They have appreciated artistic goals and were reticent about the measurement of audience ratings. The new production culture has been frightening because it narrows artistic freedom. Practitioners' views of the changing production culture have already been explained through such tropes as the dilemma between the masses vs. the literary public, craft vs. art, and, finally, the director vs. the producer-based project. The authors usually identified with a project, which they were working on. They explained their identification with fast-paced, proportional cheap drama productions as professionalism, in other words, as the ability to make programs that do not fulfill the traditional criteria for art.

The concept of utility drama offers them the possibility to justify their work both as 'theater' and 'entertainment'. More obviously, the pressure of colleagues has created the explanatory reasons for this mode of production. The writers, as well as directors, have had to justify their position as authors of entertainment. In addition to this, topical events have required special exactness from the authors. It follows that there has also been a big push for

realism and the practitioners have continually required that the drama represent the present credibly. Drama was not thought to be as participatory as it had been in the 1960s and 1970s, but the practitioners still believed that they were participating in the building of the present through the utility drama. The practitioners have wanted to deal with, for example, the moral problems of late-modern people. The drama also seemed to give the author a possibility to study family life, which now differs from its traditional structure.

The relationship of the practitioner to the aesthetics of realism has also been interesting. It has followed the same lines as television criticism. Television series are understood to refer to reality either through empirical issues, such as the portrayed environment or events, or alternatively they are seen as lifelike in their emotional scale. For instance, television critics often point to the realism of a fictionalized world in a drama series based upon the social environment or human characters it depicts. Certainly a critic can cut a series some slack in the realism department provided that its narrative is seen as requiring the exaggeration of things otherwise true to its genre, or if it involves the portrayal of myths. Yet, an understanding of the fictional worlds various series describe and their human conception as a symptom of a broader cultural and social tendency is still not typically found in newspaper writing about television drama.

The same characterizations are largely reflected in the views of the makers of the series. The notion that series, at least referentially, deal with the outside world is still alive. The interviews reveal that the articulations of truth have changed rather drastically at different times. Whereas the makers of early *perhesarja* simply used the camera to portray — albeit fictionally — what took place in the modern world, the intellectual of the late 1960s was no longer satisfied with a mere ‘window to the world’ ethos. S/he had a message to deliver and used television as an instrument for changing the world into more humane place to live. At the beginning of the 1970s, this was accompanied by a strong emphasis on documentarism. The motivation for making series was to represent the Finnish way of life, as well as to provide the audience with emotional experiences. Mixing fact and fiction in certain topical programs, however, kept pestering the emerging politicized society and, through that, also public broadcasting; the different voices had to be more equally represented on the screen, and opinions needed to be clearly differentiated from factual material.

In the 1980s it was as if a transition back to the dynamics of the informational program policy of the late 1960s was taking place with regard to the blending of fact and fiction. Now it became important to show that fact also had its fictional side. Even a documentary is somebody’s story, and

therefore the relationship between fact and fiction started to waver. At the same time, the notion that through television series it was possible to raise strong reactions to serious social matters in the audience, which news documentaries do not provide, was reinforced. Yet, despite these generalities, relatively few realistic serial dramas were created by TV 2. Instead, the questioning of the border between fact and fiction made its way to the reorganization of genres. Situational comedies and comedies tied to key characters that were targeted to a presumed Finnish audience appeared on the screen. Stylistic experiments were not conducted with regard to mid-length and long serial drama.

The same process continued into the 1990s. Some experimentation occurred through combining clearly different realistic and comic elements. These experimentations were more concerned with breaking with the tradition of social realism than with questioning the validity of realistic narration in dramas. Simultaneously, portrayals of human relationships were foregrounded, in which realism was justified expressly by credible portrayals of emotional life. In the case of *Metsolat*, the portrayal of the human relationships was also connected with a strong informative ethos. The changes that took place in society at the beginning of the 1990s were portrayed in the series through the individual fates of its characters. However, unlike during the period of the informational program policy, the consequences of the politics that prevailed during the recession were resolved within the family community.

In the 1990s, along with an increase in the number of women writers at TV 2, questions concerning women's quality of life also increased. Series were made that dealt with lives of single parents, the special problems of woman writers, or surviving breast cancer. The portrayal of the rituals of the everyday and celebrations, as well as friendships between women, increased. Female writers wrote and even directed series in which a broad use of the emotional scale was not looked down upon, even in *perhesarja*. Even the absurd was not shied away from. However, the boundaries of a *perhesarja* still could not be touched. In this sense a maker of serial drama clearly internalized the conceptualization of what realism signified in the *perhesarja* convention, which was an appropriate way to bring forth a fictional reality. Romantic love between married spouses or with another male character offered itself as a solution to painful conflict between the sexes. Hence, *perhesarja* was allowed to remain a genre in which a consensus is characteristic also with regard to the social gender system.

## 15.7. Drama of the Future?

Ever since the mid-1980s the consumer perspective has also risen in other public sector discourses. In other words, is the celebration of the viewers' 'activity' in meaning making finally a means to introduce liberalist television politics (cf. Gripsrud 1998, 90)? At the end of the 1980's YLE's program policy relied on the culturalization of everyday life. The part that audiences play in the production of cultural meanings and the choice of the forms of social action has been emphasized ever since.

The reverse side of culturalization is the possibility that the political meanings of everyday life are gradually completely cleared away. This is part of the global mediation process in which our culture begins to be saturated by symbols and starts to have less and less interest in anything else other than its own reality. The re-articulation of the social can simply happen so that a fictive television drama begins to feed the viewer, hungry for reality, more than everyday life itself can. Some researchers propose that citizens' "patronage" is in the end replaced by a certain kind of indifference in the media production ideology that guards freedom. In competition economy interest for individuals and their freedoms is secondary. It is logical and primary to concentrate instead on their ability and readiness to consume certain products. (Heath 1990, 271-276.)

Could YLE not clearly separate itself from such an perspective? Is it not its job as a public service institution to be interested in the status of individuals in this locally and globally reorganizing and resignifying society? Could it not double-check its own role as a producer?

I consider it important that we do not give totally up on the modern project, but instead, we should learn from the mistakes that have been made (Habermas 1996). This is especially important when one speaks through the methods of fiction about the handling of everyday life. Makers of *perhesarja* have the production expertise, but they should not claim that they represent objective reasoning. This does not mean the forbidding of reason, but recognizing that truth always has a relative and political nature. This view also applies to television criticism. Under these late-modern conditions, the utility drama, which connects art and entertainment, as well as fulfilling both the informative and entertaining functions of drama, could truly thrive. There will be much greater uses for economically produced series that employ and deal with current topics. However, it would be good for an author to, for example, critically examine the present limited scope of *perhesarja*; the utility drama can place events in one or more households, but it does not need to support the present family ideology and gender hierarchy.

In any case, the significance of information is considered from a new perspective. First of all, the information disseminated by YLE no longer has a similar assumed relationship with the dynamics of society as it previously claimed to have. Moreover, YLE should take into account that the viewer who enjoys her/his assumed freedom is taking part in “everyday tests” which have unpredictable results (see Giddens 1995, 84-89). When the everyday choices of the viewer are part of the globalization process, it demands a new kind of citizenship, which emphasizes more than before the individual’s responsibility for his or her own actions. Citizenship has not disappeared but it has changed its anatomy and started to include consumption as well. In short, the moral responsibility that was formerly socially regulated by such institutions as YLE has increasingly been transferred to the shoulders of the individual (Bauman 1990, 143-169). The viewers that have often been called ‘individualists’ may be more willing to comment as participating citizens although the program formats offered by television and the agenda of the things as they now stand would not seem to allow a chance for this (Ridell 1998, 295-298).

In any case, “the consumer’s freedom of choice” concerns a wider turn in social philosophy than the resistance of bureaucratic paternalism in the cultural field and the all-encompassing power of expertise.

There is an unwanted alternative: the resistance of top-down exercise of power can be articulated as the rise of neo-liberalism. In this case the social functions of the private and the public are “naturally” juxtaposed: the role of managerialism, which emphasizes economic efficiency and the role of public administration in defending the welfare state. In neo-liberalism the values public service, the benefits of citizens, and the interest on the level of communities are confronted with the values of economics, the benefits of consumers and the interests on the level of individuals (Clarke & Newman 1997, 124-125.) Furthermore, do not the different possibilities for articulation that are connected to the viewer’s “freedom of choice” presuppose that the author can maintain a certain degree of freedom in his or her work and independence in relation to the state as well as in relation to the markets? Similar to other cultural workers, the author of serial drama easily accepts the ensuing constraints and possibilities. They seem to him or her as they seem to all of us as “things that have to be done” (Bourdieu 1998, 58).

In a small country like Finland, with a characteristic language and culture of its own, it is the public service system, which can, unlike the commercial system alone, guarantee certain kinds of relationships of cultural, and productional co-operation where, for instance, branding is not the foremost issue. Instead, the public service system should guard the drama artists’

possibilities to say, innovate, realize their ideas, exercise their freedom of speech and find forms for the things they have to say. This too is a form of individualism that is based on social realities: author-orientation that respects quality.



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# Appendix 1:

## TV 2 Serial Drama from the 1960s to the 1990s\*

### **The 1960s**

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#### **Heikki ja Kaija (1961-1971)**

Episodes	76
Format	series
Type	drama
Writer	Reino Lahtinen
Directors	Pertti Nättilä (episodes 1–25, 30–64, 66-75), Marjaliisa Viinikainen (episodes 26-29), Vili Auvinen (episodes 9-35, 37, 40-41,45,47, 49-55,59-74), and Juhani Nättilä (combined episode 76)
Production unit	Tamvisio (episodes 1-28), TV2 Theater Department (episodes 29-75)
Production secretary	Ulla-Maija Alppi, Terttu Suokas, Ulla-Maija Mäkinen, and Mari Lehtonen
Cast	Vili Auvinen, Eila Roine, Sylvi Salonen, Veijo Pasanen, Raakel Laakso, Liisa Roine, Eero Roine, etc.

#### **Kiurunkulma (1966-1969)**

Episodes	25
Format	series
Type	drama
Writer	Liisa Vuoristo
Directors	Antero Nurminen (episodes 1-4) Pekka Koskinen & Eila Lappalainen (episodes 5-6), Eila Arjoma (episodes 7-25)
Production unit	TV2 Theater Department
Production secretary	Tuulikki Pajunen
Cast	Martti Pennanen, Irma Tanskanen, Pentti Kultala, Kaija Sinisalo, Riitta Turunen, Orvokki Mäkinen, Keijo Lindroos, Eira Soriola, etc.

#### **Hilma (1967-1968)**

Episodes	22
Format	series
Type	drama
Writer	Pseudonym “Pavi”, Paavo Vihervä

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\* The list of practitioners and their professional status was made according to the program archive of TV2. In some unclear cases the status had to be deduced from the composition of the production team. Especially this was done when concluding whether it was appropriate to use the title of ‘assistant producer’ or ‘associate producer’.

Directors Jarmo Nieminen (episodes 1-9, 11-13, 18), Kalervo Nissilä (1-6), Matti Tapio (episodes 10, 14-16, 21-22), Pekka Koskinen (episodes 17, 19-20)

Production unit TV2 Theater Department

Production secretary Ulla-Maija Mäkinen and Terttu Suokas

Cast Senni Nieminen, etc.

### **30-luvun mies (1968-1969)**

Episodes 11

Format series

Type historical drama

Writer Tauno Yliruusi

Directors Mikko Majanlahti (episodes 1-5, 7-8), Jarmo Nieminen (episodes 6, 9-14)

Production unit TV2 Theater Department

Production secretary Ulla-Maija Mäkinen

Cast Antti Litja, Esko Roine, Toivo Lehto, Marja-Sisko Aimonen, etc.

## **The 1970s**

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### **Palveleva puhelin (1970)**

Episodes 8

Format series

Type drama (with studio commentaries)

Writers Tauno Yliruusi (1, 3), Eero Silvasti (2, 5), Heikki Hemminki (4), Eero Vanhatalo (6), Anneli Pukema (8), unknown (7)

Directors Matti Tapio (1,3, 6), Eila Arjoma (2, 7), and Pekka Koskinen, (4, 5, 8)

Production unit TV2 Theater Department

Production secretary Kati Holm (1), Ulla-Maija Alppi (2, 4, 7), Terttu Suokas (3, 5, 6, 8),

In Studio Aulis Aarnio and Eero Silvasti

Cast Reino Kalliolahti, Tauno Karvonen, Sally Knute, Leena Kokko, Pentti Kultala, Mauri Kuosmanen, Reijo Lahtinen, Tapani Lampimäki, Aimo Laukkanen, Aune Lind, Turkka Lehtinen, Turo Lehtinen, Keijo Lindroos, Seppo Majjala, Maija-Liisa Majanlahti, Pekka Mikama, Pekka Myyryläinen, Juha Mäkelä, Minna Mäki, Mari Niemi, Olavi Niemi, Ensio Niiranen, Marja-Liisa Nisula, Liisa Pakarinen, Maiju Palo, Pertti Palo, Veijo Pasanen, etc.

### **Päälüottamusmies (1970-1971)**

Episodes 8

Format series

Type drama

Writer Jorma Savikko

Director Rauni Mollberg

Production unit TV2 Theater Department  
Production secretary Tuulikki Halonen  
Cast Kapo Manto, Raili Veivo, Martti Pennanen, Kurt Ingvall,  
Esko Hannula, Vieno Saaristo, etc.

#### **Rintamäkeläiset (1972-1978)**

Episodes 30  
Format series  
Type drama  
Writer Reino Lahtinen  
Editor (producer) Pentti Nätilä  
Directors Pertti Nätilä (episodes 1-28), Veijo Pasanen (episodes 2-30)  
Production units TV2 Theater Department, TV2 Entertainment Programs,  
The Bureau of TV2's Program Chief  
Production secretary Ulla-Maija Alppi and Mari Lehtonen  
Cast Ahti Haljala, Veijo Pasanen, Sirkka Lehto, Eila Roine,  
Marjukka Halttunen, Matias Ikävalko, etc.

#### **Mustat ja punaiset vuodet (1973)**

Episodes 10  
Format series  
Type historical drama  
Writer Liisa Vuoristo  
Director Eila Arjoma  
ProductionUnit TV2 Theater Department  
Production secretary Tuulikki Halonen  
Cast Ritva Valkama, Pertti Palo, Erkki Siltola, Orvokki Mäkinen,  
Minna Aro, Katja Salminen, Veli Tuomas-Kettunen, Irma  
Tanskanen, Virpi Uimonen, Aarre Pekkarinen, etc.

#### **Oi kallis kaupunki (1975)**

Episodes 9  
Format serial  
Type drama  
Writer Jorma Savikko  
Director Matti Tapio  
Production unit TV2 Theater Department  
Production secretary Terttu Suokas  
Cast Kim Floor, Eija Nousiainen, Toivo Lehto, Tuulikki Pohjola,  
etc.

#### **Sodan ja rauhan miehet (1978-1979)**

Episodes 10  
Format series  
Type historical drama  
Writer Matti Tapio  
Director Matti Tapio

Production unit TV2 Theater Department  
Production secretary Terttu Suokas  
Cast Keijo Komppa, Martti Pennanen, Risto Mäkelä, Mikko Niskanen, Kullervo Kalske, Leif Wager, Ilmari Saarelainen, Rolf Labbart, Yrjö Parjanne, Timo Kankainen, Aulis Ruostepuro, etc.

### **Tankki täyteen (1978, 1980, and 1982)**

Episodes 12  
Format series  
Type comedy  
Writers Neil Hardwick and Jussi Tuominen  
Director Esko Leimu  
Editor (producer) Jussi Tuominen  
Production unit TV2 Entertainment Programs  
Production secretary Sirpa Bertling and Kaarina Vihuri  
Cast Sylvi Salonen, Tauno Karvonen, Ilmari Saarelainen, Tuire Salenius, Tenho Sauren, etc.

## **The 1980s**

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### **Reinikainen (1982-1983)**

Episodes 14  
Format series  
Type comedy  
Writers Neil Hardwick and Jussi Tuominen  
Director Jouni Tuokkola and Neil Hardwick  
Editor (producer) Jussi Tuominen  
Production unit TV2 Entertainment Department  
Production secretary Ulla Kilpeläinen  
Cast Tenho Sauren, Esko Roine, Pentti Kultala, Mauri Kuosmanen, Seppo Maijala, Antti Seppä, Tuija Vuolle, etc.

### **Kotirappu (1987)**

Episodes 8  
Format serial  
Type drama  
Writer Jussi Niilekselä  
Director Jussi Niilekselä  
Editor (producer) Reima Kekäläinen  
Production unit TV2 Theater Department  
Production secretary Ulla-Maija Alppi  
Cast Matti Viironen, Eriikka Magnusson, Nuutti Meriläinen, Saara Taajoranta, Martti Palo, Ulla-Maija Siikavire, Roosa Ritola, Antti Palo, Vesa Kietäväinen, Sylvi Salonen, etc.

### **Mummo (1987 and 1989)**

Episodes	10
Format	series
Type	comedy
Writer	Pekka Lepikkö
Director	Pekka Lepikkö
Editors (producers)	Jussi Tuominen and Pekka Lepikkö
Production unit	TV2 Drama Group
Production secretary	Teija Hakanen, Eija Wilkman, and Hilikka Yli-Arvo
Cast	Anja Räsänen, Maiju Jokinen, Riitta-Liisa Helminen, Ahti Jokinen, Mauri Kuosmanen, Tuija Ernamo, etc.

### **Korpimotelli (1988)**

Episodes	8
Format	serial
Type	comedy
Writer	Arvi Auvinen
Director	Arvi Auvinen
Production unit	Korpifilmi Oy & TV2 Entertainment Programs
Production secretary	Tuula Ahokivi, Anja Pujola
Cast	Tuija Piepponen, Hannu Lukinmaa, Kalle Eskelinen, Pirkko Marjavaara, etc.

### **Rivitaloelämää (1989-1990)**

Episodes	14
Format	series
Type	comedy
Writer	Ilse Rautio
Director	Kristiina Repo
Editor (producer)	Kristiina Repo
Production unit	TV2 Drama Group
Production secretary	Arja Terho
Cast	Ismo Kallio, Sinikka Sokka, Katri Sandholm, Hanna-Loviisa Rabinowitsch, Alekski Kalmankurki, etc.

## **The 1990s**

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### **Aaveita ja valkoisia valheita (1990)**

Episodes	8
Format	series
Type	dramedy (drama and comedy)
Writer	Jussi Parviainen
Director	Jussi Parviainen
Production unit	TV2 Drama Group
Production secretary	Hilikka Yli-Arvo
Cast	Samuli Edelman, Leea Klemola, Johanna Kerttula, Matti Viironen, Raili Veivo, Anna Haaranen, Lena Meriläinen,

Minna Hokkanen, Nina Jääskeläinen, Katariina Kaitue,  
Jarkko Mikkola, Minna Soisalo, etc.

**Päin perhettä (1992)**

Episodes 20  
Format series  
Type comedy  
Writer J Puranen  
Dramatist Jukka Mäkinen  
Directors Jukka Mäkinen (episodes 1-6, 13-16), Pekka Lepikkö  
(episodes 7-12, 17-20)  
Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas  
Production secretary Ulla Kilpeläinen  
Cast Antti Litja, Vieno Saaristo, Outi Mäenpää, Jari Salmi, etc.

**Pari sanaa lemmestä (1992-1993)**

Episodes 10  
Format series  
Type comedy  
Writer Jussi Niilekselä  
Director Jussi Niilekselä  
Assistant/  
assistant director Sirpa Bertling  
Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas  
Cast Eila Roine, Esko Hukkanen, Tuija Töyräs, Ilkka Koivula,  
Sari Tirkkonen, Petri Lairikko, Seppo Kulmala, etc.

**Pappa rakas (1993)**

Episodes 9  
Format series  
Type comedy  
Writer Seppo Vesiluoma  
Dramatist Jarmo Lampela  
Director Jarmo Lampela  
Producer Olli Tola  
Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas  
Production secretary Varpu Eräpää  
Cast Tauno Karvonen, Hannu Kivioja, Milka Ahlroth, Päivi  
Ruippo, Elina Hoffren, Aulis Ruostepuro, Orvokki  
Mäkinen, Anneli Ranta, etc.

**Hyvien ihmisten kylä (1993-1994)**

Episodes 9  
Format serial  
Type dramedy (drama and comedy)  
Writer Seppo Vesiluoma  
Director Jussi Niilekselä

Associate producer Sirpa Bertling  
 Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas (episodes 1, 8) and TV2 Theater Programs (episodes 2-7, 9)  
 Production secretary Kati Mattila  
 Cast Tapio Liinoja, Jaana Järvinen, Aulis Rosendahl, Seija Näppilä, Hannes Lukinmaa, Laura Jurkka, Jarmo Kangas, Antti Seppä, Eija Varima, Kristiina Kuivaila, Kalevi Haapoja, Heikki Luukas, Dick Holmström, Hilikka Ollikainen, etc.

### **Huomenna on paremmin (1993)**

Episodes 8  
 Format series  
 Type comedy  
 Writers Raija Talvio (episodes 1-8), Marjo Valve (episodes 1-8), and Susanna Huuhka (episode 8)  
 Director Marjo Valve  
 Associate producer Sirpa Bertling  
 Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas  
 Production secretary Katriina Mattila  
 Cast Erkki Saarela, Kirsi Liimatainen, Niko Saarela, Kristiina Kuningas, etc.

### **Metsolat (1993, 1995, 1996)**

Episodes 40  
 Format serial  
 Type drama  
 Writers Carl Mesterton (creator, episodes 1- 40), Curt Ulfstedt (episodes 1-21), Miisa Linden (episodes 22-40), and Anna Lisa Mesterton (episodes 22-40)  
 Director Carl Mesterton (episodes 1-40),  
 Assistant directors Vesa Veijalainen (episodes 1-7) and Anne Syrjä (episodes 23-40)  
 Producer Raimo Mikkola (associate producer, episodes 1-21; producer, episodes 22-40)  
 Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas  
 Production secretary Maija Hiltunen  
 Cast Ahti Haljala, Helinä Viitanen, Kari Hakala, Katriina Honkanen, Hellevi Seiro, Svante Martin, Anna-Leena Härkönen, Kim Floor, Esko Raipia, Jaana Raski, Juha Hyppönen, Anu Hälvä, Mikael Andersson, Jari Salmi, etc.

### **Kyllä isä osaa (1994 and 1995)**

Episodes 30  
 Format series  
 Type comedy  
 Writer Pekka Lepikkö  
 Director Pekka Lepikkö

Producer Olli Tola (episodes 1-30)  
Associate producer Ulla Kilpeläinen (episodes 1-20)  
Production unit Linssilude Ky. & TV2 Theater Programs (episodes 1–20),  
and TV2 Serial Dramas (episodes 21-30)  
Production secretary Varpu Eräpää  
Cast Tom Lindholm, Tuija Ernamo, Maiju Jokinen, Jarno  
Jokinen, etc.

#### **Autopalatsi (1994)**

Episodes 12  
Format serial  
Type comedy  
Writers Anita Malkamäki & Susanna Patjas (episodes 1-12), and  
Jukka Mäkinen (episodes 8-12)  
Dramatist Jukka Mäkinen  
Director Jukka Mäkinen  
Producer Olli Tola  
Production unit TV2 Theater Programs  
Production secretary Hilikka Yli-Arvo  
Cast Esko Raipia, Outi Alanen, Ulla-Maija Siikavire, Risto  
Salmi, Risto Autio, Tuire Saloniemi, etc.

#### **Kohtaamiset ja erot (1994-1995)**

Episodes 21  
Format serial  
Type dramedy (drama and comedy)  
Writers Sirkka Laine  
Dramatists Merja Turunen (episodes 1-21), Kristiina Repo (episodes  
1-9)  
Director Kristiina Repo  
Associate producer Varpu Eräpää  
Production unit TV2 Theater Programs (episodes 1-14) and TV2 Serial  
Dramas (episodes 15-21)  
Production secretary Arja Terho  
Cast Susanna Haavisto, Kari Kihlström, Helena Haavisto, Emmi  
Suhonen, Merja Larivaara, Jan-Peter Nyquist, Martti  
Pennanen, Ritva Oksanen, Tauno Karvonen, Kai Lehtinen,  
Pirkko Uitto, Pertti Koivula, Eira Soriola, etc.

#### **Taikapeili (1995)**

Episodes 19  
Format series  
Type comedy  
Writer Kastehelmi Savolainen  
Directors Kalle Pursiainen (episodes 1-3, 5-8) and Jussi Tuominen  
(episodes 4, 9-19)  
Producer Jussi Tuominen  
Production unit TV2 Quiz/Talk Show Group



Production secretary Rea Rintakoski  
Cast Tuija Vuolle, Esko Roine, Petteri Summanen, Sanna Jalomäki, Mia-Annette Latvus, Markku Murtomäki, Kaj Kangas, Tuula Kosonen, Jouni Kauppila, Juhani Tuominen, etc.

### **Onnea vai menestystä (1995)**

Episodes 20  
Format serial  
Type drama  
Writer Ilse Rautio  
Directors Irmeli Heliö (episodes 1-5, 11-20), Jukka Mäkinen (episodes 6-10)  
Assistant director Arja Terho  
Producer Olli Tola  
Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas  
Production secretary Loviisa Baderman  
Cast Susanna Haavisto, Mikko Hänninen, Sara Ikävalko, Johanna Hämäläinen, Sara Paavolainen, Ilkka Heiskanen, etc.

### **Lähempänä taivasta (1996)**

Episodes 18  
Format serial  
Type drama  
Writers Annukka Kiuru (episodes 1-4, 7, 10, 13), Anne Raatikainen (episodes 6, 8, 11), Anita Malkamäki (episodes 9, 12), Petri Repo (episodes 5, 17-18) Päivi Alasalmi (episode 14), Hannu Raittila (episodes 15-16)  
Dramatists Merja Turunen (episodes 1-13), Jukka Mäkinen (episodes 6-18), Annina Enckell (episodes 13-18)  
Directors Jukka Mäkinen (episodes 1-3), Kalle Pursiainen (episodes 6-11, 15-16) and Kristiina Repo (episodes 4-5, 12-14, 17-18)  
Producer Matti Penttilä  
Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas  
Production secretary Maija Hiltunen, Hilikka Yli-Arvo, Terttu Eskelinen, Maija Syrjälä, Kati Holm  
Cast Riitta Havukainen, Petteri Sallinen, Raimo Grönberg, Maria Nygård, Juha Niemi, etc.

### **Pimeän hehku (1996)**

Episodes 13  
Format serial  
Type thriller  
Writers Kerttu-Liisa Karjalainen & Lasse Jaakkola  
Director Ilkka Vanne  
Producers Olli Tola & Sirpa Bertling  
Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas  
Production secretary Maija Syrjälä  
Cast Svante Martin, Mari Rantasila, Mikk Mikiver, Viktor

Drevitski, Tapani Perttu, Pertti Koivula, Ritva Oksanen,  
Hannele Laaksonen, Martti Pennanen, etc.

### **Heartmix (1996)**

Episodes 13  
Format serial  
Type docu-drama  
Writers Mika Kemmo & Pasi Kemmo (episodes 1-8) and Jukka-Pekka Siili (episodes 9-13)  
Directors Pasi Kemmo (episodes 1-8,13) and Jukka-Pekka Siili (episodes 9-12)  
Producers Olli Tola and Pasi Kemmo  
Production unit MCT ManCanToo Oy and TV2 Serial Dramas  
Cast Teija Korkeamaa, Tomi Paalosmaa, Tuomas Talvitie, Maria Valonen, Laura West, Juha Sulin, Pia Rantanen, etc.

### **Elämän suola (1996-1998)**

Episodes 60  
Format serial  
Type dramedy (drama and comedy)  
Creator Jussi Niilekselä  
Writers Jussi Niilekselä, Risto Autio, Reijo Honkonen, Markku Turunen, Matti Kuusisto, Tuija Lehtinen, Kaarina Terho, Vuokko Tolonen, Seppo Vesiluoma, Johanna Sinisalo, and Jarmo Lampela  
Script editor Mika Ripatti  
Directors Jussi Niilekselä (episodes 1-3, 20, 57-59), Irmeli Heliö (episodes 9-11, 17-19, 21-23, 27-29, 33-35, 39-41,48-50) Jarmo Lampela (episodes 4-5, 12-16, 24-26, 30-32, 42-44, 60), Tommi Auvinen (episodes 6-8), Ilkka Vanne (episodes 36-38,45-47,51-53)  
Assistant directors Irmeli Heliö, Johanna Vuoksenmaa, Arja Terho, Ulla Kilpeläinen  
Producer Jussi Niilekselä  
Assistant producer Varpu Eräpää  
Production unit TV2 Serial Dramas (episodes 1-18), TV2 Theater Programs (episodes 19-60)  
Production secretary Arja Terho, Ulla Kilpeläinen, Mia Rouvinen, and Maija Syrjälä  
Cast Ritva Oksanen, Mikko Nousiainen, Ilmari Saarelainen, Tapio Liinoja, Jaana Järvinen, Heikki Paavilainen, Reidar Palmgren, Kirsi Liimatainen, Esko Hukkanen, Anna Haaranen, Marjasisko Aimonen, Laura Jurkka, Elias Vakkuri, etc.

### **Ota ja omista (1997)**

Episodes 32  
Format series

Type comedy  
Writers Leena Tamminen (original idea), Leo Viirret (episodes 1-2, 5, 9-10, 15, 17, 20, 24, 32), Jukka-Pekka Siili (episodes 1-3, 5-8, 30-31), Susanna Laaksonen (episodes 2-3, 5-8, 9, 13, 25, 27, 29), Kirsi Porkka (episodes 3,6,14,21), Markku Haapalehto (episodes 4-5,12,18, 23, 30), Tarja Kylmä (episodes 11,19,26), Maarit Lalli (episode 16), Petri Kotwica (episodes 22, 28), Ronnie Winter (episode 27)  
Script editors Jukka-Pekka Siili (episode 1-4, 18, 20), Susanna Laaksonen (episode 14-17, 19-22, 24-26, 28)  
Directors Jukka-Pekka Siili (episodes 1-5, 17-18, 29-30, 32), Mikko Mattila (episodes 6-11, 28, 31), Kalle Pursiainen (episodes 12-14, 19-21), Lenka Hellstedt (episodes 15-16, 22-26), Jyrki Lehtonen (episode 27)  
Producer Hilikka Salo  
Production unit TV 2 Theater Programs  
Production secretary Arja Terho & Ulla Kilpeläinen  
Cast Katriina Honkanen, Susanna Vasara (Indren), Pentti Helin, Irene Ilander, Jetro Meriläinen, etc.

### **Klubi (1998)**

Episodes 20  
Format serial  
Type drama  
Creator DRAAMA 2001 (orig. idea)  
Writers Petri Repo, Jari Juutinen, Anneli Kanto, Ulla Malassu, Olli Saarela, Leena Virtanen  
Dramatist Anne Raatikainen  
Script editor Petri Repo  
Director Ilkka Vanne  
Producers Sirpa Bertling & Matti Penttilä  
Production unit TV2 Theater Programs  
Production secretary Mia Rouvinen and Maija Syrjälä  
Cast Tapani Perttu, Pirkko Mannola, Teemu Lehtilä, Kristiina Halttu, Ossi Ahlapuro. Carl-Kristian Rundman, Paavo Liski, Svante Martin, Maarit Peltomaa, Hannele Laaksonen, Anu Sinisalo, Juho Luhtala, Kari-Pekka Toivonen, Ritva Sorvali, Minna Turunen, Anna Siren, Pentti Helin, Jukka Pitkänen, Irma Junnilainen, Samuli Muje, Raimo Grönberg, Roman Schatz, etc.

### **Kalapuikkokeitto (1998)**

Episodes 8  
Format series  
Type comedy  
Writer Kati Royle (orig.)  
Dramatists Anne Raatikainen (1-5, 7-8), Hilikka Salo (1-2, 6-8), Tuula Länsisalmi, (4-6)

Directors Lenka Hellstedt  
Producer Hilikka Salo  
Production unit TV 2 Theater Programs  
Production secretary Marja Hedman and Arja Terho  
Cast Kolina Seppälä, Mari Perankoski, Juha Junttu, Tuukka Huttunen, Elisa Salo, etc.

**Hovimäki (1999-)**

Episodes (the serial continues)  
Format serial  
Type historical drama  
Writers Carl Mesterton (creator), Anna-Liisa Mesterton, Kirsti Manninen, and Jussi-Pekka Aukio  
Directors Carl Mesterton  
Assistant director Anne Syrjä  
Producer Raimo Mikkola  
Production unit TV 2 Theater Programs  
Production secretary Maija Hiltunen and Kati Holm  
Cast Tapani Kalliomäki, Nina Hukkinen, Risto Salmi, Anneli Sauli, Pekka Heikkinen, Eppu Salminen, Riitta Salminen, Janina Berman, Antti Lang, Karoliina Blackburn, Marc Gassot, Rose-Marie Precht, Mikael Andersson, Johanna af Shulten, Linda Gtllenberg, Minna Haapkylä, Oskari Katajisto, Anna Pitkämäki, Esa Latva-Äijö, Niklas Häggblom, Tom Wentzel, Taisto Aho, Dan Henriksson, Oiva Lohtander, Monica Nyman, Minna Hämäläinen, etc.

## Appendix 2: The Question Frame

### **Women, Men and Television Evenings – a Case Study for YLE in 1996**

#### **Thematic interview: The production of entertainment programs**

The interview begins with the professional history of the makers. At the same time personal data is gathered:

1. Name
2. Profession
  - a. Producer
  - b. Writer
  - c. Director
  - d. Some other
3. Employment
  - a. YLE
  - b. Independent production company

#### **Themes for discussion (varied according to the profession)**

1. The original program idea
  - A. Did the program idea come from inside or outside the television company?
  - B. What were the criteria for developing the idea further?
  - C. How much did the competition effect shaping of the program idea?
  - D. Who was the program primarily aimed at? Was this successful?
  - E. Was the 'quality of your program discussed at any stage?

2. Recruiting the makers and developing the program idea
  - A. How were the makers (writers, directors, and editors) of the program selected?
  - B. What is the role of each maker in the production of the program in question?
  - C. What kind of compromises was made in the program idea or in the realization of the program? At what stages?
3. Evaluation of the final result
  - A. How does the final result correspond to the original idea?
  - B. What kind of entertainment is the program?
  - C. How has the program been received among the audience and colleagues?
4. Additional question about the program (corresponding with the question made to viewers about the program)