KATJA VALASKIVI

Relations of Television

Genre and Gender in the Production, Reception and Text of a Japanese Family Drama

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Contents

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1. Relations of this study

How did you become interested in Japan? Why do you study Japan? Why do you study Japanese television and drama? These are among the frequent questions that I have encountered while doing this work. At one point I did find the constant questioning quite crippling because the inquiries forced me to problematize my own motives and also seemed to put the value and justification of my approach under doubt. Later, however, I came to appreciate the questions precisely for of these reasons. After having talked with anthropologists from the US and Britain I have also realized what it can mean not to be asked these questions. Studying something which has self-evidently established itself as an object of study can also be limiting in terms of not realizing one's own motivations and recognizing the socio-cultural and historical background that actually creates the justification for one's work.

My primary motives for becoming interested in Japan and Japanese television were personal. After spending a year as an exchange student in Tokyo, Hachioji, in the late 1980's, I studied journalism, Japanese studies and women's studies in Finland. At times what I was doing had nothing to do with Japan, but nevertheless the interest was there. For my master's thesis I did a textual analysis of *Wataru seken wa oni bakari*, the serial which I also focus upon in this study. When the opportunity for doing research for a Ph.D. dissertation came more than four years ago I decided to work this through. In that sense this study is very much about my relationship with 'Japan'.

The personal interest, however, was not enough to justify the study for me, especially for me having a background in the discipline known in Finland as 'journalism and mass communication', even though a personal account could have had something to offer from a more anthropological point of view. The repetition of the question "Why do you study Japanese television drama?" began to create a justification for doing this study. This justification depended on the emphasis with which the question was asked.

Firstly, the question "Why do you study *Japanese* television?" made me realize that had I chosen to study Finnish television, no matter the genre, probably nobody would have asked me why. It is unlikely that the question would have appeared even in the case of studying US television, or even British. Thus, by choosing Japanese television, I have come to choose a subject that reminds the (international) academic community of scholars in media studies of the fact that there is something outside of the usually perceived range of 'global' media culture — something of which a growing proportion is in fact made in Japan. Furthermore, my subject also brings out the point that 'Japanese media culture' is more than *manga*, *anime*[1], and

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[1] comic books and animated films

popular movies that become hits outside Japan. Despite the fact that cultural studies in particular has grown more and more interested in 'localities', the focus is usually on the 'local' reception of 'global' media products. What interests me in this study is 'local' production, 'local' text and 'local' reception. Insisting, for instance, as Ang (1996) does, that the essential point is to study the global media products in a local setting, overlooks the fact that at times the global is not the issue. It is more essential to explore the cultural function of a genre that has naturally taken influences, but is nevertheless a local phenomenon. Focusing on the global in local contexts might lead to a situation where the local is overlooked and the global is a symptom of development and progress, the local being a symptom of backwardness. In particular, emphasis on the local reception of global media texts might lead to ignoring questions of economic and cultural power relations.

Secondly, the question "Why do you study Japanese *television* drama?", shows that television is still often considered to be an inferior, passivizing and mass medium. With the event of new media technology and especially the Internet, television seems to have lost even the 'sex appeal' it gained during the redemptive era of John Fiske's heyday. Television has fallen somewhere in between film and the Internet, the old and new media, both of which seem to be 'better' than television, which is considered a 'domestic' — sometimes also feminine — medium. Particularly in the case of Japan — the country with the aura of technological development and expertise — it would appear more appropriate to focus on the 'new media'[2]. The self-evident rule of television in the daily lives of the majority of the people on this planet sometimes makes the medium so natural that it is easily overlooked. In this setting the task of academic television research should be more than to serve (the international) media industries that demand predictions of future viewing habits in the era of digital television without realizing that the future 'consumption' of television is only born after certain decisions are made in the 'production' of television.

Finally, the question "Why do you study Japanese television *drama*?", implies that the asker would probably rather see me focusing on something "more serious", such as journalism, or even, these days the so-fashionable talk shows. This question, of course, often arises due to my working in a department of 'journalism and mass communication' which has its history and roots in (newspaper) journalism, and even there the focus has usually been on the analysis of the text, instead of on production or reception. In the latter case the international influences of cultural studies have in recent years directed research towards 'the use of media products'.

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[2] The whole concept of the 'information society', *jōhō shakai*, originates in Japan. (see Ito 1991 for a discussion on concepts of *jōhō shakai* and *jōhōka)*.

Due to their being concerned with the very premises of my research, these questions have then helped me to formulate what this study is about. This is a study about relations and contextualities. It is about my relationship with Japan, but first and foremost about relations between the production, reception and text of television, which I approach with the help of the notions of genre and gender. It is also about seeing phenomena and concepts within the context of other phenomena and contexts. More specifically, this is an empirical study on the production, reception and text of a Japanese television family drama or *terebi hōmu dorama*[3] as a genre- and gender-related cultural phenomenon, and I set out to tackle the following three issues:

Firstly, to challenge the linear and still strongly prevailing transmission model of (mass) communication and instead to explore the relationship between different aspects of communication, understood as a triangle of production, reception and text. Here I use the concept of genre as processual and social relationship, a 'communication contract' between the three corners of the communication triangle (cf. Ridell 1998b, Ryall 1978).

Secondly, to shed light on the gendered nature of genres and genre hierarchies. Media genre theorists have for quite some time emphasized the social aspects of genre, but gender has been more or less overlooked. The organization of genres into 'masculine' and 'feminine' has of course been acknowledged, but the ways in which gender cuts through all levels of genre has not been seriously looked into.

Thirdly and finally, to explicate how the intertwined dynamics of genre and gender are constructed in the case of Japanese *hōmu dorama* and specifically in regards to a particular serial of the kind, namely *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* — or *Wataoni* as it is called by its makers and fans — the family drama hit of the 1990's in Japan.

Media representations play an active role in shaping our understanding of good and bad, moral and immoral, normal and deviant. Media stories, such as *hōmu dorama* are part of mechanisms which provide the symbols, myths and resources through which the common culture is constituted and "through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture". (Kellner 1995a, 5.) Media stories, on their part, are organized into genre hierarchies, in which some types are defined as being more important than others. For instance, in cultures with a strong public service broadcasting tradition[4], television news are often considered to be the most essential and constitutive form of television with respect to national identity. News, however, is not, as it is often thought, the only form of television — and maybe not even the

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[3] Literally, 'television home drama', which in this study is translated as 'family drama' or 'family serial'.

[4] E.g. the Nordic countries, Britain and Japan.

most important one — taking part in the formation and reproduction of a 'collective memory'. Fictional genres, especially locally produced television dramas, also take part in 'nation-building' on a symbolic level.[5]

This study leans, in its definition of the concept of genre, and also more generally, on the tradition of critical cultural studies. For Kellner (1995b, 94) a researcher with a critical standpoint interprets culture and society "in terms of power, domination and resistance".

While critical social theory and cultural studies of mass communication involve developing normative standpoints through which cultural texts can be critically engaged, at the same time a researcher with a critical standpoint has to be self-reflexive and flexible about methods, positions, assumptions and interventions. One has to be constantly prepared to question, revise and develop them. For this purpose Kellner introduces 'multiperspectival' social theory, which would take into account "a wide range of constituent elements of cultural texts and practices". (Ibid., 97.)

In this study the critical challenge is taken on two different levels: firstly by using the concept of genre to focus on the whole triangle of the communication process, where the meaning is constituted in relation to television — the text, the audience and the production. This includes considering the socio-historical situation. The first level leads into the second level of theoretical and methodological approaches, which can be conceived of as a set of different perspectives (see Gripsrud 1995, 111) drawn from the genre theorists, feminist studies on television and related fields and semiotic theories of texts and cultures, and combining ideas from the Frankfurt school and Birmingham cultural studies, as well as Marxism and psychoanalysis (cf. Kellner 1995c).

Kellner's idea of multiperspectival theory underscores that the more perspectives there are, the fuller the picture. However, it has to be noted that the picture is never *full* in the sense that it would be the only and 'true' picture. This is why the word perspective is important. The picture will look different from different angles and thus the researcher's specific position has to be made a visible and explicit part of the research.

1.1. Genre and gender

One of the starting points for me in this study was the hypothesis that in Japanese society gender has become, and is constantly becoming, more top-

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[5] See Harvey (1998) for a discussion of morning dramas as a part of Japan's public service television NHK's national agenda.

ical[6]. This was grounded on the perception that as demands for greater equality between the sexes increase, people (both women and men) face more situations where traditional normative understandings about womanhood and manhood no longer appear satisfactory. I have seen indicators of this in the media culture as well: for instance *Wataoni* is — as programs belonging to the *hōmu dorama* often are — based on dialogue about changing understandings of gender. Consequently, one of the foci in this study is the shifting norms and understandings of gender, the understanding of masculinity and femininity in relation to television, and the gendered ways in which the genre-related processes of meaning take place.

Studies on television have usually concentrated on one of the three aspects: the text, the audience or the production. Studies combining these three have been scarce (Buckingham 1987, Gripsrud 1995), although in theory this combination has been considered important. The importance of more than one aspect in finding explanations for media phenomena can be demonstrated with some of the problems in the very influential and often quoted study by Katz, Liebes and Iwao (1991). This study finds explanations for *Dallas*'s failure in Japan and concludes that certain features of the programme were simply incompatible with "the Japanese" way of perceiving television family drama.[7]

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[6] This hypothesis is based on literature (e.g. Kondo 1990, Japanese Women Now 1992, Iwao 1993, Skov & Moeran 1995) and following the Japanese media culture and its way of reporting gender issues, as well as my own experiences in Japan in 1987-88, 1993, 1996 and 1997.

[7] Although these findings can give one view of the failure of Dallas, the study does not consider the possible influence of the research setting for the results. These include details like: people were asked to come to a specific place for the purpose of watching the drama, they knew the drama had failed in Japan, they knew they were going to be asked to discuss what they were to watch. Furthermore, as the serial had failed in the country, few of the interviewees had actually seen any episodes of the serial prior to the research. Moreover, the credibility of the given explanations could have been increased if the study had been broadened to include some features of the media atmosphere in Japan at the time *Dallas* was broadcast there. For example: When exactly was *Dallas* broadcast "for about six months by one of the leading private networks" (ibid., 99)? Which network was this and what was going on at the same time on other channels? Furthermore, what was going on in Japanese society and what kind of other dramas were successful at that time? Katz et al. themselves give us hints of several other possible explanations for the failure than the one they themselves prefer. They note that the drama was broadcast at a very late hour and it was the victim of bad PR (they report some viewers saying this). They even quote one viewer saying that *Dallas* failed because the audience preferred Japanese dramas to foreign ones. (Ibid. 101, 104, 110, note 15). If only the contents of the program were the reason for failure, logically the ratings would have dropped after a few episodes, only after the viewers had seen what was in the program. This was not the case, as we learn from Katz et al. Quite the contrary, according to them (ibid., 100) the share of the program was around 4,8 % during the whole period the drama was broadcast.

This explanation reinforces a view of Japan as something culturally unique[8], instead of analysing what actually happened in the media context. Rather than ground the explanation simply on textual reasons, it would be more plausible to suppose that *Dallas* failed, not (only) because of "cultural incompatibility" (ibid., 100), but also because the timing was bad, the PR failed and maybe because there was no market for a continuous, imported serial. Probably the Japanese production was sufficient to fulfil the needed 'drama quota' and thus there was no vacuum to fill. (Unlike in Norway, where "a quite unspecified 'need' for narrative entertainment was experienced as 'satisfied' [..] by the form of the prime-time soap opera [..]" [Gripsrud 1995, 25.])

As has been documented in earlier research (Larsen 1990), television audiences around the world prefer domestic dramas for imported ones. This tendency has also been strong in Japan since the 1960's. The majority of Japanese audiences prefer Japanese dramas, while foreign films are more popular than Japanese ones. (Hagiwara 1995, 5-6.) Gripsrud (ib., 104) concludes about the prioritization of indigenous programmes, that "[..] US shows do not deliver what viewers treasure most: strong, many-sided, meaningful experiential relations to their own lives and conditions."

In a study that focuses not only on text, but also on production and reception, it thus becomes necessary to find a concept that enables explanation of the intertwined relationships inside communication processes. In recent cultural media research this kind of analytical potential has been perceived in the concept of genre, if defined as a social 'communication contract' between makers and audience. More often, and especially in daily usage, however, the concept is employed taxonomically to refer to certain shared textual characteristics of television programmes or other cultural products.

Todorov (1973, 1977) has discussed the difference between 'historical genres', and 'theoretical genres', pondering whether or not genres exist as such, or are constructed by researchers. His conclusion is that historical genres are also theoretical and conceptual constructions, although they are used as means for taxonomic categorization. In this work the word 'genre' is used in both these meanings, although it would be more useful if it were possible to use the notion only as an analytical concept, referring to processes of meaning on a more general than just the taxonomic level. The context in

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[8] This kind of 'uniqueness of Japan' -discourse has been especially common in the *nihonjinron* tradition of Japanese studies. See Mouer & Sugimoto (1990[1986]) for critique of the *nihonjinron*.

each case indicates whether or not the question is of 'historical genre' or more analytical usage.[9] (cf. Ridell 1998b, 14.)

The notion of genre defined as a communication contract has been employed in empirical studies on the relationship between (television news) text and audience (Ridell 1998b) and between text and production (Helland 1995). However, empirical studies that would explore the practical implications of this 'contract' for both makers and audiences have this far not appeared.

As regards reception, central in the generic communication contract are the expectations the viewers have for a certain type of program, features that they have gotten used to finding in programs belonging to a certain genre. They have also learned to expect a variation on the features, that variation being often the reason for watching something that is basically familiar.

The makers, for their part, have the responsibility to provide for the expectations, as well as to breed new ones. Particularly on commercial channels their basic aim is to make a blending of old and new in such a compound that will attract the largest possible audience, or the largest possible share of the desired segment of the audience. The good rating as a result will ensure the continuity of the program and secure the professional future of the makers of the program. From this point of view, the production sees the viewers as potential consumers of their product — and at the same time, of course, as potential target groups for the advertisers and sponsors of the program.

Kinds of television or particular genres appear to be about specific 'realities' in specific ways, and to address specific audiences. At the same time they construct specific makerships inciting actual makers to act them out. This is how practices of making and watching are established and re-iterated in genre-related ways. Practices, for their part, actively reproduce social and cultural structures. This does not mean that structures would fix or determine practices, but they do exhibit tendencies, lines of force, as well as openings and closures which constrain, shape and channel practices. If structures are what previous practices have produced, then altering structures presumes changes in practices. (Hall 1996[1985].)

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[9] In the Finnish language these two meaning aspects of the concept 'genre' can be signified with different words: there is the notion of 'lajityyppi', literally meaning 'type of species', to distinguish between the taxonomy and categorising of texts from the more theoretical approach of genre analysis. In the English language this distinction is more difficult to make, as the same word 'genre' has to be applied to both.

In Ridell's (1996a, 1998b) definition genre refers to the conventionalized dynamics and processes of meaning that relate to textual practices and social practices. These take part in 'historical, social and political processes' (Threadgold 1989, 198). Textual and social practices connect the production and reception of a particular kind of television programming. Since Ridell's work focuses on television news and especially on the relationship between the news text and its audience, I find it interesting to combine her theoretical ideas with my own empirical material on production, reception and text of fictional television. This enables me to assess what kind of implications the study of a fictional, instead of factual, form has for the theoretical frame. Moreover, even though the critical genre approach is in principle sensitive to social questions, it, too, tends to neglect the pertinent issue of gender. This work is a move towards filling that gap and, in this way, advancing the social and cultural theory of genre for the purposes of media studies.

In this study the notion of gender is also perceived as a relationship of shifting powers. It is a relationship between the cultural conceptions of Woman and Man, and the relationship between these cultural ideals and actual women/men. Sex is one of the basic categories of cultural sense-making, and in this sense-making particular cultural meanings and social possibilities are associated with particular biological properties. In this study gender — like genre — is then seen as a cultural and social construction which is constantly in process. Genre and gender are intertwined on many levels, most obviously in cultural representations that appear in the media.

1.2. Structure of the study

The structure of this study is somewhat different from the usual deductive structure of dissertations in social sciences. I will start with the particular case of *Wataoni* and describe it as a part of the historical *hōmu dorama* genre, and only after that move into the theoretical concepts and framework, issues of method and empirical analysis. I have chosen this structure for two reasons: Firstly, to introduce a reader unfamiliar with Japanese television and family drama to the ways in which these are usually defined. The second reason involves the theoretical frame of the work. Since Chapter 2 focuses on the ways *hōmu dorama* has been constructed as a 'historical genre', it is in fact in contradiction with the more analytical approach to genre employed in the analysis later on in the study. This is why I move into details of defining genre and gender as theoretical notions in Chapter 3.

There is also another unusual feature in this study: unlike other studies that have focused on more than one aspect of the mass-mediated communication process, this study does not take first production, then reception and

then text, but looks at the three aspects as intertwined throughout the study, separating the analysis only in rare cases in different sub-chapters. Since my aim in this study was to explicitly address the relationship between the three aspects, I found it necessary to keep them close together throughout the work.

In Chapter 2 I will, as noted, first give a description of *hōmu dorama* as a historical genre, in its context of Japanese television in general and drama in particular, on the basis of the earlier literature. I also discuss *Wataoni* as a part of the *hōmu dorama* genre and describe the main audiences and the way of making the serial, as well as sketching the main developments of the plot-line.

After that I move into the theoretical framework of this study in Chapter 3, including the definitions for the notions of genre and gender. I illustrate my definition of genre with three figures, which I also use as tools for the analysis throughout this study. In Chapter 3 I also address some problems that the use of the term 'contract' brings with it in the context of critical genre analysis.

Chapter 4 focuses on how the material was collected and analyzed. I also reflect on my position and the used methods in relation to the setting of the study.

Chapters 5 and 6 concentrate on the analysis of empirical material. In Chapter 5 I follow the more or less established way of doing genre analysis and bracket gender, although it nevertheless surfaces at times. In Chapter 5 I discuss the themes of 'realism', 'Japaneseness' and 'family', as they appear in the interviews, in relation to the perceptions the viewers and makers have on the serial (5.1). I also look into the ways in which practices of making and watching *Wataoni* are characterized in the interviews (5.2). Finally I describe the perceptions the viewers and makers have on the relationships within the production, towards the programme and to each other (5.3).

The relationship between genre and gender, and the constitutive role of the latter in the genre-related process of mass-mediated meaning, starts unfolding in Chapter 6. This chapter starts with an exploration of the gendered hierarchies of genre (6.1), the gendered definitions of *hōmu dorama* and soap opera, and the way in which *Wataoni* can be constructed through these definitions (6.2) These sub-chapters can be seen as more analytical repetition of Chapter 2, where I simply described *hōmu dorama* as it has been defined by others. In 6.3 I move into discussing the perceptions the makers and viewers have on meanings of gender, and the ways in which these are made sense of in relation to the programme text and genre.

In Chapter 7 I conclude the study, and reformulate, based on the empirical findings, two of the theoretical genre figures presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 7 also reflects upon some general ethical problems of empirical media research which I have encountered in doing this study.

Earlier versions of chapters 2.3, 2.3.1, 2.4, 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 have been published in Valaskivi (1995). They have, however, been completely rewritten for the purpose of this study.

Japanese names in this study are presented in the Japanese form, with the family name preceding the given name. When Japanese words are used, macrons indicate long vowels (as in *hōmu dorama*). Exceptions to this are 'Tokyo' and 'Osaka', which are commonly used in English without macrons.

2. *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* in contexts

Wataoni is a multi-plot continuous serial, of which Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) has made four one-year sets, the first in 1990-1991 (Part 1), the second in 1993-1994 (Part 2) and the third in 1996-1997 (Part 3). The fourth set (Part 4) started in October 1998 and was shown every Thursday night at 9 p.m. until the end of September 1999. A one year-long set consists of 46-47 one-hour episodes, and 3-4 two-hour 'specials'.

Wataru seken wa oni bakari means something like 'Living among people is nothing but trouble' or 'Living with people is a life among devils'. It is a modified version of a Japanese proverb *Wataru seken ni oni wa nashi* meaning 'There is no trouble/devils in the social world'. According to the script-writer Hashida Sugako, she had been contemplating the proverb since her early childhood and had thought that it should be just the opposite. Thus, she decided to make her version the name of a serial.

Wataoni is said to be a *hōmu dorama* or family drama, meaning that it focuses on family, presupposes a family audience and addresses 'family interests'. There is also a consensus among makers and viewers of the drama that the question is about 'family drama' (on the definition of family drama see Ruoho 1996, 61). In this chapter I take a brief look at how Japanese television and popular culture have been studied and conceptualized, then describe the television system in Japan and television drama there. After that I move into discussing *Wataoni* by first describing the history of *hōmu dorama*, as it has been constructed in earlier literature, and then by referring to *Wataoni* as a representative of its kind. Finally I describe the making and watching of the serial and give a brief outline of the plotline.

2.1. Growing interest in Japanese media culture

Literature on television drama in general and *hōmu dorama* in particular is numerous in Japan. A greater part of it, however, is aimed at a wider popular audience, or professional tv-makers, rather than at academic audience. The more popular kind of literature includes books on the making of television drama: There are books on the process of making a script, often authored by script writers themselves (e.g. Tai 1980, with a foreword by Ishii Fukuko), about making television in general (e.g. Takase 1959) or autobiographical books by famous television makers (e.g. Kobayashi 1995, who is the pro-

ducer of *Oshin*[1]). There are also books that cover several famous makers and their work (e.g. Shiga 1977, which includes a chapter on Ishii[2]; Shiga 1979, Shiga 1981).

There are also more theoretical books on television drama written by professional tv-makers (e.g. Ogawa 1985) and historical overviews of television drama in Japan, some of which seem to be addressed towards the television audiences (e.g. Harada 1983), and others assuming more professional audiences, makers of television, students or researchers (e.g. Egami 1989, Gotō et al 1991, Toriyama 1993). Books and articles about *hōmu dorama* particularly often pay attention to family and/or gender (e.g. Matsuo 1987, 1993, 1997; Satō 1978). There is also some literature concerning images of women in television and media in general (e.g. Muramatsu 1982, Makita & Muramatsu 1985, Kunihiro 1997) and television drama in particular (Muramatsu 1974, 1979, 1986, 1991, 1992; Makita & Muramatsu 1987). However, Sakamoto (1999, 177) notes that Japanese feminist media studies have until recently relied on the transmission model of media, and have focused mostly on gender stereotypes. She uses as examples of this Inoue et al. (1989) and Muramatsu (1979).

In summary, Japanese authors seem to have concentrated on the history of the makers in tv-drama and *hōmu dorama*, as well as historical developments of the genre's textual features. There are also some quantitative studies on the number of male and female characters and on the themes of the dramas. Studies conducted with more qualitative methods focus on the macro-level rather than on textual analysis of specific programmes. Empirical studies on the drama audience appear to be few, if the research for market purposes made by the television companies themselves is excluded. Research on production also appears to be rare, and the numerous books on the subject are often rather descriptive, since they are written by professional makers.

With the spreading of cultural studies internationally, the 1990's has seen a surge of anthropological ethnographies on "contemporary Japanese life" and "popular culture" by researchers of nationalities other than Japanese, and published in English. Many of these have been ethnographies of media or media related phenomena (e.g. Painter 1991, Allison 1994, Skov & Moeran 1995, Moeran 1996, Treat 1996, Robertson 1998, Stocker 1999). Very recently there have also been works by Japanese authors with a media stud-

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[1] Probably the all-time hit of Japanese television drama, also internationally. *Oshin* was first broadcast in Japan in the beginning of 1980's by NHK as *asadora* or morning television serial. (cf. Harvey 1996.)

[2] Ishii Fukuko is the producer of *Wataoni*.

ies background published in English (e.g. Yoshimi 1999, Sakamoto 1999). Few of the studies still focus on television, or take up television drama, especially *hōmu dorama*, but some do, as in Painter (1991, 1996b) and Harvey (1995, 1998).[3]

This study continues research completed in 1993 - 1994, which was a textual study on the same programme, Part 2 (Valaskivi 1995). The earlier study emphasized the sex-gender system in the programme text by focusing on the way the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law was represented in the programme.

2.2. National politics of the popular

'Popular culture' has been described as something that is inherently oppositional to 'dominant culture'. In this view "the popular is quite simply progressive and there is no space for the possibility of a 'reactionary popular'" (Sparks 1992, 36 on Fiske 1989). However, there are other kinds of conceptions of the idea as well. In Japan during the 1930's an idealized view of the culture of 'ordinary people' as the original culture of 'Japan' was developed (Ivy 1988, 1993, 1995; Harootunian 1989). These ordinary people were rural people and the original roots of Japan thus lied in the countryside, as in the supposed pre-modern folk culture. In the ideal folk culture there is a close relationship between production and consumption, and no markedly stratified differences exist between cultures of different social classes (Sparks 1992). In Japan the admiration of folk culture shifted into particular kinds of popular culture and continued throughout the war years as an official strategy for reinforcing the national cultural identity.

In Japanese language the concept of *minshū bunka* alludes to human agency in the construction and reproduction of social life, and can then be translated as 'folk culture'. The concept of *taishū bunka* for its part denotes something close to mass culture or popular culture. *Taishū* emphasises the size of

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[3] Niyekawa (1984) does focus on *hōmu dorama*. However, she does not consider drama to be a product of media culture, but rather a suitable place to study the behaviour of "the Japanese people". She writes: "The use of television home drama appears to be an excellent way to overcome the difficulties of assessing behavior in natural settings. The observational methods [..] affect(s) the behavior observed [..] The unobtrusive method is the best approach if one is interested in behavior in a specific situation only. [..] television dramas are the best way to obtain data on the behavior of the same individuals in different situations and to assess how conflicts in daily life are handled as they arise. The television home drama enables an outsider to have a close look, so to speak, into personal and private aspects of life in Japan, particularly since these home dramas are characterized as down to earth." (Ibid., 62) Thus, Niyekawa seems to forget the constructed nature of television drama, and she instead studies it as if the drama was a place of 'real life' or a valid indication of 'real life' as such.

a great mass of people, and *minshū* evokes the instrumentality of "the people" or "the folk" as a collective body. (Robertson 1998, 32-33; Kogawa 1988.)

According to Sparks (ibid.) continuities between folk culture and popular culture have also been common in other parts of the world: "[T]he truly 'popular' performer builds performance out of the life of the people and expresses something of value to them'". Although Sparks criticizes this kind of view, in contemporary Japan, at least a part of 'popular culture' is still constructed as carrying the value of being about and a part of national culture: in Japan popular culture as a continuum from folk culture has been used as the tool of describing 'Japaneseness'. Theorists of the 1930's aestheticized and spiritualized the political potential of popular culture. "For them popular culture *was* the national, dominant culture" (Robertson 1998, 30). *Taishū bunka* can be considered to be "national popular culture", something that encompasses and affects all people within the borders of Japan, and popular, because it is familiar or experientially available to all Japanese (Robertson 1998, 34 on Kawazoe). *Wataoni* and the *hōmu dorama* genre in general are often talked about as the "traditional Japanese" form of television drama. Questions of 'Japaneseness' and the role of woman and man in the "Japanese family" are also explicitly discussed in the dialogues of the drama.

2.3. Television in Japan

The current Japanese television system where strong public service and competing private networks exist side by side was formed after the second World War. The US occupying forces staying in the country had a strong influence on the final outcome. Before the war Japan had an established broadcasting tradition, and its own public service system of *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation). After the Allied occupation, the supreme commander general McArthur decided to continue the monopoly of the existing broadcasting system, for this was an economic necessity in a country just out of the war. Furthermore, the nation-wide broadcasting network was also useful for the occupying rule, since it was easy to control and also easy to sensor (Luther & Boyd, 1997). The first licences for television were granted in 1952, and the public service NHK started broadcasting in early 1953. The commercial *Nihon Terebi* followed later the same year.

Currently NHK is the Japanese public broadcasting company and receives most of its funding from obligatory subscriber fees, which are collected from all homes that have a television set. NHK's functions are regulated by the Broadcast Law, which was enacted in 1950 under the influence of the Allied

occupation. NHK has two television channels, one for "general" programming (channel 1) and one for "educational" programmes (channel 3). It also has two satellite direct broadcasting services and a number of radio stations. The satellite services are provided following commercial principles and by using subscriber fees. In selling programmes abroad NHK also functions like any commercial company. (cf. Cooper-Chen 1997, 217-221.)

Commercial television stations (or 'private' stations, as they are called in Japan) are funded by the revenue of advertising and sponsorship[4]. These stations are licensed as local stations and are not allowed to broadcast beyond a certain locality, but in reality have formed nation-wide networks, each again allied with major newspapers. Networks provide between 70 to 90 percent of programming at the local stations. Each of the five networks have a 'head station' in Tokyo. NTV or Nihon Terebi heads the NNN network, has 27 local affiliated television stations and is allied with *Yomiuri Shinbun*; Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) is in lead of the JNN network, is connected with *Mainichi Shinbun* and has 27 affiliates; FNN network is headed by Fuji Terebi, allied with *Sankei Shinbun* and has 27 affiliates; Terebi Asahi is the head station for the ANN network with 20 affiliates and connections to the *Asahi Shinbun*. The smallest is TV Tokyo, which is allied with *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* and has five affiliates in major Japanese cities. (Cooper-Chen 1997, 113; Gotō 1991, 6.)

Until only recently, around heavily populated metropolitan areas (Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Fukuoka, Sapporo) seven channels were available (two NHK and five commercial) and even remote towns and villages received four channels (two NHK and two commercial) (Shimizu 1993, 190). Besides NHK's satellite services there is one private pay channel (WOWOW). Also available are six communication satellite channels, scrambled for non-subscribers. The popularity of these has fallen behind expectations. (Ibid.) Nowadays, as more satellite services (both analogue, such as STAR-TV, and digital, like PerfecTV and DirecTV), as well as cable services have become available, the amount of channels is more or less uncountable. Of the traditional broadcasters also NTV and TBS have started transmitting their news through digital satellite services. Despite this, the majority of viewers still choose to watch the 'traditional' channels. The expansion in the popularity of satellite and cable services has then become much slower than was expected. Until April 1995 other than domestic media were forbidden from transmitting their programmes in Japan. The appearance of STAR-TV and Turner Entertainment

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[4] The difference between an advertiser and a sponsor is that a sponsor can have its' name in the promotion materials of a serial; it also gets a slot between the programme and commercials that says "this programme was sponsored by[..]". Sponsors can, and often do, also have product placement in programmes. Advertisers only buy air-time in the commercial slots. (On product placement see Russel 1998.)

Networks in Japan, however, has not decreased viewing of the 'traditional' channels. (cf. Cooper-Chen 1997, 221.)

All seven 'old' channels broadcast for more than 18 hours a day. NHK closes at midnight and commercial channels go on broadcasting until early morning. All of the channels offer general programming services, except for NHK's educational channel. These services are available to 40 million tv-owning households in Japan. (Shimizu 1993, 191.)

In industrialized societies around the world, television technology is going through major changes because of digitalization. Japan is no exception to this. However, as in many other countries, in Japan the main television channels also have a strong hold on the 'market', since the viewers are accustomed to them. From a viewer's point of view television is what it is because of its contents, and the means of receiving these contents is irrelevant, if the viewer can afford the necessary equipment. Currently the price of new equipment together with the economic recession, is likely to slow down the growth of digital television, although, unlike in many other countries, broadcasting has already begun in Japan.

There are certain features in the Japanese television system that are typical of countries where a strong public service system co-exists with 'private' channels. As in the Nordic countries and Britain, in Japan the public service tradition has also carried with it the ideals of educating, informing — and entertaining. This philosophy of broadcasting, together with the ideal of impartial information, has spilled over to the commercial side and become a part of broadcasting policy there as well. The practice, however, has sometimes been different from the ideals.[5]

As a result the way of perceiving television and media as a means for education has not been an idea exclusive to the public service channels. "Although [commercial stations in Japan] do not do as well in cultural, educational and public affairs as in entertainment, their efforts to present balanced programming would appear to surpass those of American commercial stations" (Geller 1979, 18). This kind of influence has been common in all countries with strong public service broadcasting companies. (cf. Hellman 1996, 1999.) The makers of television move between the companies, and there are also programmes carrying the 'public service ideals' made for the private channels.

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[5] Especially in the 1990s the news and current affairs programming of commercial television channels has had difficulties with establishing credibility because of scandals revealing that journalists working in these programmes have acted in unethical ways. One of the examples is the *Aum Shinrikyō* scandal at TBS that unfolded in 1996. (cf. Masuzoe 1996.)

Changes in the overall media environment and the appearance of 'global' competition have created new strains for public broadcasting. This has resulted in changing programming towards increasing the share of entertainment and moving into commercial areas in other than traditional broadcasting activities, such as the satellite services. In this sense the main principles that have been present on the commercial side are now influencing the public service broadcasting more than the other way around. This trend is apparent also in Britain and the Nordic countries.

In the world of television production, the 'educational' mode is increasingly seen as old-fashioned, while the commercially-driven 'active audience' paradigm has gained more space. Currently the fierce competition between public and 'private' television channels has ended up in a situation where 'audience-orientedness' is gaining a strong foothold, and the public service channels move towards the commercial ones in their programming policies.

2.3.1. Drama in Japanese television

Throughout its history TBS (and also NTV) has been famous for its television dramas. NHK, too, has a long tradition in television drama and some NHK dramas have attracted attention not only in Japan, but abroad as well (e.g. *Oshin* in the early 1980s).

The audience of Japanese television drama consists mostly of women. 80 per cent of women that answered a NHK survey in 1991 watched TV dramas regularly, while the corresponding figure for men was 59 per cent (Muramatsu 1991, 90). TV has also targeted women because of their value as consumers; after all, commercial stations are dependent on revenue from advertising (Muramatsu 1991, 85).

Drama on Japanese television is almost exclusively of Japanese production. There are some American situation comedies and other series broadcast by NHK during the early afternoon (depending on the season, such as *Little House on the Prairie* and *Father Dowling,* etc.) and late at night (e.g. *Medicine Woman*, *X-files, ER,* etc.). Foreign, mostly American, films are shown late at night by commercial stations, but none of these gain significant audiences.

In Japanese television broadcasting the year is divided into two halves: from the beginning of April till the end of September and from the beginning of October till the end of March. Usually programming changes accordingly. In those series that do not finish at the end of a period, there are "special" episodes, often lasting for two hours.

Television dramas do not run for very long periods. Dramas range from single 1–3 hour programmes to 15–55 minute serials that are scheduled for a

longer time. The basic unit sold to the sponsors is 13 weeks of drama. There are also programmes scheduled for six months, which is usually the case with NHK. It is very rare that a drama is scheduled for a whole year, because sponsors usually do not want to commit themselves to longer dramas. *Wataoni* is an exception to this, since it is scheduled for a year.

The notion of 'TV drama' is very wide and includes virtually all kinds of fictional programmes made in Japan. The range is from *hirumerodorama* or *hirudora* (day-time serials) and prime-time *hōmu dorama* to prime-time and night-time action series and historical *jidaigeki* and *samurai*-dramas as well as one-time television films. Newspapers and TV magazines usually refer to all of them as *dorama* or drama, although expressions like *sasupensu* or suspense also appear. Ōyama (1991, 185) writes that "action and detective dramas, as well as historical dramas are primarily television movies filmed by production teams belonging to the film studios". This has, however, changed during the 1990's, and now television companies and individual television production companies produce all kinds of drama, except that historical dramas or jidaigeki are currently very seldom made by commercial channels.

The themes of dramas have changed along with the changes in the society. Makita and Muramatsu (1987) compared the themes of Japanese TV dramas in 1974 and 1984 and found that in ten years the themes had shifted from dealing with traditional family settings to handle such things as the loss of community ties and the break-up of the family. However, not only have the themes changed, but there have also been changes in the television expression and production systems.

2.4. *Hōmu dorama* or family drama in history

Wataoni is considered to be a part of the long tradition of a genre called *hōmu dorama. Hōmu dorama* first appeared in cinema. Between 1920 and the 1960's it developed from *shōshimin eiga* or 'petit bourgeois films' into *haha mono* or 'mother films' and finally, in dialogue with production, critics and female audiences into *hōmu dorama*. Already then films of this kind were considered as being artistically and educationally better than the *haha mono*, which were seen as mere tear-jerkers. (Sakamoto 1997.)

Hōmu dorama has dominated television drama scene since the beginning of television in Japan.[6] It has undergone major changes in the last two dec-

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[6] The family theme continues to appear in the cinema, although it has mostly taken a different form than that of television (cf. Niskanen 1996).

ades and remains now somewhat marginal in the form *Wataoni* represents, despite the fact that *Wataoni* itself has achieved very good ratings. Some have even considered the whole genre to have disappeared from prime time in late 1980's (cf. Hirahara 1991, Toriyama 1993), although at the same time television drama on the whole was considered to be "in hard times" (Sata 1991, 217). It experienced a revival only in the early 1990's.

At the beginning of the 1980's, director Hoga Takashi of the New York office of the Fuji Telecasting Corporation provided a characterisation of *hōmu dorama* in a newspaper interview. This description illustrates the way in which the genre has been seen as an essential form of Japanese television and also as one of the genres taking part in the definition of 'Japanese identity':

> The Japanese do not enjoy situation comedies. The most popular TV fare is 'home drama', a form of soap opera without the 'sexploitative aspects' of its American counterpart... The Japanese serials are 'rooted in the Japanese character'. The constant is less comedy than a home setting. There are hilarious moments but it is mostly serious. They are family-oriented and watched by everyone from grandmother to little children. They present stories of actual family life and allow parents to use some of the materials as example to children. They give a sense that what is on TV is acceptable. The programs try to help audiences exorcise their daily frustrations. It is entertainment but with situations that give practical guidance, an example to emulate. The programs are not culturally bankrupt. (According to Niyekawa 1984, 62.)

By comparing Japanese and American soap opera Hoga seems to imply that even though *hōmu dorama* is a form of soap opera, it is a better kind of soap opera, clean of the degenerated features of American soap ("no sexploitative aspects", "not culturally bankrupt"). Reference to "the Japanese character" reinforces this impression, and implies that this genre has uniquely 'Japanese' properties. This assumption appears in other texts as well. Sentences like "The history of *hōmu dorama* is the history of the Japanese family" (Terebi dorama zenshi 1994, 694) and "The change of history can be seen in *hōmu dorama* families" (ibid. 700) show that the genre is considered to be something special in television and is connected with the faith of 'the nation' — as a part of the 'national popular culture'.

Hoga's referring to family-orientedness implies that dramas are targeted at women. This appears with the choice of words: if "everyone" (including men) was in fact was watching these dramas, then the expression would be "everyone from grand*father* to little children". With the current expression Hoga comes to say that all women within a family watch these serials: family and femininity are combined together. By referring to these serials as giving practical guidance at the same time as being entertainment, Hoga, despite

being in a leading position in the commercial television industry, commits himself to the traditional public service ideals of broadcasting first and foremost as a means of education and impartial information and only after that as entertainment. The patriarchal tone of these ideals appears to imply that women are particularly in need of education. Television is also here regarded as a good medium for transmitting the values and attitudes suitable for women, especially housewives. Also, when referring to the frustrations of the audience, Hoga seems to be talking about (stereotyped) housewives, who become frustrated at having to stay at home day after day. Hoga's image of the *hōmu dorama* viewers appear thus to repeat the results Herta Herzog (1954) reported in the 1940's after having interviewed US daytime radio serial listeners, who not only looked for emotional and recognitional pleasures in the serials, but also found advice and instruction in the programmes.

Hoga's 'common sense' description of *hōmu dorama* defines it as an acceptable form of television, for it is not to have too much sex in it, it is to take place in a home setting and is to come close to actual family life. It is to be entertaining, but also to give practical guidance to women who watch it. As will be discussed later, the makers of *Wataoni* express similar views to Hoga, although more than ten years after Hoga. (For a more extensive analysis of Hoga's citation see Valaskivi 1995[7].)

Hōmu dorama in Japanese television was formed in the late 1950's and early 1960's (Shôwa 30's[8]) following the example of US melodramas and situation comedies. However, there was one main difference between *hōmu dorama* and the US programmes: *hōmu dorama* portrayed extended families despite the fact that in Japanese society the nuclear family was already predominant, while in the US the focus was on nuclear families. (Hirahara 1991, 112–113.) Hirahara (ibid.) explains this by the fact that broadcasting time was increasing and *hōmu dorama* had to have many characters in order to fill the time:

> Naturally with the increase in the amount of air time, more variety was called for, both in quantity and quality and different situations had to be planned. It was considered to be easier to develop plots with families of two or three generations living together than for nuclear families.

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[7] cf. also Valaskivi (n.d.)

[8] The Japanese eras of chronology are named by the emperors. In the recent past the eras are *Meiji* (1868 - 1912), *Taishō* (1912 - 1926), *Shōwa* (1926 - 1989). The current era is *Heisei* (1989 -)

The increase of broadcasting time was due to the Tokyo Olympics of 1964: the Japanese bought television sets and television broadcasting became more profitable. Thus television programming policies changed. *Hōmu dorama*, focusing on multiple generations was considered to appeal to a public of different generations and ages. (Ibid., 114.) With the scarcity of available channels in the early age of television, this was a reasonable strategy. In current developments of television, where smaller and smaller segments are expected to be attracted by certain 'precision serials' aimed particularly at them, the 'largest possible audience' -aim no longer applies. Consequently both the need and possibility to attract very large audiences with one programme has changed, and so have the serials.

In considering the themes and narrative frame of *hōmu dorama,* Ōyama (1991, 180) has found five chronological categories in the early developments of the genre.

1) The era of series concerning the family next door and the neighbourhood, centring people residing in two or three houses in a neighbourhood or on a side street. (end of 1950's, beginning of 1960's*)*
Examples:
Basu Dōri Ura (Off the Bus Route) (NHK)
Wakai Kisetsu (Season of Youth) (also NHK).

2) The era of series revolving around a large family centred on a *patriarch* such as the father or grandfather. (beginning of 1960s)
Examples:
Shichi-nin no Mago (Seven Grandchildren) (TBS)
Tadaima Jūichi-nin (There Are Eleven for Now) (TBS).

3) The era of series revolving around *a mother* who carries on *a business* by herself. *No father* present or father incapable of supporting the family. (during the 1960's)
Examples:
Jikan Desu yo (It's Time, Everybody!) (TBS)
Arigatō (Thanks!) (TBS)

4) The era of *exposé* and *iconoclastic dramas* which leave a bitter aftertaste. Depict homes directly impacted by *external forces,* characters clash with one another voicing their true opinions. (late 1960's, early 1970's)
Examples:
Tonari no Shibafu (Neighbour's Lawn) (NHK)
Kishibe no Arubamu (Album of the Riverbanks) (TBS)

5) The era of dramas of *confrontation and danger: dangers of the outside world affect the family*, traditional systems of education and family ties are questioned. (mid- and late 1970's)
Examples:
Tsumiko Kuzushi (Crumbling Blocks) (TBS)
Fubo no Gosan (Parental Miscalculations) (TBS)
Ikenaka Genta 80 Kiro (Genta Ikenaka, Weight 80 Kilograms) (NTV)

Hirahara (ibid., 117) shares Ōyama's view on the early phases of the genre: In the late 1950's and early 1960's it centred on the patriarchal family. Since the late 1960's the emphasis has changed: "The home drama of the [Shōwa] 40's [late 1960's and early 1970's] can be summarized as being mother-centred" (ibid.). These dramas often portrayed self-employed families having small businesses, especially eateries in Tokyo's *shitamachi*[9] areas (ibid. 118).

For Hirahara (ibid. 120-121) the shift from patriarchal families to mother-centred ones occurred because of changes in the society. In the Shôwa 30's the patriarchal family represented the whole nation and the destiny of the *hōmu dorama* family corresponded to the destiny of the nation. When the mother-centred *hōmu dorama* is compared with the patriarchal one, the former "seems closer to the real-life families around us". Hirahara (ibid.) writes:

> It is true that males have disappeared from the Japanese home[..] males were forced to abandon the home in order to serve as slaves for enterprising companies. Therefore, the weaker sex had to take over as head of the house. From that point of view, the women depicted in the 'mother-centered home drama' are true to life. Aren't these characters mere substitutes for the male heads of families? Are they not merely playing the role of persons 'guarding the home front' after their husbands have been drafted? It's not bad seeing them working hard, but it is carrying things too far when they are seen sacrificing themselves for their in-laws, taking care of shop and home, bringing up children, and seeing to the comfort of those around them. The fact that the charac-

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[9] Kondo (1990, 37) explains *shitamachi*: "In the folk wisdom of Tokyo dwellers, the city is divided into roughly two parts. The western half is called *Yamanote*, the hillside or the foothills, while the eastern part is *Shitamachi*, literally downtown, for it lies on a plain on the lower ground near the bay. [..] *Yamanote* is the home of the bureaucrat, the professional, the white-collar worker in large, elite firms. It is the mainstream, modern ideal. *Shitamachi*, on the other hand, conjures up images of the merchant, the artisan, the small family business. A more 'traditionally Japanese' ethos is thought to reign here."

ters of mother-centered home drama do not create a lasting impression is because they have been idealised to the point of folly.

Eventually he comes to consider the mother-centred *hōmu dorama* as only a variant of the patriarchal *hōmu dorama*, because in both of them there is a strong head of the family. This idealized view of womanhood gained such a status because after the second World War no such strong ideal had been established. Like the large family dramas of the Shōwa 30's, these woman-centred dramas of the Shôwa 40's were also outdated compared with "the social reality" of Japanese life of those days. (Ibid. 120–121.)

Common to these serials, then, was a warm and harmonious tone, and a certain sense of nostalgia with conservative principles (ibid. 126). The scale of represented feelings in *hōmu dorama* started changing in the mid-1970's after the oil shock, when economic problems of families began to appear on the screen as points that destroyed the family instead of bringing family members together. (Terebi dorama zenshi 1994, 700.) Ōyama (1991, 181) explains that the impact of the oil shock changed the attitude of the Japanese and made them "look reality in the face", and this caused the themes of television drama to change as well. As in other parts of the world, in Japan dramas of the 1970's also included experimenting with means that were to make the constructedness of drama apparent to the viewers. For instance in the middle of a scene an actor might pause, look into the camera and ask: "How do you like my acting?"

2.4.1. The change of the 1980's

Another change happened in the 1980's. The serials ceased to revolve around the strong head of family. Matsuo (1987, 63) writes: "*Hōmu dorama* continued to exist while changing style and stage." The focus shifted towards nuclear families, and especially conflicts between peers (*yoko-kankei*), rather than generational relations (*tate-kankei*)[10]. "Discommunicational" families appeared (Toriyama 1993, 81) , as well as serials where "real feelings" *(honne)* were spoken out.

According to Hirahara (ibid., 134) this change was caused by the fact that women started to continue working outside the home even after marriage, which created a need for a different kind of drama that would not portray

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[10] In Japanese Studies (especially in the *nihonjinron* tradition) the Japanese society is usually described as being based on *tate* or vertical relationships rather than *yoko*, or horizontal relationships. (cf. Nakane 1970).

only heroic housewives. The change also coincides with the death of the famous family drama writer Mukōda Kuniko in 1981.

The change of *hōmu dorama* in the 1980's has been described differently by different writers. Matsuo (1987, 63) calls the changed drama "new *hōmu dorama*". Hirahara (1991, 136–146) condemns the changed *hōmu dorama* as "anti-*hōmu dorama*", which portrays "the dark side of the life": illicit love-affairs, murders and illegitimate children. Hirahara considers anti-*hōmu dorama* as the opposite of patriarchal and mother-centred dramas. After all the "mainstream of home drama had been the heart-warming type of home drama [..] by the time of the Shōwa 50s [late 1970s and early 1980s] heart-warming dramas had all but disappeared from prime-time". The successors were "bitter-tasting home dramas", such as *Tonari no Shibafu*, written by Hashida Sugako. In this serial the difficult relations between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law forced the viewers to take sides. (Ibid.)

In the 1980s drama was said to be affected by the loss of the "five S's" (Ōyama 1991, 190-191):

> 1) Loss of **squareness**, because the number of authentic drama serials was decreasing.
> 2) Loss of **series**, because earlier series were made for a thirteen week season or for 26 weeks, but the length had come to vary depending on the length of the content.
> 3) Loss of **seriousness**, because fewer dramas dealt with serious themes
> 4) Loss of **sentiment**, because fewer dramas dealt with human understanding or encouraged the audience to shed tears.
> 5) Loss of **studio**, because of the increased usage of 'on location' shooting.

These were considered to cause deterioration of quality in television dramaturgy, where the ideal had been the "dramatization of daily life" following principles that had been developed through combining ideas of traditions on Japanese stage, film industry and radio broadcasting, and especially following the example set by Reginald Rose and Paddy Chayefsky in the United States. When these principles were changed, the opposite was born: "dramas that created a world of complete fiction". (Ibid.)

Another variation of *hōmu dorama* was high school drama. In this type of drama the family was replaced by the school community and a popular teacher acted as the central figure. These dramas deal with close relations between the students and their teacher(s) (Ōyama 1991, 185). In its focus on *tate*-relationships, school drama continued the traditions of *hōmu dorama*.

Some writers consider *hōmu dorama* as a certain prime-time serial form of television; some consider almost any kind of drama with a family focus a *hōmu dorama*. One of the longest traditions in Japanese television drama,

the NHK morning serialized television novel — *asa no renzoku terebi shōsetsu* or *asadora*[11] — is also by some considered a part of *hōmu dorama*, for some it is a form of its own. *Asadora* have been broadcast since the 1960s each morning from Monday to Saturday from 8.15 to 8.30, with a replay at 12.45. Usually the old story ends every six months and a new one starts at the beginning of October and April, but in exceptional cases a show can run for a whole year. Along with a new story the programme introduces a new actress, who is usually flung into popularity with the role. *Asadora* are mostly historical and the main character is a young woman. *Oshin,* which was also written by Hashida Sugako and first broadcast in 1981, is one of the most famous *asadora*. Gotō (1991, 11) writes: "This drama series or 'television novel' is a special genre of its own, neatly structured with narrations and monologues." Hirahara (1991, 125) writes of *terebi shōsetsu* that "[..]it is characteristic for television novels to be concentrated on one of three historical eras: the Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa, and to portray the biographies of lower middle-class women."

Yanagihara (1988, 119) who considers *Oshin* as part of the *hōmu dorama* genre, notes that in the first half of the 1980s there was still a boom for the genre, when *Oshin*, the famous *terebi shōsetsu*, was aired by NHK. Yanagihara calls this type of *hōmu dorama "happii hōmu dorama"* since they portray the family as an ideal community which has no internal problems, but faces threats from the outside. Consequently, Yanagihara's *happii hōmu dorama* is the counterpart of Hirahara's "heart-warming" drama.

The main features of this heart-warming *hōmu dorama* are summarized by screenwriter Onoda Isamu, who has listed the following rules for *hōmu dorama*:

> 1) the characters must be good people, and the number of regulars (characters) must be large,
> 2) the conclusion of each episode must be happy,
> 3) in the viewing audience all members of the family must be able to enjoy the programme, and
> 4) the incidents that occur must not be serious.
> (According to O|yama 1991.)

Some time after the traditional *hōmu dorama* started changing, appeared *torendii dorama*[12] which portrayed young women working in so-called

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[11] Abbreviation of the words '*asa dorama*' meaning 'morning drama'. For a description of the history of *asadora* see Harvey (1995, 75-110).

[12] 'Trendy' drama, serials that focused on the lifestyles of young and fashionable women (and men).

katakana-professions[13] surrounded by material goods. The young women were not seen at work, but their leisure-time love affairs were intense and frequent. (Toriyama 1993, 9–10.) *Hōmu dorama* and *torendii dorama* are still considered opposites, *hōmu dorama* representing the serious and well-made, while *torendii dorama* is seen as the fashionable, youth-oriented and empty. Schilling (1997) considers *torendii dorama* to be a phenomenon of the economic boom period of the late 1980's and early 1990's.

These days the more youth-oriented drama which employs young 'talents' or celebrities and has a quick pace with a fashionable atmosphere is beginning to be the mainstream, and is referred to as just *dorama*. This kind of visual drama with rapid cuts is said to interest the most important focus group for Japanese commercial networks: the F1 group, females in their late teens and early twenties. This is the niche that consumes the most and is the most attractive for sponsors and advertisers. The F2 group goes from 26 to around the late 30's and the F3 group consists of 'old women'. Although the expression *torendii dorama* can still be heard frequently, as a promotional term for television production it is considered obsolete. For at least commercial television production, everything is now just "drama". Despite this, the producer of *Wataoni* still maintains in her talk a contradiction between *torendii dorama* and *hōmu dorama* to emphasize the difference between these two. (cf. Terebi dorama zenshi 1994, 700-701; Schilling 1997, 273-275.)

Drawing a discursive distinction between other types of drama and *hōmu dorama* acts as a means of emphasizing the 'uniqueness' of the genre. This way of making a distinction is one of the reasons why *hōmu dorama* continues to be interesting despite its somewhat marginal position in the megatext[14] of Japanese television. In the words of both makers and viewers of the programme there is a discourse of 'traditional Japaneseness' and 'nostalgic family values'[15] connected with *hōmu dorama* in general and *Wataoni* in particular. There seems to especially be a general anticipation that dramas written by the scriptwriter Hashida Sugako (and some others) will be about traditional family values and will explicitly touch the issue of 'Being Japanese'. This expectation may be and also is resisted in different discourses by viewers, television professionals and columnists, but it nevertheless does exist, constantly surfacing in discussions with makers of television and viewers of drama. This feature thus seems essential to the genre.

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[13] *Katakana*-professions are fashionable careers that use loan words from the English language as names. Among these are *disainā* (designer), *editā* (editor), *moderu* (model) etc.

[14] Browne (1984) calls megatext the whole body of television programming available at a particular historical time in a certain society.

[15] Cf. Valaskivi (1998) for a description of the usage of 'nostalgic family values' for representing 'traditional Japaneseness' in *Wataoni*.

Hōmu dorama as a type of television drama then has a somewhat contradictory position within contemporary Japanese television. Depending on the way of perceiving television *hōmu dorama* is either seen as a superior form of television, a place where social issues are still brought into dialogue with a symphatetic but educational tone, or as an old-fashioned relic that does not attract the most desirable and consumption-oriented viewer segment, which is young women. In my material in general people of the first opinion tend to belong to an older generation (although there are exceptions) that believes in public service ideals of television as first and foremost the educator and informer and only after that entertainer. At the same time, however, this view sees *hōmu dorama* as a phenomenon of serial television, a part of industrial production and thus inferior to 'art'. The second opinion sees television as first and foremost an industrial and commercial institution that is there to provide each viewer segment 'what they want'. For them *hōmu dorama* is acceptable when it acquires good ratings, although as a televisual form it is considered old-fashioned. Then there are some who simply see the genre as obsolete and even harmful in current Japanese society, since it misrepresents the contemporary situation. This strong view can be explicable because the genre has been represented as the portrayer of "Japanese society". There appears to be a struggle between these opinions, and some people seem to shift between positions, not taking a strong stand themselves, but understanding them all, and realizing their existence.

Recent changes in television drama in Japan have left *hōmu dorama* marginal in the programming. On the one hand, the development can be seen as parallel to what Caldwell (1995) describes as the development of style taking over the issues, namely the visual appearance of television programmes having become more important than their contents. The commercial aims and competition ask primarily 'what does the (segmented) audience want' and aims at giving people 'what they want'. In this view there is little space for educational or enlightenment purposes, a matter that some consider an improvement. On the other hand, the development of television technology and visual techniques of special 'televisuality' (cf. ibid.), can be seen as an improvement, rather than as a countertrend for issues. Some see *Wataoni* and the whole *hōmu dorama* genre in its traditional visual output as dull, boring and simplistic, because it lacks the 'televisuality' of the newer kind of drama.

2.4.2. Hashida Sugako and Ishii Fukuko

Hirahara (1991) notes that television drama tends to be "hypersensitive" to changes in society, even more so than stage drama or cinema. Script writer

Hashida Sugako is often said to be talented in 'grasping the mood of the times', in giving form and content to thoughts, problems and anxieties of a certain period. Her status as the "representative of Japan" (Ōyama 1991, 192-193) is connected also with the genre, which, as noted, is supposed to represent the 'Japanese society' 'as it is'. In the early days of television drama it was considered "an important journalistic medium through which one [can] voice one's social and political opinions" while at the same time being an established genre of artistic expression (Hirahara 1991, 41). Since the late 1950's, dramas that brought up "issues of social importance in the manner of journalism" (ibid., 44) were the ones that appropriated good drama. Despite the fact that this type of dramas are in the minority of supply today, they are still considered to be 'good' drama, for they portray the 'everyday life' in a 'realistic' manner. Hashida Sugako, in explicitly saying that she "sends messages" to her viewers, is considered to some extent as one of the central writers of this kind of 'good' dramas.

Hashida's particular field of interest is the family and the division of labour inside it. She also has publicly stated that she sends messages for women, and does not care if men do not watch[16]. She is considered to be conservative in her views on gender, family and the nation, building her dramas on the juxtaposition between conservative ideas and challenging views.

Hashida's success began in early 1960's when she wrote her first scripts, which were produced by Ishii Fukuko[17] for the *Toshiba Nichyō Gekijō* (Sunday Theatre, sponsored by Toshiba) for TBS. *Toshiba Nichyō Gekijō* was until the end of the 1980's a one-hour slot on Sunday evening in which *tampatsu dorama* or one-off dramas were broadcast. This spot provided newcomer script writers a route into the business, until it was changed into a continuous-plotline serial at the turn of the 1990's. Ishii Fukuko was the producer who spotted the most talented writers and started supporting their careers; of these Hashida Sugako and Taraiwa Koe have been considered the most important ones for *hōmu dorama* writing (Terebi dorama zenshi 1994, 694).

As noted, the team of Hashida Sugako and Ishii Fukuko got its beginning in *Toshiba Nichyō Gekijō*. Since then these women have been working together, although both have also made productions with other teams. They have also formed a group of actors/actresses and other television profession-

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[16] *Hashida Bunka Saidan Shinariōseminā* or Hashida Culture Foundation seminar for beginning screen writers Nov. 22, 1997.

[17] Ishii has been working for television from an early age. Her getting into the business was much helped by the fact that her father was a famous stage actor who also appeared on the small screen. Ishii is one of the very first 'exception' women in the very male television business in Japan. These days a female producer is a more common sight than used to be 20 years ago, not to mention 40 years ago.

als, sometimes referred to as the "Hashida family" or "Ishii family", because of the long years of a shared professional career. The term "Hashida family" is used especially for PR purposes, and is used widely in the press that discusses television. Viewers also recognise and use this term.

Hashida Sugako herself appears frequently in the Japanese media, both as a talk-show guest and as a column writer in papers and magazines. She also has her connections to politics and tells that some politicians come and ask for her opinion on matters which touch on family issues. She openly shares her opinions concerning television drama's tasks in society. Hashida emphasizes the importance of having a message in writing drama, and in the making of television. Her description of her aims and purposes appears as clearly educational. She describes her view on good 'scenario writing' as follows:

> HS: [one has to think] what kind of characters are necessary for expressing a certain theme, in order to get through one's own message in an attractive way. This is the same as making food. One wants to make delicious food, that is also healthy at the same time, including carrots and other vegetables. And yet having people eat and enjoy it. When you do this with skill, people eat it with pleasure. It is not just like giving a simple plate full of carrots, but making blendings and combinations. This is how it happens with drama, too.[18]

However, her aim is not only education of the viewers, but also to take part in discussion about society and especially about the tasks, status and meaning of the family in society. The views she herself puts forward in her work and how she articulates her motivations are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

2.5. *Wataoni* among its kind

As noted above, *hōmu dorama* has been considered as having almost disappeared from prime time in the late 1980's. At the beginning of the 1990's the 'old television culture' of the 1960's and 1970's made a come-back in the form of the heart-warming type of drama (Iyoda et al. 1998, 277-270) when TBS first broadcast *Wataoni*. In *Wataoni* Hashida Sugako and Ishii Fukuko used the form of the traditional *hōmu dorama* and employed it to tell a story about contemporary Japanese family life in an urban context. The form car-

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[18] Hashida Foundation seminar for future script writers Nov. 22, 1997.

ried a nostalgic tone of family values, the belief of goodness in human nature and a strong aspiration towards educating the viewers, despite the "bitter" edge of characters expressing their "true feelings". The large family was back — although in a less coherent manner than earlier — as well as the happy endings and the "goodness" of the characters (Ōyama, 1991). Yet the themes and conflicts of the drama were derived from present-day issues and the daily family life of an "ordinary" Japanese family.

Wataoni, then, is a blend of old and new features of *hōmu dorama.* The narrative structure, the focus on dialogue and acting, as well as the slow pace of cutting connect it to the traditional ways of making *hōmu dorama*. At the same time the serial derives its themes from contemporary society. (For an analysis of 'old' and 'new' *hōmu dorama* features in *Wataoni*, see subchapter 6.2.1.)

The serial does not have a linear plotline with a clear line of development, but the multiple, and cyclical plotlines intersect and repeat each other. Viewers often express their wonder at the ability of the serial to keep their fascination despite the fact "it is always the same thing over and over". The producer notes that it is difficult to make a drama which does not have incidents or *jiken* but is based on daily relationships between family members. The cyclical development of the narrative is called by one of its makers "the rotation of drama" or *dorama mawashi.*

2.5.1. *Wataoni* and audiences

Being a part of the *hōmu dorama* genre, *Wataoni* is called an all-family serial, which is supposed to represent family values for a family audience. In practice the family audience means women: Contrary to the 'largest possible audience' aim, the scriptwriter emphasizes that she writes for a middle-aged female audience, and that this is also the main viewer segment. By expressing this in public she also adds to the audience expectation and narrative image (Ellis 1992[1982], 30) of the serial as a 'women's' programme. Predictably, close to forty percent of *Wataoni* viewers during Part 3 were women over 50 years old. The majority of all *Wataoni* viewers, both men and women, were over 50 years of age: 16 percent were men over 50. The second biggest viewer group, 17 percent of the audience, were women between 35 and 49 years of age and only five percent were men of the same age. *Wataoni*, then, by no means appears as a trendy and fashionable thing for young people to watch or be fans of; the target group is rather the F3 of the 'old women' than the more desirable F2, or F1 of young women. In some people's opinion the whole serial is so old-fashioned that it should be discontinued as it gives a distorted representation of contemporary Japanese society.

Despite the 'granny' image of the serial there are also younger people among the audience: according to the ratings, 13 percent of those who watch *Wataoni* are women between 20 and 34 years and 3 percent are men of the same age. The makers like to point out that there is also a small group of *Wataoni* fans with their own e-mail list. Nevertheless, the belief of the makers that the proportion of younger viewers was on the increase towards Part 3 does not show in the ratings.

All in all, quite a few viewers have found the serial appealing enough to watch it — for one reason or another. The average rating for Part 1 was 18.2 percent, Part 2 got 23.6 percent and Part 3 got 26.2 (TBS chōsabu; Matsuo 1997). Because of this rising trend TBS started broadcasting a fourth one-year set in October 1998. The first episode of this Part 4 got a rating of 26.4 percent; the rating dropped some after that, but has gained a steady 22 - 25 percent throughout the year of broadcasting (www.videor.co.jp/tst/)[19].

2.5.2. The making of *Wataoni*

The following description of the making of the serial is based on the interviews made with the makers, as well as my observations at the television company during the production.

The Ishii-Hashida team has clear division of work in producing serials. In the case of *Wataoni,* TBS first asked the freelance producer Ishii Fukuko to produce a new serial in the slot of Thursdays at 9 p.m. She then developed the frame and narrative with Hashida Sugako. The frame of the serial starts from planning the house where a family lives, thinking about the background of the characters and deciding ages and professions of central characters. According to Hashida and Ishii this is the stage when they work together in planning. Then Hashida starts writing and Ishii organizing the actual production, which includes first casting and hiring the staff; of both at least 3/4 is likely to be known for having previously worked for the "Ishii family". According to her own words, Hashida either approves or disapproves of Ishii's choices, but does not give preferences. During the production Ishii occasionally does research for Hashida on details in the script, such as asking doctors details about certain illnesses appearing in the script, or finding out about applying to private high-school when a character in the serial is to do so. Mainly the research is done by the assistant directors. Otherwise Ishii

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[19] In early 1999 Part 4 and the makers of *Wataoni* got a lot of press attention when the previous main actress, Yamaoka Hisano died of liver cancer. This press attention also caused a temporary peak in the ratings.

focuses on the practical side of production and Hashida on writing. Hashida never comes to the studios, and Ishii normally never tells Hashida what and how to write.

The production of *Wataoni* follows the industrial logic of television. In Japan the cost of production for making ninety minutes to two hours of drama is on an average 40 to 50 million yen. *Wataoni* is said to be expensive because it employs famous actors and actresses, but on the other hand it is based on dialogue, mainly shot in the studio and has little visual effects, expensive camera movements or costumes. The script and the salary for the actors and actresses takes about 30 percent of the budget. The fact that *Wataoni* seems to exceed its budget every time is acceptable because it is produced within TBS and most of the money is moved only on paper.[20] Being a serial of a 'private' television channel, *Wataoni* is sponsored, and commercials for products made by the sponsors are shown in the commercial slots. This also means self-evident product placement in the serial: Nestle Nippon demands that if coffee is drunk it be theirs, Kaō wants detergents, soaps and cosmetics to be from them, and if a car is used, it is always Mazda.[21] This, however, doesn't happen very often, because *Wataoni* is almost exclusively shot in the studio.

The regular staff of the maker team consists of four directors (*kantoku, enshutsu-ka*) working under the producer (*purodūsā*) and taking turns in directing the episodes. Practical matters are taken care of by the assistant producer (AP) and four assistant directors (AD). In the case of *Wataoni* nine of these ten are men — all except producer Ishii. The ages of assistant directors range from the early twenties into the thirties, and for directors from the forties to the sixties. The major part of the staff are either freelancers or come from a subcontractor firm called VSO. Only two of the staff members (two directors) are regular employees of TBS. According to the staff, this is exceptional. Usually at least one of the assistant directors is also a regular employee.

The preproduction and the making of the first episodes starts well before the broadcasts. This is how there are at least ten episodes ready when the broadcasts start. One episode of the serial takes a week to shoot. The preparations, however, take longer. In ideal cases the production is at least 3-4 weeks ahead of broadcasting, but sometimes, like in Nov. - Dec. 1996 when I visited the production, the episode that was finished on Wednesday was broadcast on Thursday of the same week. Usually the script-writer delivers

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[20] This was the case with Part 3. With the tightening budgets of recession-time Japan during part 4 the attitude is stricter.

[21] Perhaps due to the recession, the sponsors for Part 4 changed for the first time. For instance Mazda was replaced by Suzuki.

the script at least three weeks in advance of shooting, leaving the director time to prepare. Directors usually direct two episodes in a row, and prepare new episodes in between shifts. Their task is to carry the responsibility over those episodes they direct themselves, while the producer has the overall responsibility for the whole serial and the fluent undergoing of the production process.

The assistant producer makes schedules and other preparations with the help of the assistant directors. He takes part in tending relations e.g. with players'[22] managers. The four assistant directors have a ranking among themselves according to their age, working years and experience. The first AD is the 'chief' and is in principle in charge of the work done by the rest of the ADs, but mostly each AD works fairly independently in their own area of expertise, arranging the setting, doing research for the plotline, etc. The youngest is always in charge of catering for the staff and players during rehearsals and shootings.

Preparations for shooting are usually done in the TBS Akasaka head-office in Tokyo, where the staff has their working facilities. These working facilities are located in one of the *seisaku-bu* or the production departments, the department that specializes in the production of drama. There are other departments that produce news, variety shows, game shows, documentaries etc. The production staff is then separated from the technical staff, sound technicians, and camerapersons etc., who work mainly in the studios, which are located in Midoriyama, towards Yokohama. Some of them, like the chief cameraman [sic] and the technical chief come to Akasaka for the rehearsals and 'art meeting' or *bijutsu uchiawase*.

A lot of attention is paid to rehearsal, because the shooting is done with the aim of getting one scene with one run. This reduces the need for editing. Each scene is thus practised thoroughly until the director is pleased with the result and the scene is ready to be 'canned' as such. Present in the rehearsing room are not only the actors and director, but also the assistant producer, the time keeper (*kiroku*), all ADs, the technical chief, the chief cameraman, and some others.

As noted, the studios are located in Midoriyama towards Yokohama. Shooting takes usually two days of the week, and the days can be very long, for instance from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Scenes are shot according to the schedule made by the AP. The props in the studio are built on about 80-90 cm high platforms, making the studio look like it is full of theatre stages. This is done to make it easier to shoot scenes where the players sit on *tatami*.

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[22] In this work I use the word 'player' to include both actors and actresses. This is a translation of the Japanese word *yakusha*, which includes both male and female players. *Yaku* means 'part' or 'role' and *sha* means a person or professional. *Yakusha* then is 'the person who plays a role/part'.

Before shooting a scene is first rehearsed in the studio setting without the costumes and then with the costumes (dry rehearsal or *dorai*). After that comes the camera rehearsal (or *cameriha*), then the run through (or *rantsuru)*, which is followed by *honban*, the actual shooting. Between dry rehearsal and camera rehearsal there is a meeting with the director, ADs, the time keeper and the chief cameraman deciding the order of the cameras, size of pictures etc. Six cameras are available. The director does the camera plan negotiating with the chief cameraman.

Besides the regular staff who are involved with the actual making of the drama, there are people who take part in the overall production process. There is the *bangumi senden* or PR person, who takes care of public relations and press releases concerning the serial. He also does his best to keep the image of the serial positive despite the occasional scandals involving the players and even the producer[23]. Then there is one person in the programming department or *hensei,* who is in charge of *Wataoni.* During the time of broadcasting he very rarely has anything to say, but in cases of sudden remarkable drops in ratings he comes forward to call for improvement. The third person works in the *seisaku-bu* with the staff. She is the *desuku no hito* or desk-person, the secretary who takes care of running errands and paying bills. She also works for other productions. Unlike the men in the production, her contract is renewable every year, although she has been working for the company for more than 10 years. This goes for the time-keeper as well, who is also female.

2.5.3. Plotline in a nutshell

The serial is a story of the everyday life of the Okakura family members (for the family tree as seen in Part 3, see Appendix 1). The mother Setsuko and father Daikichi are in their 60's and have five daughters, who are between 27 and 41 years of age[24]. When the serial started the father was still working as *sarariiman* or white collar company employee and the mother was a house-

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[23] Producer Ishii was dismissed from the post of producer for Part 3 just a few weeks after it started broadcasting in April 1996 because she had been found guilty of tax evasion. Her place was taken by one of the directors who acted as a producer/director during Part 3. Ishii came back as the producer after the media sensation had passed to take over the pre-production of Part 4 in April 1998. In this work, however, when I refer to 'the producer' I refer to Ishii. Although the work done by the producer/director in Ishii's absence is not to be undermined in any way, his relationship with the serial seemed to be more 'technical', as the 'spirit' of the drama is created by Ishii (and Hashida) and he seemed to be working to fulfil this spirit.

[24] Ages as portrayed in Part 3.

wife. The eldest daughter Yayoi, was married to a *sarariiman*, who took no part in raising the two children of the family and who was then transferred (*tanshin funin)* to Iwaki by his company. The main theme of Part 1 (1990-1991) was the death of the father-in-law of the second daughter (Satsuki) and all the conflicts that arose because he had no will. The family has a Chinese restaurant where all the family members are employed and the death of the head of the family turned things upside down.

The third daughter (Fumiko) had graduated from a first class university and then married a young *sarariiman* (Tōru) against the will of her parents, and stayed home to take care of their baby son (Nozomi). The two youngest daughters (Yōko and Nagako) were still studying at the university and living with their parents.

In Part 2 (1993-1994) the Okakura father decides to leave his company and starts working as a cook in a Japanese restaurant. His wife resents the decision, as it was made without her knowing, and she even goes so far as to leave home without notifying anybody. After some drinking in a *ryokan* or a Japanese inn, she nevertheless comes back, as everybody is worried sick.

The eldest daughter, Yayoi is still portrayed as a patient and gentle person in Part 2. When her mother-in-law (Noda Hana) had a stroke and moved in to live with them, she helped her to recover and made her feel at home. The husband (Ryō) was still in Iwaki and only had demands and accusations for his wife when their daughter (Akari) ran away from home and ended up as a striptease dancer. With the encouragement of the mother-in-law Yayoi started working part time in a high-class French restaurant and her husband was again angered because he was not consulted.

The plotlines at the second daughter, Satsuki's home revolve around the mother-in-law (Kojima Kimi), daughter-in-law and sister-in-law (Hisako) relationships. At times the mother-in-law seems to grow to be more reasonable and understanding, but after a while she always turns out to be the *onibaba* or the demon mother, as her son (Isamu) sometimes calls her when very drunk. In this family the daughter-in-law, Satsuki, is the classic enduring Japanese woman, takes everything with a gracious smile, and only loses her temper in extreme conditions. The central plotlines often involve Satsuki's daughter Ai and son, Shin.

Fumiko, the third daughter, has a deal with her mother-in-law (Takahashi Toshiko) that they have separate households, although they live under the same roof. Nevertheless there are constantly situations where separate refridgerators are not enough to keep the mother-in-law from meddling into the life of her son's family and the raising of their child Nozomi. The son, Tōru, decides to quit his company and he does this without consulting his wife, which brings in a lot of discussions about divorce. Finally the arguments are resolved and the wife starts working part time at the natural food shop which the husband has founded.

The fourth daughter, Yōko, is first and foremost a career woman who has an education in interior design and architecture. After graduating from the university she was about to marry her love (Yamaguchi Tarō) but this was opposed by the mother (Masako) of the groom-to-be and Yōko instead married somebody else and left for Hawaii to study. After divorcing her husband she came back to Japan to look for work and found her old love again, this time as a business partner.

The youngest, Nagako, works as a doctor's secretary in a hospital. Her first husband died in an accident and left a seven-year old daughter (Yū) from his previous marriage to be taken care of by the Okakura family. Basically the child is the responsibility of the Okakura mother, who also cleans and cooks for her two youngest daughters, who still live at the house. Nagako has an admirer, a doctor (Homma Eisaku) at the hospital, whom she ends up marrying.

In Part 3 (1996-1997) the Okakura parents have a restaurant of their own and all the daughters have left home. Daikichi and Setsuko have to give up the restaurant, however, because the owner (the family of Yamaguchi Tarō, Yōko's boyfriend) of the building has financial problems and has to sell the place. The Okakura couple decides to retire, but within a week come to understand that idle life is not for them. That is why they turn their own home into a restaurant.

The character of Yayoi, the eldest daughter, is reversed during Part 3. The sacrificing daughter-in-law turns into a demanding and selfish mother and wife who does not accept her husband's wish to retire from the company or her daughter's desire to marry a country boy. The husband's company does not need him at Iwaki any longer because of the recession. He would like to stay in the countryside and start cultivating *nashi* or the Japanese pear instead. Because of his wife's strong opposition he yields and continues at the head office, but the daughter — who has come to her senses, left striptease dancing and graduated from the university — makes a deal with a local farmer at Iwaki and starts working there. Eventually she falls in love with the young farmer and wants to get married. This is also opposed by her mother but in the end the daughter gets her way. At the same time there is a conflict with the son of the family (Takeshi), who wants to become a car mechanic and not to go to the university. Yayoi opposes this too, but eventually has to let him do as he wishes because Ryō encourages him. Yayoi is bitter and even leaves home for some time because she feels her family does not respect and need her any longer. Finally she returns to her family and decides to leave her job at the French restaurant to take care of her husband, whom they anticipate to get a promotion.

In Part 3 the plotlines at Satsuki's family still involve in-law relations and also relationships between cousins, but the sister-in-law has changed; Hisako has been written out and Kuniko has replaced her. The central plotlines

concentrate on the relationships the children of Satsuki and Kuniko have with each other, and also on Kuniko's involvement with a married man, who finally dies of cancer. A new plotline is also developed through a young girl, who has fled home and finally been accepted as a worker at the family restaurant, Kōraku. She works hard to support not only herself, but also her boyfriend, who has also fled home to become a *manga* or comic book artist. As the plotline unfolds and the boy is successful in his efforts, it appears that both come from upper class families. Because this is revealed the girl refuses to marry the boy, since she would have wanted to be accepted by his family as her ordinary self, not as somebody from a prestigious family. She then leaves the boy and the restaurant, where one of the cooks, a man in his mid-thirties is devastated by all this, as he had been hoping to get together with the girl.

Fumiko, the third daughter, has a hard time because her mother-in-law has developed Alzheimer's disease. The husband and wife are fighting about how the patient should be taken care of. The couple is again on the verge of a divorce when an aunt comes from Hawaii to solve the problem: she suggests that the couple should divide the week in two and take turns working at home and at the family business.

Yōko is again getting married to her first love, Tarō, and this time the rich and high-class mother-in-law also wants this to happen. However, because of the economic crisis, the family company is about to fall and the mother-in-law decides that the only son and heir must marry money instead. Yōko agrees to this, but continues working with Tarō and also seeing him at business-related get-togethers, despite strong opposition by both parents of their. Finally the newlywed wife comes forward and solves the situation by making friends with Yōko, the ex-girlfriend of her husband.

The youngest, Nagako, married her doctor Homma Eisaku and they now have a baby girl (Hinako). (The daughter of Nagako's ex-husband has disappeared, supposedly to be taken care of by distant relatives of her father.) Nagako has left her profession as a hospital secretary and tries to work as a freelance translator instead, but has difficulties because her husband does not take part in the housework. The mother-in-law lives in Osaka, but yet manages to bother the young couple with different kinds of demands. The husband is unable to solve the disputes of the women, and he mainly ends up siding with his mother. Occasionally the women are able to solve the problems in their relationship and become close, which makes the husband even more confused.

Part 4 (1998-1999) begins with the death of the Okakura mother. For the first time in her life she had taken a trip abroad, and had left for New York. The holiday was a gift from her daughters. Quite unexpectedly she died there of a heart attack. She was 'replaced' by her friend, whom the mother had asked to take care of the family and the family restaurant in her absence.

During Part 4 it becomes obvious that this Taki-san knows even more about the family than the daughters would like her to. Since the Okakura father is now a widower there are plenty of interested women who stop by at the restaurant more often than they used to. These women include some of the mothers-in-law of the Okakura daughters.

Yayoi is having trouble adjusting to her life without her children, who have grown up and left home. She feels she has no goal or meaning in life. Things are at their worst when she realizes that her daughter considers her mother-in-law to be more important than her mother and when her son gets married without letting his parents know. Yayoi leaves home and goes to Okakura, as not even her busy husband seems to need her, since the mother-in-law cooks and cleans for him. The mother-in-law notices this and decides to move to an old peoples' home in her native Osaka. After different phases of family consultation, Yayoi eventually returns home. At the same time she gets laid off from the restaurant. Since she has a nursing education, she, after taking a course to refresh her professional skills, starts working in an old peoples' home.

Satsuki's arguments with her mother-in-law get worse, and she even leaves home when the mother-in-law refuses to give her permission to go to New York to fetch the body of the dead mother. Satsuki plans to start living with her father, and to take care of him, but because of Taki-san there seems to be nothing for Satsuki to do. Satsuki returns home, back to the fights with the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law. Satsuki's son Shin is determined to continue the operation of the family restaurant and refuses to go to high school, which again causes arguments in the family. These plans and the peace of family life are altered when a new and more attractive Chinese restaurant opens nearby and the customers of the family restaurant disappear. The family is forced to consider new ways of attracting customers and making profits, and start making *bentō* or lunch-boxes which they deliver by order to companies.

Fumiko is divorced and lives with her son Nozomi at the Okakura home. After the death of her mother-in-law her husband had suddenly decided to sell the home and to take the whole family to Hawaii without negotiating with Fumiko. Angered by this, Fumiko divorced her husband, who left alone for Hawaii. Fumiko has problems with raising the son, and her natural food shop is in trouble because of the recession. It appears that her ex-husband would like them to get back together; he has also been secretly supporting Fumiko and the shop all along. Fumiko is the first of the sisters to fully accept Taki and the importance of her role in the house, because Fumiko herself is too busy to take care of the household of her father. Most of the time she is too busy to take care of her son either, who is also being taken care of by Taki. After different phases the divorced couple decides to get

back together and move into an apartment. The Okakura father is left to live alone, which causes his daughters to worry.

Despite the efforts of her ex-boyfriend's mother, Yōko refuses to consider marrying Tarō even if Tarō were to divorce his wife. The mother would like to force the divorce, because the wife has to spend most of her time at her childhood home taking care of her elderly parents. Instead Yōko announces that she will never marry anybody and continues being friends with both Tarō and the wife.

Nagako's mother-in-law has found a new love and her son, Eisaku, is strongly against the two getting together. Nagako and Eisaku's sister try to convince him otherwise. Nagako continues to have arguments with her husband, her mother-in-law and other relatives about her working. Her sister-in-law, however, takes her side and the two young women team up to defend each other on several occasions. Nagako has a fight with her mother-in-law about the new love the latter has found, and is forced by the mother-in-law to leave home. Nagako moves with her daughter Hinako into the Okakura home, and finally her husband also decides to move there, despite the mother-in-law's strong opposition. This solves the problem of the Okakura father having to live all by himself.

3. Genre and gender in theory

In this chapter I present the theoretical framework of the study and the central notions of gender and genre. The chapter also includes figures that illustrate the notion of genre as it is used as a tool of the empirical analysis in this research.

In recent years, genre theorists within media studies have emphasized that genre provides an analytical model for the mass-mediated dynamics of meaning production — a model where the maker, the receiver and the text can be seen in a triangular or cyclical relation with each other (cf. Ryall 1978, Gledhill 1994, 1998; Buscombe 1969, Neale 1980, etc.). Few studies, however, have put this theoretical insight into practice and looked empirically into the genre-related processes of meaning at each corner of the triangle, and especially how these corners in actual practice relate to each other. Furthermore, in terms of theory, the focus has been biased towards pondering genre-related meaning-making in reception and in constructing audience expectations towards the text.

In this study I employ the notion of genre to approach production members' interviews, audience interviews and tens of episodes of a specific Japanese television drama. In this chapter I first define genre in a way that foregrounds the processes of meaning in production, as this has been the most undertheorized part of the genre triangle. After that I move to define the concept of gender as I employ it in this study. As already noted in the Introduction, the intertwined relationship of genre and gender will be elaborated upon gradually in the course of this study, through the analysis of the empirical material.

In my view, the concept of genre with its emphasis on relationality, provides us with a more fruitful approach to television than those theories which consider television as 'flow' or those considering production, reception and text as separate points in the process of mass communication. The concept of gender, for its part, offers a new and pertinent dimension for genre analysis, a dimension that has been largely overlooked in mainstream and even in critical analyses of genre (see e.g. Ridell 1998b and Attallah 1984, but see Gledhill 1997 for a different example). It is not unusual that studies focusing on genre from a cultural studies perspective note the gendered nature of the genre hierarchy (see for instance Curti 1988, Fiske 1987; Alasuutari, Armstrong & Kytömäki 1991), but until now the constitutive and dynamic way in which gender cuts through all levels and aspects of genre has not been studied empirically.

My tentative point of departure is the classical film theoretical text by Tom Ryall (1978), in which he describes genre as "patterns/forms/styles/ structures which transcend individual art products, and which supervise both

their construction by artists and their reading by audiences". Ryall emphasises that the three — "film", "artist" and "audience" — are in a triangular relation with each other. This triangle is located within the industrial conditions of the television industry, which again lie inside the social formation of the society in question. I will return to Ryall's figure in more detail on page 56.

Television genres can also be conceived of as cyclical processes of repetition and re-iteration (Easthope 1979) for both the viewers and the makers of television. Genre not only introduces viewers into certain viewing patterns, but also invites makers to act along certain practices of making television. Between making and watching there lies a common ground (sometimes wider, sometimes narrower) consisting of a shared horizon of meaning framed by the television industry, the 'public' discussions and debate on television and its output, fan culture, television criticism and the cultural and social values in a community.

Recently the concept of genre — traditionally widely employed in literary theory and cinema studies — has also been found useful in the studies of (news) journalism (see e.g. Kunelius 1996; also Latham 1997). There genre is often defined as a cultural and social contract between production and reception, the rhetorical mode of address (considered inherent in a genre) being a central notion (see Morley 1981, Fiske 1987, Gledhill 1997, Ridell 1998b). The genre-specific mode of address is seen to suggest audience members certain meanings and viewing patterns. On the production side, genre is usually seen as a part of the industrial conditions of production. (cf. Feuer 1992, Easthope 1979.)

The significance of genre on the level of actual production practices of television has been looked into only in rare cases. Knut Helland (1995), for one, in his dissertation studies the practices of television news work and the television news text empirically from a genre perspective. His view on genre in production is as follows (ibid., 63):

> [..] the television news departments, in presenting a news programme, are mediating the nature and the codes of the genre within which they are operating. [..] The news genre affects not only the editorial and journalistic personnel's understanding of how to produce: it also affects the audience's 'reading' of the news programme [..]

Even rarer are studies that empirically focus on the whole triangle of production, reception and text. In one of them John Tulloch (1990) starts from the view that also makers, not just audiences, of television are also active agents within certain social frames, with their needs, desires, interpretive strategies and intentions. He also criticizes ethnographic audience research for neglecting the media industry and the ways its members "resist the deleterious effects of

their social situations" (ibid., 20). In his work, however, the relationship between production and reception remains somewhat vague. He approaches both producers and receivers as active actors within specific conditions, but does not talk much of their relationship. Implicitly Tulloch gives the impression that genre is one of the preconditions for both production and reception, but in his actual analysis genre is used as a taxonomic concept for classifying texts. He thus appears to operate within the frame of the existing genre system without problematizing it and, in this way, reproduces the genre hierarchies according to which some genres "just appear to be" better and more respectable than others. (cf. Ridell 1998b, where she criticizes Fiske 1987, among others for this.)

I propose that it can be useful to study empirically how genre addresses both the makers and the viewers. The way the generic mode of address works for each direction may differ, yet genre also persuades the makers to adopt a certain meaningful 'author' position in relation to the programme in question, not differently from the address it directs at the audience offering it certain patterns of reading. In television production genre directs and limits possibilities of expression: the visual choices of the programme, the amount of dialogue used, the appearance of the setting, the degree of 'realism' etc. Moreover, genre carries inherent presumptions about the audience, presenting it in a more or less self-evident light to the makers. The television industry, for its part, frames and conditions genre by making a different amount of money and resources available for production, according to a particular genre's place in genre hierarchy.

3.1. Genre studies and television

Genre has been discussed extensively in literary theory and in film theory, but it has figured less prominently in the discussion on other media. Some researchers have employed it in the study of journalism, focusing more often on newspaper news (Ridell 1996a, 1994; Kunelius 1996, Reunanen 1991) than on television news (Pietilä 1995, Ridell 1998b). As regards television, some have considered genre an unsuitable concept because of the flow-like nature of the medium (cf. Feuer 1992). Others have applied it, most often in studies focusing on situation comedies (e.g. Attallah 1984, Nielsen 1997) or soap opera (Feuer 1992, Gledhill 1997). In Finland Iiris Ruoho (1993a, 1993b) has discussed 'family drama' from a genre perspective.

There are two typical features of television genre studies. Firstly, there seems to be a clear division between those focusing on 'factual' kinds of television and those that look into 'fictional' 'genres'. Secondly, those interested in news journalism seem to borrow their theories from literary studies

and studies of rhetoric rather than film studies, while those focusing on 'fictional television' go for examples from cinema studies. The influences are, however, shared to some extent, because film genre theorists have tended to get their ideas from literary theories (e.g. Neale 1980). Curiously enough, defining and describing fictional forms of television seems impossible in television studies without reference to and/or comparison with Hollywood film genres. The 'Western' is the most popular example, with the 'musical' taking second place (cf. Modleski 1990[1982], Attallah 1984, Geraghty 1991, Feuer 1992, Fiske 1987, Gledhill 1997, see also Ryall 1969, 1975; Feuer 1981, Neale 1990, Altman 1981, 1987; Buscombe 1969). Maybe the obsession with the Western can be explained by a statement Buscombe (1969) makes: "[..]the Western seems to me the most important of the genres, the one in which the largest body of good work has been done[..]" In other words, Westerns simply have been studied a lot, because they are an "important genre". This has a strong connection to what I say about genre hierarchies and genre and gender in Chapter 6.

Insofar as 'genre' is spoken of within television production, it usually refers to certain industrial marketing strategies of television programmes. When programmes are made and 'sold' to the viewers, they are marked with specific sets of cultural and representational conventions that make the programme in question belong to a certain genre, be it news, documentary, soap opera, situation comedy etc. Consequently, genre is one of the elements of the television institution that organises, regulates, and hierarchizes themes, signifiers and discourses (Attallah 1984, 232).

In the daily categorization, genre seems to be a useful and handy vehicle for referring to certain shared characteristics of television programmes or other texts. Particularly in film studies, the focus has been on classifying films into certain 'genres', thereby seeing a genre as a recognizable set of textual, internal and/or external features. This, however, requires an already shared common sense understanding of a particular genre and of texts belonging to it. For this reason, as Attallah (ibid.) notes, it is impossible to define a genre from textual features of programmes. In order to make this kind of definition, we need a tacit preconception of the genre in question. This underlines the aspect of genre as something already agreed upon culturally.

The usage of the concept of genre in culturally oriented television studies has focused on certain textual features of media texts and on looking for ways in which these texts invite audiences to relate with them. John Hartley defines genre as one of the Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies (1994, 126). He points out that, because of the recognition, that a book, a movie or a programme belongs to a certain genre, "the viewer/reader/critic will orient his or her reactions to what's there according to the expectations generated by recognizing the genre in the first place". The em-

phasis within cultural television studies has thus been on "what genre does to the audience", instead of studying how it works in production or in reception, for that matter (see Gledhill 1997, Feuer 1992, Neale 1980, Morley 1981, Buscombe 1969, etc.).

Despite the fact that it is quite usual to consider genre as a 'contract' between film-makers/makers of television/writers and viewers/audiences/readers, genre has been related to the production side mostly on a very general level (cf. Schatz 1981, 16; Morley 1981, Gledhill 1997). The emphasis has been on describing genre as an industrial practice. Usually the industrial practices are considered to be those of or equal to the Hollywood film production. Hartley (ibid.) offers an illuminating example: "[..] they [genres] do have a material effect [..] on the way the industry itself institutionalizes its output — there were whole studios which concentrated on particular genres [..] and individual actors, directors and writers will often be identified wholly with just one genre [..]"

Attallah (1984, 223) focuses on television and sees genre, quite exceptionally, as an unseparable feature of television institution: "[n]o genre exists or has meaning independently of its context. The context of situation comedy includes basically not only the institution of television and all that it produces but also the social meaning and values upon which it draws and which it reformulates."

In the few cases where production is paid closer attention to it is seen from a 'system' point of view, and the significance of genre conventions for individual makers as well as their actualization in diverse practices of producing television are rarely questioned. Schatz characterizes film studies (1981, 15):

> Genre study has tended to disengage the genre from conditions of its production and to treat it as isolated, autonomous system of convention. As a result genre study tends to give only marginal attention to the role of the audience and the production system in formulating conventions [..][1]

Neale (1980, 19; 1990, 48), who mainly focuses on genre as textual features inviting the (cinema) audience to certain readings, considers any genre both a coherent and systematic body of film texts *and* a coherent and systematic set of expectations. These "circulate between industry, text and subject".

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[1] Williams (1984) has attacked Schatz's work on genre, but not specifically from the point of view of neglecting the production. Williams's criticism focuses mainly on Schatz's selection of Hollywood films and the theoretical implications he finds in the development of genres based on his selection.

Here Neale's writing can be understood as containing both the 'writing' and 'reading' subject, although his text does not indicate this very clearly.

To sum up, genre has been considered as a feature of texts which addresses audience in a specific manner, and as a part of industrial practices. The notion has rarely been used as a tool for empirical studies of audience. Even rarer are studies that would employ the concept of genre in empirical studies of fictional television production.

3.2. The genre relationship

3.2.1. Genre and textual features

As noted above, genre has been used mostly in theorizing and categorizing textual features, instead of conceiving it in terms of connection between all elements of a mass-mediated communication process. Theorizing has focused on how certain textual features invite certain readings (and sometimes ways of writing). Feuer, for instance (1992, 144) writes that genre guarantees the intelligibility of the text:

> Through repetition, the cultural 'deep structure' of a film genre 'seeps to the surface'. The audience – without conscious awareness – continually rehearses basic cultural contradictions that cannot be resolved within the socio-economic system outside of the text: law and order versus the ideal of individual success (the gangster genre), nature versus culture (the Western), the work ethic versus the pleasure principle (the musical).

The notion of 'verisimilitude' has been central in discussing the relation between text and audience. For Neale (1990, 45) this concept is a part of "the question of the social and cultural functions that genres perform".

> These systems of expectation and hypothesis involve a knowledge of – indeed they partly embody – various regimes of verisimilitude, various systems of plausibility, motivation, justification and belief. Verisimilitude means 'probable' or 'likely'. It entails notions of propriety, of what is appropriate and therefore probable (or probable and *therefore* appropriate). (Neale 1990, 46.)

Literary genre theorist Todorov (1992[1981], 18-19) names two aspects of verisimilitude according to which kind of representations are referred to: a

more narrow generic and a broader social/cultural verisimilitude. The former one applies to the 'rules of genre', and can also be called 'probable'. The latter, for its part, is defined in relation to 'reality': a relation between "discourse and what the readers believe is true", in other words, between the work and 'public opinion' (ibid.). These two forms of verisimilitude are interrelated and overlapping. Consequently, it is important to note that neither "equates in any direct sense to 'reality' or 'truth'" (Neale 1990, 46). Generic verisimilitude follows the 'rules' of a genre, and cultural verisimilitude refers to the common sense understanding in a culture of what is 'real', probable and plausible. This can also be explained in the terminology Stuart Hall uses, by defining cultural verisimilitude as "the continuous process of signification of the cultural/ideological world" and generic verisimilitude as a phenomenon related to specific practices of making and receiving of television programmes. (Angus et al. 1994, 258; cf. Ridell 1998b.)

Culler (1975, 140) uses the concept of vraisemblance, and distinguishes "five ways in which a text may be brought into contact with and defined in relation to another text". The first two would refer to the social/cultural verisimilitude and the last three to the generic verisimilitude:

1) the *socially given* text, that which is taken as the '*real world*'.
2) (sometimes difficult to distinguish from the first), a general *cultural text*, which is the shared knowledge recognizable by participants as part of culture and "hence subject of correction of modification but which none the less serves as a kind of '*nature*'".
3) the text or *conventions of the genre*, a specifically literary and artificial *vraisemblance*.
4) "the natural attitude to the artificial, where the text explicitly cites and exposes *vraisemblance* of the third kind so as to reinforce its own authority".
5) the complex *vraisemblance* of *specific intertextualities*, where a work takes another as its basis or point of departure and must be assimilated in relation to it.

It is important to keep the two — cultural and generic verisimilitude — separate, if only analytically. As Neale (1990, 47) notes, certain genres appeal more directly and consistently to cultural verisimilitude than others. Especially those types of television programmes where generic verisimilitude calls for fantasy, the 'cultural verisimilitude' can be broken. Indeed, many genres tend to work through and play with their limits (some more some less). But, in so doing, genres also take part in the continuous process of defining and negotiating what is culturally 'real'. For instance, a view that the popularity of *The X-files* is due to a sense of distrust towards officials and a need to believe in supernatural forces can be deepened by asking to what

extent the fact that a serial like *The X-files* exists has enhanced these 'tendencies', and whether or not they would have appeared as an issue without the serial (or parallel 'secondary texts' [Fiske 1987, 117]).

As the concept of verisimilitude indicates, genre is not only about the internal rules of a textual kind, but also essentially about the perceptions of what is 'real' in a culture. These are interrelated in any television text. In fact the further a programme draws away from what is considered 'real' in social and cultural sense, the more it comes to rely on verisimilitude of the genre itself.

3.2.2. Genre and textual/social practices

Genres, then, are central in representing the world, making sense of it and naturalizing it (cf. Culler 1975). Genre, as noted, can be defined as the socially, historically and practically embedded horizon of meaning making that connects the production, texts and reading of texts. This horizon is characterized by certain rules, conventions and expectations that render things intelligible in already familiar ways. Through genre the world is represented and understood as sensible. (Ridell 1992, 142.)

As noted earlier, Ryall (1978) conceives genre as a concept that combines production, reception and text in a triangular relationship with each other. Figure 1 reformulates Ryall's illustration (ibid., 23) to consider terminology that is used in the context of television.
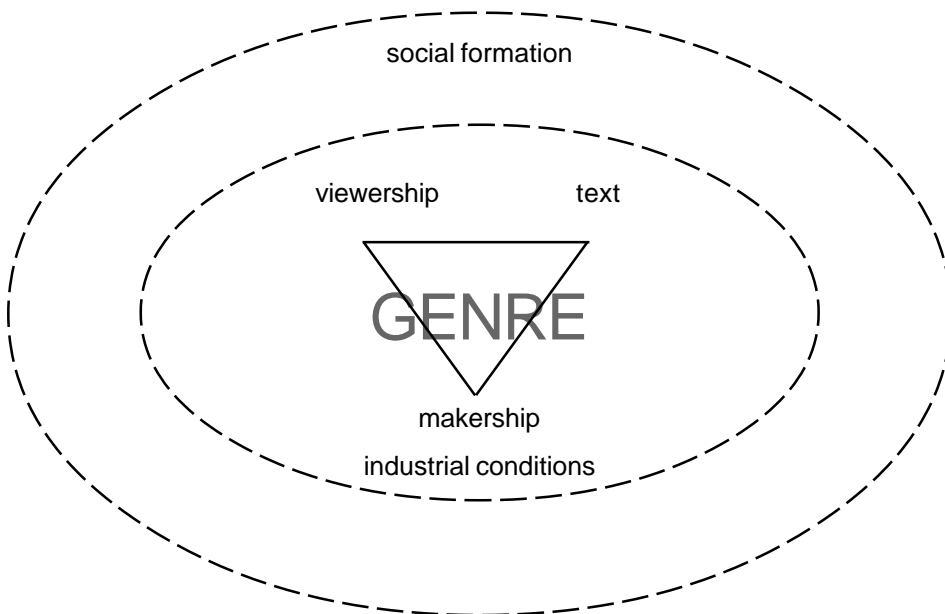
Figure 1

Within this triangle, when sharing an understanding of a particular genre, its features and narrative image, the viewers and the production side have made a 'communicative contract' (Ridell 1996, 8). The genre actualized in this 'contract' is not just the "horizon of phenomenological meaning making", but an institutionalized process embedded in material cultural practices. This process regulates and organizes the construction and interpretation of discourses. For this reason, genre is central in maintaining prevailing ways of thinking in society and thereby sustaining the social and power relations. (Ridell 1994, 147.)

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 the 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 forms 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.

In the case of more 'fictional' forms of television, such as family dramas, the situation is different. Television drama is supposed to be 'fictional', in other words, it is made and watched with the anticipation of something that is 'made up'. Thus, the generic contract might be less binding as regards the relation to the 'real' world. However, even these serials often include a strong aspiration to 'realism' or cultural verisimilitude, in this way taking part strongly in defining what is, for instance, a 'real' family or a culturally correct way of perceiving womanhood and manhood. The contract matter can also be seen from another point of view, and thus it is possible to note that in the 'fictional' genres a part of the contract is that it is possible to question the degree of 'realism' in the programmes.

There are also some specific advantages in using the word 'contract': it implies a power relation, as there is always somebody who drafts a contract, despite the fact that contracts are mutually signed. Terms of a contract can also be rewritten, sometimes less than mutually, and in many contracts there is the small print, which is not necessarily the knowledge of all parties.

Ridell (1998b, 130; 1998a, 77) distinguishes three interrelated but analytically distinct aspects of genre, namely the presentational, the representational and the practical. Her definition of genre includes relations between production, text and reception, but empirically she focuses on the relation-

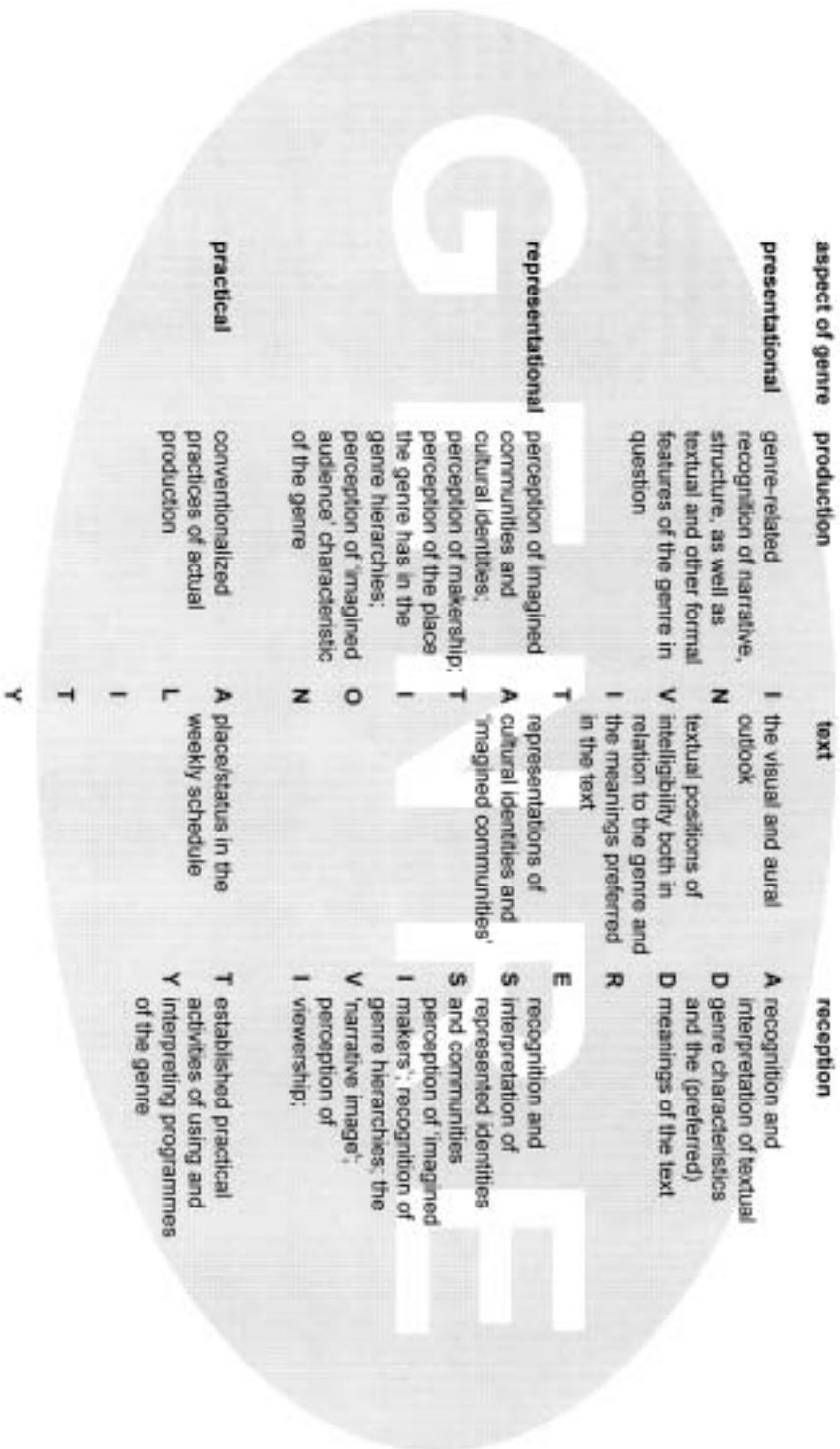| aspect of genre	production	text	reception
presentational	genre-related recognition of narrative, structure, as well as textual and other formal features of the genre in question	I the visual and aural outlook N V intelligibility both in relation to the genre and the meanings preferred in the text R	A recognition and interpretation of textual D genre characteristics and the (preferred) D meanings of the text
representational	perception of imagined communities and cultural identities; perception of makership; perception of the place the genre has in the genre hierarchies; perception of 'imagined audience' characteristic of the genre	T representations of A cultural identities and 'imagined communities' I in the text O N	E recognition and S interpretation of represented identities S and communities I makers'; recognition of 'imagined perception of genre hierarchies; the V 'narrative image'; I viewership;
practical	conventionalized practices of actual production	A place/status in the weekly schedule L I T Y	T established practical activities of using and Y interpreting programmes of the genre

Figure 2

ship between text and audience in television news. I make use of Ridell's genre model here and reformulate it to demonstrate how the whole triangle of communication in television, as represented in Figure 1, actually floats on practices of genre. Figure 2 specifies how genre works for each point in the triangle and which aspects will be given specific attention when applying the concept of genre in this particular study.

The most important points in Figure 2 are the words 'invitationality' and 'addressivity'. Genre invites members of production to certain kinds of decisions within the practices of making television at the same time as it addresses members of audiences in a particular manner. This calls for specific contextualized interpretative competencies both in the making and in the reception to recognize and (re)produce the discursive features of the given genre.

For **production** a major question is how genre directs and frames possibilities of expression by providing certain assumptions about the audience and suggesting certain strategies of expression as appropriate (Ridell 1998b, 62). For the makers genre acts as an invitation, which they in theory can also discard (cf. Culler 1975). The conditions posed by the industrial demands on genre, however, set a frame that makes too strong of deviations impossible. I will return to these industrial conditions below. Here the presentational level refers to the recognition of genre-specific narrative structure, as well as the other textual and formal features of the given genre. On the representational level especially notable are questions concerning the imagined communities and cultural identities that are being represented and how. On this level the perception of the genre intersects with the imagined audience and the view on makership. The aspects of the presentational and representational level appear also on the practical level of making television programmes.

In the **text** genre is realized in a visible form, in particular ways and strategies of visual and aural outlook, certain narrative tempo, amount of dialogue, way of cutting, using music etc. In the text appear also the positions of intelligibility in relation to the genre and in relation to the meanings the text puts forward as preferred. The discursive ways of representing cultural identities and 'imagined communities' depend on the genre, on the genre-related ways of perceiving the audience and conceiving the aims of programming. In the case of *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* these communities involve the representation of 'nation' through the discourse of 'traditional Japaneseness' and the traditional gender roles these enact. On the practical level the place and status of the programme in the weekly schedule is taken into account.

In this framework, **reception** is a corner of the 'triangle' (cf. Figure 1). Here we can see the actual possibilities of interaction and meaning that each programme type provides for the audience (Ridell 1998b, 62). Genre addresses the viewers in specific ways, and on the presentational level the viewers recognize and interpret the textual genre characteristics and the (pre-

ferred) meanings of the text. On the representational level they recognize and interpret the represented identities and communities and position themselves in relation to the perceptions of the viewership. They also have a view on makership, which to some extent depends on genre (and genre hierarchies) and is often mediated through the 'narrative image'. On the practical level there are the conventionalized practices and activities — genre routines — of using the programmes belonging to a particular form of television.

There are three problems in Figure 2. As already mentioned, the first problem has to do with the metaphor of 'contract': both the word 'contract' and the model itself make the issue of genre appear as overly rational — conscious and controlled. In actuality, practices of genre are rather something conventional and self-evident. They "just happen" or "just are" as we are used to having them, and meanings "just appear". In genre-related processes of meaning little attention is paid to what is actually going on in terms of social action and its consequences: which social actors and relations are being represented as dominant by the textual practices and consolidated as such in the interpretative processes of production and reception. (cf. Ridell 1998b.)

The second problem is also related to the rationality aspect. Particularly on the reception side much of watching television is definitely about pleasure. The figure, however, seems to reduce this pleasure into "recognition and interpretation", which appear as conscious and controlled processes, thereby neglecting the multiplicity of pleasure. The concept of genre nevertheless does emphasize the routines of media use, which is often intertwined with the pleasures and patterns of everyday living.

The third problem then involves something that Fiske (1987, 117) calls secondary texts: much of genre, especially the narrative image (Ellis 1992[1982], 30) of certain programmes, is mediated for the viewers through texts outside the actual programme, for instance 'trailers' of programmes and writings and critiques of programmes in newspapers and the popular press. If the makers are already famous, merely their names are enough to create a certain narrative image, as is the case with *Wataoni*. There are also different kinds of fan-activities around programmes, which Fiske also includes in secondary texts. This kind of intertextual features do not have a place in the figure.

As with all theoretical notions, genre thus conceptualizes cultural and social phenomena in a specific way. It brings into light certain things, such as the intertwined relationship between production, text and reception, and the social nature of meaning making processes, which are difficult, if not impossible, to reach with other concepts. Since genre is a central tool in this study, issues of pleasure and intertextuality, for instance, are only touched

industry	aspect of genre	production	text	reception
industrial conditions (competition: e.g. public service vs. commercial)	**C** presentational	genre-related recognition of narrative, structure as well as textual and other formal features of the genre in question	**I** the visual and aural outlook	**A** recognition and interpretation of textual genre characteristics
'goal' of communication (e.g. education vs. entertainment)	**O**		**N** textual positions of intelligibility both in relation to the genre and the meanings preferred in the text	**D** meanings of the text
	N		**V**	**R**
	D		**I**	
view on reception (e.g. public/audience/consumers)	**I**		**T**	**E**
	T		**A**	**S**
ranking of audiences	**I** representational	perception of imagined communities and cultural identities; perception of makership; perception of the place the genre has in the genre hierarchies; perception of 'imagined audience'	**T** representations of cultural identities and 'imagined communities'	**S** recognition and interpretation of represented identities and communities
genre hierarchies	**O**		**I**	**I**
	N		**O**	**V** perception of 'imagined makers'; recognition of genre hierarchies; the 'narrative image'; perception of viewership
	A		**N**	**I**
	L practical	conventionalized practices of actual production	**A**	**T**
industrial practices (e.g. scheduling, resourcing, and marketing strategies)	**I**		**L** place/status in the weekly schedule	**Y** established practical activities of using and interpreting programmes of the genre
	T		**I**	
	Y			

Figure 3

upon here. Moreover, as already mentioned, the focus on gender adds new pertinent dimensions on the prevalent, critically informed genre analysis.

In Figure 1, the genre triangle was placed within two circles, the first being the 'industrial condition'. This illustrates the fact that, on the one hand, industrial conditions act as a frame of genre having often very direct and strong effects on development and dynamics of genres. On the other hand, the presumed importance of some genres over others is reflected in the allocation of the resources as well as in the scheduling given to particular programmes. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

The television industry[2] frames and conditions genre. The industrial frames include the mode of production, the 'goal of communication' and assumptions on reception. They are intertwined with the genre hierarchies which also make preference over certain audiences. Genre hierarchies are not located only in the industry and the industry does not mechanically determine the hierarchies, but the industry takes part in reproducing them. In practice this happens in the scheduling of programmes and resourcing of productions. In fact there is an interrelated relationship between genre hierarchies, assumptions over reception and the industrial conditions. These all have an impact on each other.

Unlike many studies that have theorized genre, I find it necessary to distinguish between the levels of industrial practices and the actual production of programmes. I realized the importance of this distinction when interviewing the production crew members. Talking with them made visible the conditions that the industrial frame actually sets for people working in the productions of television drama. Ien Ang (1985) has stated that viewing is a social practice which differs according to media form and social context. This is also precisely what can be about the making of television: as a social practice it varies depending on the media form and programme type, as well as the social context, including gender, length of career, position in the working organization, just to mention some. The industrial conditions act as a frame for these factors.

There are also conditions for reception which are not marked in the figure. These conditions, such as the family context and patterns of consumption are among the frames. They, however, are multiple in such a manner that it feels forced to set them into a figure illustrating genre-specific processes of meaning making. These conditions do not directly correspond with the more specialized industrial practices and frames, which for their part

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[2] It can be noted that the television industry functions according to the laws of the mode of production as do all modern (capitalist) societies, which have based their 'development' and social structures on the interplay between production and consumption (see Marx 1973[1857]).

condition the making of television drama. The conditions of reception are also part of the social formation mentioned in Figure 1.

3.3. Gender as a relationship

Yet another part of this social formation is gender which can be seen to cut across the whole genre triangle. The formative effects of gender are recognizable in production, text and in reception, as well as at all analytical levels of genre: presentational, representational and practical, although there are nuances in how strongly gender takes part in the process of meaning on each level. The empirical material in this study is used as a means for exploring what the differences on different levels are and in which ways gender cuts through the field of genre.

Sex is one of the basic categories of our sense-making, and meanings ascribed to specific biological properties frame people's possibilities and choices in a given society. These choices become so self-evident for members of a given culture that they appear natural. Thus gender has the characteristics of ideology or a myth (Barthes 1972). It presents itself as shared by all, appearing as the normal state of affairs, and 'interpellating' people to act along (Althusser 1971, 162). This can also be called 'self-representation', or "the process whereby a social representation is accepted and absorbed by an individual as her/his own representation, and so becomes, real, even though it is in fact imaginary." (de Lauretis 1987, 12).

> To study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination. [..] certain symbolic phenomena are not ideological as such, but are ideological only in so far as they serve, in particular circumstances, to maintain relations of domination (Thompson 1990, 56).

Gender, according to some, is this kind of symbolic phenomenon, which serves to maintain social relations of domination. De Lauretis, who notes that gender has the characteristics of ideology, is one of these. She argues this by referring to Althusser (1971, 160) who describes ideology as having "the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects". De Lauretis notes that we can also say that gender has the function of constituting concrete individuals as men and women. Althusser (ibid., 163) describes ideology as a system which hides the fact that it is a construct and not something natural. Althusser writes:

> [..] those who are in ideology believe themselves [..] outside ideology: one of the effects of ideology is the practical denegation of the ideological character of ideology by ideology: ideology never says 'I am ideological'. (Ibid., 163-164.)

De Lauretis (1987, 5) criticizes the understanding of gender simply as a biological difference. She emphasises that gender does not represent an individual but rather a social relation. Thus the important distinction is not between cultural and biological (gender versus sex), but between a cultural norm and the actual people trying to live according to the cultural norm. She thus distinguishes the cultural ideal and norm of Woman from the actual biological women who try to self-represent themselves to resemble the cultural Woman. Despite her emphasis on the relational nature of gender, de Lauretis here omits men, which I find a disadvantage. An attempt has been made to compensate for this absence by simply adding biological men and the cultural norm of Man into the picture (Karvonen 1993). This, however, does not solve the problem.

Despite the insight that both Woman and Man are cultural constructions, it has to be remembered that this relationship is never symmetrical (cf. Braidotti 1991). Firstly, cultural Woman and Man are not simply constructed as individuals, but particularly in relation to each other. This relationship is a one of shifting power. Secondly, in this power relationship the cultural Man has been in most times and in most societies constructed as having power over the cultural Woman. This then has lead into biological men having power over biological women. The ways of constructing this asymmetry differ. A basic notion of the sex/gender system (Rubin 1975, Kuhn 1982, D'Acci 1994) sees that traditionally the reproductive work has been the responsibility of the Woman, the breadwinning being the Man's share. De Lauretis (1987, 5) sees the sex/gender system as constructed both in culture and in language. For her the system is:

> [..] both a sociocultural construct and a semiotic apparatus, a system of representation which assigns meaning (identity, value, prestige, location in kinship, status in the social hierarchy, etc.) to individuals within the society.

The sex/gender system as a concept is a fairly rigid one, and suggests that there is a fixed and unchanging structure. Gender is, however, more complex than this, a constantly changing struggle over meaning in shifting power positions. Simply noting that both Woman and Man are cultural constructions is not enough for analyzing gender. It is more essential to explore how the relationship is based on asymmetry, and to look into the shifting powerplay in different fields of life.

The gender relationship is thus always hierarchical and the question is about power. The power actualizes situationally and the relationship is much more complicated than "the active Man is suppressing the passive Woman" -simplification. Instead of starting from this fixed position it is more fruitful to ask what kind of relationships there are between men and women, women and women, men and men and how these relationships are realized in different kinds of situations and are represented in diverse cultural forms. (cf. Ruoho 1990; Nikunen, Ruoho & Valaskivi 1996).

Some studies on women in Japan claim that it is precisely because the division of labour and sex roles are clearly differentiated and polarized that women enjoy significant freedom in Japan (cf. e.g. Lebra 1984). It has also been argued that the way in which Japanese women perceive equality between sexes is essentially different from that in 'the West' and, moreover that in the Japanese clearly divided worlds of women and men, women in fact have considerable power and freedom in their domestic roles (Iwao 1993, 11-20).

In this study my intention is not to claim differently. Within their domestic role women in Japan no doubt may have power and freedom, just as television viewers watching a television serial are able to make their own meanings of the text or to switch onto another channel, or just as a television director is 'free' to choose the angle from which to shoot a scene. Or just as a Japanese man has the possibility to choose his career. In all of these cases there is power and there is freedom. In this study, however, I focus on the boundaries, limitations and relativities of these powers and freedoms.

There are some things that trouble me about Lebra's and Iwao's claims. Based on their cases of Japanese women, they appear to be making fairly essentializing claims on what "Japanese women" are like, overlooking, for instance, class, regional and educational differences. As can be read in for instance Buckley (1997), AMPO (1996), Imamura (1996), Fujimura-Fanselow & Kameda (1995), and Sievers (1983), views of womanhood, woman's place in the society and gender have, in fact, been various, and also contradicting and changing in Japan, as in other parts of the world.

According to Karen Offen's (1988) definition, a feminist:
- takes seriously women's own estimations on their situations and experiences
- is conscious of the existence of a subordinating system and considers it a disadvantage
- works for a change of the unjust system by resisting it in different situations

These principles, however, can collide with each other, and frequently also do. If a feminist researcher with a consciousness of inequalities in a society and with a serious aim to changing things, encounters women who say they

are perfectly happy in their home-making roles, a dilemma may appear, as she is also supposed to take seriously what the women say about their lives. Obviously those researchers, who have come to the conclusion that Japanese women are powerful in their homes, have listened to the women but have forgotten the social and cultural frame that excludes women from decisions made in the fields of production and politics. Yet, focusing solely on women's absence from the public life of Japan would portray women as powerless and voiceless in all fields of society, which would be an equal misrepresentation.

In an attempt to avoid these extremes I define gender as a relationship of shifting powers. It can be said, and also has been said (e.g. Yamaguchi 1995) that while women need to be allowed to gain power in the so called public life, men should have access to the home and family life. There is a struggle over meaning of gender at play here, which concerns questions of power in daily life and the division of labour in society. The cultural images of the relationship between Woman and Man take part in this struggle over meaning.

As theorizing gender first took place within women's studies, there has been, and still is, a rather unfortunate equation of gender studies = women's studies. This kind of equation not only suggests that only women have gender while men represent the normal human beings, but it also leaves gender studies into a marginalized position, where the 'normal' 'malestream' of research seems to have no need to read what is written about gender. Recently men's studies have also appeared, but so far this has not brought about the effort of treating gender as a relationship, or rather as a set of relationships, and exploring the complexities of mutual influences.

3.3.1. Technologies of gender

Gender then, is a culturally and socially constructed relationship, which is produced and reproduced in representations, gendered practices and patterns of behaviour. De Lauretis (ibid., 18.) writes:

> The construction of gender goes on today through the various technologies of gender[3] (e.g. cinema) and institutional discourses (e.g. theory) with power to control the field of social meaning and thus produce, promote, and 'implant' representations of gender. (My note.)

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[3] Cf. 'technologies of sex', Foucault (1990[1976], 119).

These various technologies of gender work in different ways. Television it-self has numerous different ways of representing gender, opening and clos-ing spaces for discussions on meanings of gender. The shape that the strug-gle over meaning (Hall 1996[1985], D'Acci 1994) of gender takes differs depending on the genre. It depends on the practices of production, the textu-al features and the expected competencies of the imagined audience. Some types of television allow a generous space for negotiation over meanings of femininity and masculinity, while some, especially those that have a referen-tial relationship with 'the real world', such as the news, tend to represent gender in its most 'normal' and commonsensical way.

Television drama, and especially soap opera is often considered as one of the cultural forms where gender is negotiated and spaces for struggle over meaning of gender are opened up. This is because television drama is con-structed as an 'open' text, which does not fix the preferred meaning very strongly as compared to more 'closed' forms of television, such as the news (cf. Fiske 1987, Eco 1979, Barthes 1975)[4]. Due to the multiplicity of mean-ings, several writers (e.g. Brunsdon 1981, Feuer 1992, Modleski 1990[1982], Fiske 1987) seem to agree with the interpretation that soap opera for instance does not give the viewer one subject position to identify her/himself with. Just when the viewer has identified her/himself with someone, the scene changes. In this view soap opera is an open text. This openness is character-ized by the multiplicity of plots and resistance to narrative closure.

Stereotyped characters. In cultural products, such as television drama, the construction of the culturally ideal womanhood and manhood can be easier than in 'real life'. The representation is often done through stereotypes — notions of social groups that emphasize certain features in those groups. Stereotypes claim that all those belonging to a certain group share certain characteristics and act in a certain way.

According to Winship (1988, 7) stereotyped representations have three characteristics. Firstly, they represent real groups in the society. Secondly, they construct and express meanings in an economical way that makes rec-ognition easy. Finally, through recognition the viewers can quickly either identify themselves with the stereotypes offered or distance themselves from them.

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[4] Fiske (1987) distinguishes between open, writerly texts and closed, readerly texts, borrowing the concepts of open and closed text from Eco (1979) and writerly and readerly texts from Barthes (1975). According to him a writerly text provides alternative meanings for the readers, whereas readerly text reads easily — it "does not foreground its own nature as discourse and appears to promote a singular meaning". This singular meaning is not that of the text, but the one of the 'real'.

The most important of these features appears to be recognition. It can be said that stereotyping is a genre-related method of emphasizing features that are essential to cultural phenomena: stereotypes being based on our cultural understanding of certain groups give us the pleasure of recognition. Stereotypes are created through 'excess' (Barthes 1986, Fiske 1987) recognizability is created by exaggerating some features. From recognizability comes the 'reality effect' (Barthes 1986) and the viewer can think: "I recognize that, thus I know it exists."

Gender then cuts across the whole genre triangle. It works differently on different levels of genre, but nevertheless it appears. In the analysis of empirical material in Chapters 5 and 6 I explore how these intertwined issues are made sense of in the production, text and reception of *Wataru seken wa oni bakari*. Before moving into the results of the analysis, however, I introduce in Chapter 4 the material and methods of analysis.

4. Methods in reflection

In this chapter I move into describing how the material of this study was collected and analyzed. I focus on how things were done and also reflect on the problems I ran into in doing this study. The reflections and ponderings in this chapter involve mostly issues of method.

4.1. Collecting material

The material for this study was collected in three phases. I conducted most of the production interviews during a two-week stay in Tokyo between Nov. 23, 1996 and Dec. 9, 1996 at TBS, both in the Akasaka main office and the Midoriyama studios. The viewer group interviews I made during a one-week visit in Feb. 18 - 26, 1997. During this time I also interviewed the assistant directors who were too busy to talk with me during my first visit. During a three-month stay in the Autumn of 1997 (Sept. 17 - Dec. 14, 1997) as a visiting researcher at the Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture, I interviewed the desk secretary and script writer. Otherwise the three-month stay was for collecting literature for the study, as well as for polishing my Japanese language skills.

Time set limits for doing the interviews. Since I wanted to make the interviews during the making and broadcasting of Part 3 (at that time there was no knowledge of Part 4), the short trips became necessary. Originally the long visiting scholarship was planned to coincide with the serial's broadcasts, but because of delays in the process of the scholarship coming through, the plans had to be rescheduled and interviews made during two short trips.

The tight schedule caused me to depend on friends and acquaintances in organizing the viewer interviews, since the interviews had to be settled by the time I got to Tokyo. In the production one of the directors acted as host and organized my schedule more or less in advance, according to my wishes. (I will return to the pros and cons of this below). He, together with the PR division, also organized a press conference with the idea of 'Hashida Sugako meets a Nordic woman doing research on her drama', as well as opportunities to observe the making of *Wataoni* in all its stages, as far as it was possible during such a short period. I was also able to talk with the research division at TBS, as well as obtain some of their statistics on the *Wataoni* viewers. During the longer stay in autumn 1997, I was also able to attend to a one-day seminar organized by the Hashida Culture Foundation for young script writers.

The viewer group interviews were organized by my friends. I asked three of them to arrange meetings where I could discuss *Wataoni* with people. I specifically pointed out that I wished to find both men and women, and both people who liked the serial and watched it a lot and people who disliked it and/or did not follow it regularly. Despite this, most of the groups turned out to consist exclusively of women, and those groups that included men were families. In only one of the families did the man actually enter into the discussion of the serial. Others either noted that they had not seen the serial, or that they did not like it and then withdrew to listening positions. Not all of the interviewees had watched the serial; some had seen it once or twice, although most of them were regular viewers. In group 1 of young mothers at Yokohama there were four interviewees present. Group 2 of housewives in Chiba consisted of five women. During the group 3 interview of the family Higashi in Tokyo, there were four people present, although one of them did not take part in the discussion. In group 4, Family Tanaka in Yokohama, there were three (adult) persons in the room, but only two of them actively took part in the discussion. Group 5 consisted of Family Nakamura and friends in Tokyo, and there were five people present, of whom two did not participate in the interview. Altogether there were 21 people present in the group interviews, of which four assumed a listening position. The names of the families and participants have been changed. In the text I refer to the groups with numbers, and to the participants with the names that have been mentioned in Appendix 2.

When it became obvious already before my second trip that I would not get to interview too many men, I decided to complement the material by making a questionnaire. It included questions on the respondent's background, her or his television watching habits in general, questions about gender and roles of men and women, and finally questions on *Wataoni* in particular. (See the English translation of the questionnaire in Appendix 3.)

Altogether 84 questionnaires were filled in by friends and acquaintances of friends during the spring and summer of 1997. I asked four friends to ask their friends, neighbours, work-mates and relatives — those people who they considered to be suitable, and who would undertake the task — to fill in the forms, and then to collect them and to send them back to me. Two of these friends had also assisted me in organizing the group interviews. I took about half of the questionnaires to my friends during my second trip to be distributed, and the second half was collected by research assistant Hayashi Sawako during a visit from Finland to Japan in July 1997.

An important part of my material is the serial *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* itself. I have on tape 12 episodes out of 50 of Part 2, all of the 50 episodes of Part 3, and 34 episodes out of 50 of Part 4. The episodes of Part 2 I taped myself when they were broadcast in autumn 1993. Episodes of Part 3 and Part 4 I have gotten through my contact person, the director at TBS.

4.1.1. Production interviews: Individual interviews with 'a chaperone'

As mentioned above, one of the directors of *Wataoni* acted as my host, and also as my 'referee' while I was conducting the interviews. In Japanese social conduct it is necessary to have somebody to guarantee or recommend you, in order to get to meet people. The more important the interviewee, the more necessary the reference appeared to be. Because of this, the director, my host, had to be present in most of the interviews. When I was talking to some staff members at TBS, the director just introduced us and then left, or in the case of the assistant directors, the assistant producer just asked them to talk with me when they had time. This was during my second trip to Japan, when I already knew the production team members and they knew who I was. However, in the case of people with more power, the hosting director had to be present. This inevitably had its effect on the interview, and in fact some of the interviews turned out more like group interviews than individual ones, when the interviewee and the 'chaperone' started to discuss matters together. It was also obvious that the interviewees talked differently depending on whether or not the 'chaperone' was in the room. This especially appeared when during some interviews the 'chaperone' was present only part of the time. It is difficult to say what else this implies besides the fact that a group situation is different from an individual interview. For instance, when there was more than one interviewee present they tended to talk to each other, rather than address me the whole time.

In some cases the way in which the director had introduced me had given the interviewee a pre-conception of what I was doing. Some, for instance, expected me to be interested only in 'women' in television production. It also seemed that many of the interviewees agreed on giving me the interview because the director had asked them, rather than for other reasons (such as curiosity, or interest in what I was doing). Many of the production side interviewees were extremely busy, and giving me an interview within the tight working schedule seemed somewhat like an ordeal for some. However, those of the team members who were not busy at the moment, were often eager and happy to talk with me both in the interview and also while I was hanging around to observe the production process. I must have been a curiosity inside the production, and my host director added to the confusion by sometimes jokingly introducing me as his American wife.

The interviews were unstructured, although I tried to take care that certain themes would be discussed, in order to be able to make comparisons between interviews. The interviews usually started with the personal work history of the interviewee, then moved into their role in the *Wataoni* production, and their opinions on television, television drama and television production.

My intention was not to interfere too much and to let the interviewees express their opinions freely. However, when listening to the interviews I realized that I did, after all, interfere quite a bit. I seem to have been especially eager to give my own opinions about things, but fortunately only towards the end of the interviews. Usually this was because the interviewees wanted to know about television and television production in Finland, as well as Finnish society in general. As my study is not about comparing Finland and Japan as societies, I excluded these parts of the interviews from the analysis. If, however, the focus of my study was the formation of a 'third culture' (see e.g. Sarbaugh & Asuncion-Lande 1983, Hastrup 1988, Casmir 1991) it would have been interesting to also analyze the interaction between a researcher coming from another culture and the interviewees. I will touch upon the issue of 'third culture' in some detail in 4.2.1.

Altogether I made 24 interviews on the production side. Some of the interviewees were not working for *Wataoni* in particular, and those persons I left out of the systematic analysis of the material, as I did with the technical staff. I transcribed 15 of the interviews into English, and those I have examined systematically. The rest I either left out or used only for background information. I do not refer to those production side interviews that were not transcribed. For the producer and the script writer I have, after careful consideration, used their own names, as they are extremely public figures. The other production member interviewees I have marked with codes that are abbreviated from the names of their positions in the production. (A list of the production interviews used in this study is presented in Appendix 2.)

4.1.2. Viewer interviews: Group interviews with 'a chaperone'

In the viewer interviews my friends who had organized the get-togethers, were the ones responsible for the occasion, rather than myself, who occupied the position of a guest. The 'chaperones' acted out their roles in this situation in different ways. Some tried to keep the conversation within the themes of television, *Wataoni,* and family, while others tried to say as little as possible, letting me pose the questions and guide the conversation. It was as if the hostesses seemed to think that my research was to lose a part of its credibility if they, as my friends, were to give their opinion in the interview situation. I had not, however, asked them to act in either of these ways, although my request to organize the groups probably implied that I wished to find people I did not know in advance. In the interview situation, however, I also encouraged my friends to take part, especially in the cases when I knew

they watched the serial themselves, and if they did take part I counted them in as respondents.

I had originally planned the viewer interviews to be individual ones. It appeared, however, that it was easier to organize group occasions, where the hostess could be present naturally. Group interviews have also been thought to generate more interesting material regarding the gendered process of genre-related meaning making (cf. Ridell 1998b). Also the viewer interviews were unstructured. The themes revolved around watching television in general, *Wataoni* in particular and on family life in Japan (and in Finland), as well as the lives of the group members. Altogether there were five group interviews, two with a group of friends getting together (1, 2), and three (3-5) with loose family settings. In group number 3, there was a non-family member 'chaperone' present, in 4 the 'chaperone' was the niece of the interviewees and in 5 there were family members and friends present.

In these interviews, even more than in the production interviews, the interviewees were interested in my background. They were especially eager to know about Finland in general, the Finnish family in particular, as well as about the production of *Wataoni*. I also acted as their window to the *Wataoni* production, and some appeared very impressed by the fact that I had met the players and the makers.

The group interviews turned out to be fruitless to transcribe as a whole — because of people frequently talking over each other, children in the room, and other background noises. Instead I listened to them through 1-2 times and made notes on the chosen themes that are specified below. I then listened through the tapes again while writing the empirical chapters, adding relevant parts to the text.

4.1.3. Questionnaires

As noted, there are altogether 84 questionnaires. Among the respondents there are 62 women and 22 men. The questionnaires were filled in mainly in Tokyo, Yokohama, Chiba and Saitama, in other words, around the Kantō area. Some were also filled in Kyūshu. As I had not been expecting to have questionnaires filled in in different parts of Japan, there was no space for indicating place of residence. Thus, I have no means of identifying between answers in different localities. The age span varies from teenagers to people 80 years of age. Most of the respondents were between 41 and 70 (53 people, of these 42 were women, 11 men).

Gender in questions. The answers for the questionnaires made me realize the significance of the background of the researcher. For one thing, I had —

being a foreigner and a researcher — formulated my questions from an outsider's perspective. Moreover, the questions also seemed to have anticipated a female informant. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly what these formulations are, but the anticipation can be seen in the awkwardness in many of the men's answers. The expectation of this type of television being aimed at women, and also being watched mostly by women, had apparently been in the background when I formulated the questions. The answers reveal that both the genre frame and my way of formulating the questions had influenced both the women and the men who answered the questions. For instance the question "What would you like to change in your current relationship" is most of the time left unanswered by men, or they have only noted "nothing special", while a greater part of the women write something down. The questions concerning the difficulties which women and men face in Japanese society in general have also been answered by women more frequently and with more words than men. There also appears to be more coherence in the answers of women, who also tend to call for social change, than men, who seem to rely on individual solutions.

This may well be a question of cultural, genre- and gender-related relevance (Cooper 1999). Those questions that were relevant for me (and for most of the female respondents), were not relevant for a part of the male respondents. The lack of relevancy can be explained with different reasons. Male respondents, for instance, might have disliked the serial, had not seen it at all, or had not considered issues of gender. There is a question of research technique at play as well: as the number of male respondents is only one third that of the amount of female respondents, it may well be that there just happened to be a majority of men who seemed to find my questions somewhat irrelevant. The TBS statistics show that the serial is more popular among less educated men and women and those doing manual, factory or farm work. The main viewer groups are also middle-aged and elderly. The people whom I asked to collect the questionnaires for their part were well-educated, over thirty, but below forty, and city dwellers. And they were all women. (At some point I realized I had no Japanese male friends so close that I could ask them for a favour.) Among their acquaintances it appeared that there were less men from the lower classes, although there were men of different ages. Nevertheless, in the sample there were women, not only of different ages, but also of different educational backgrounds and different working statuses.

Language. Although I made the questionnaires with the help of a native Japanese speaker, there still remained things that had annoyed some. Some of these were about the questionnaire itself, some about the cover letter. Especially hilarious was a note from an elderly man, who commented on the cover letter. He had been annoyed about the name of my department 'Jour-

nalism and Mass Communication', and pointed out that 'journalism' and 'mass communication' are two completely different things and cannot be combined. There were also other comments, such as one about the term *yamome* for 'a widow', being offensive. These kinds of linguistic problems might have made some respondents hostile towards the research. Apart from those cases where the respondent wrote down the irritation it is hard to tell why, for instance, some questions were left unanswered. Some respondents, for instance, left all open questions unanswered. Many also left the open questions concerning *Wataoni* unanswered, although they wrote long responses to other open questions. This was most common in those questionnaires which were collected only after the broadcasts of the serial had ended. By the time of filling in the questionnaire these respondents had possibly forgotten the characters and plotlines of the serial.

4.1.4. Videotape

This study is a continuation of my master's thesis, which focused on the textual analysis of the episodes in Part 2. The analysis I carried out for that purpose serves as a background for the current work. In addition I have carefully watched through 84 episodes of Part 3 and Part 4 and taken a closer look at episodes 35-38 and 46-50 in Part 3. These were the episodes that were in some stage of production during my two interviewing trips to Japan. I have also focused more closely on those two plotlines that involve Akari's marriage to the countryside, and Fumiko's family problems and their solution through the aunt from Hawaii. Akari's marriage also appeared to be a plotline that was memorable for many of the viewers, who mentioned it in the questionnaires and interviews. This is, however, something that I realized only after having analyzed the scene. The analysis of the serial text is mainly based on the work I did on Part 2, where I analyzed a set of 12 key scenes using close textual reading (cf. Valaskivi 1995).

4.2. Analysis of the material

This research sets out to outline qualitatively the basic dimensions and frames of reference that define genre from different perspectives. The data of the research is read symptomatically, and features found in the data are considered as "operative indicators" of the theoretically conceived phenomena this study wishes to address, the main analytical notions being genre and gender. (cf. Pietilä 1973, Alasuutari 1994). I read the material with the aim of finding

symptoms of genre-talk and gender-talk. The basic themes I focused on in analyzing the interviews concerned family, 'realism', 'Japaneseness' and everydayness. I also looked for descriptions of practices in making and watching the serial, as well as perceptions of relationships inside the making. One of the central themes was the relationship between makers and viewers, and how they perceive each other, as well as how both the makers and the viewers relate to the programme itself. In outlining the themes I relied on the different levels of Figures 2 and 3, keeping in mind which level and which aspect of genre I was working on during the process of analysis.

The study combines multiple materials: group interviews, individual interviews, questionnaires, the episodes on videotape, and my own observations and experiences as a foreign researcher within the production and as a guest inside the viewers' homes. In the analysis I have connected these different materials in order to give different perspectives to each theme under consideration. I have systematically cross-read the materials and related ideas that have come together in the process. After the production interviews were transcribed, I marked with different colours the different themes that appeared in the interviews for the purpose of analysis. Since this was not possible with the viewer interviews that were on tape, I carefully listened through them, picking up relevant points for each theme. The answers to the open questions on the questionnaires were translated into Finnish by a Japanese translator, and I have translated them into English, keeping an eye on both the Japanese and Finnish versions[1].

The themes that I address are those that have emerged in the course of this study. I had some tentative ideas about the key themes of the serial on the basis of my previous study on it. Already at that stage I visited the TBS Midoriyama studios and talked with the makers, thus getting a perception of what was going on in the production. When planning the production and viewer interviews, I relied on these previous experiences.

I collected the information on the questionnaires manually. As I was interested mostly in the open answers, there was no point in running the data through a statistical programme. Thus, I divided the forms into two piles, women and men, and collected all the answers to the open questions on paper. (See Appendix 4 and 5 for detailed figures concerning answers to some of the most important questions.)[2] Comparing the answers of women and men made me recognize differences, which are discussed in Chapter 6.

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[1] I used a translator because the questionnaires were answered by hand, which made reading them a difficult and time-consuming effort.

[2] I also made comparisons between different age-groups, but since the sample was fairly small, the age-groups did not appear representative enough.

4.2.1. Assessing the analysis

As already mentioned, my perceptions of the serial and its genre obviously influenced the ways in which I conducted the interviews. From the beginning I was interested in questions of genre, gender, issues of realism and Japaneseness. However, these were also issues that had come up in the earlier stages of my research. The process has thus been a cyclical development of ideas in dialogue with the empirical material. The fact that this is now a printed book does not in any way demonstrate that the process has come to an end, or that this is the only possible form it could take.

As regards the talk generated during the interviews, my way of formulating the questions and coming forward with particular themes obviously had an impact on what the respondents discussed. The primary starting point for the whole analysis of the material was that the interviews would be interactive situations, and that my own role in them would be active. None of these conversations would have taken place without my initiative, and if they had, they would have been different. Thus measuring, for instance, to what extent people talked about this or that topic would not have been very fruitful, for in most cases I was the one who brought up the topics. In my analysis I have, instead, focused on *how* those topics have been talked about. I have also tried to find those points where the discussion has taken another route or revolved around different topics than those I intended with my question.

When we come to the results of a research project, questions of reliability, validity and generalizability are always asked. It has been emphasized by numerous researchers that qualitative research cannot be measured with the yardsticks of quantitative methods (cf. Ridell 1998b, Lunt and Livingstone 1996). Questions of reliability and validity are nevertheless important and relevant in all research work, although the means for assessing them differ, depending on whether the question is of qualitative or quantitative methods.

Reliability is about accuracy and correctness in the methods of collecting and analyzing data. In order to be reliable, the methods should give credible and accurate information on the phenomenon under study. In principle, reliability can be verified by collecting the information concerning a particular phenomenon in two or more different ways. (Pietilä 1973, 233.) An attempt to strengthen the reliability of this study has been made by using different methods of collecting material, such as interviews, participant observation, and questionnaires. This kind of "research strategy in which different methods are employed for data gathering and analysis around a single object of study" is often called triangulation (Jankovski & Wester 1991, 62). It has to be remembered, however, that triangulation of different methods does not indicate that the research would then give the only possible and 'true' reality of the subject under study. When findings derived from different methods

give similar results it can be an indicator of reliability, but it is only the starting point for the analysis. What the similarities (or differences) mean and indicate has to be interpreted through the analysis. (cf. ibid., 63.)

In a reliable study, there should also be as few technical errors in the analysis of the material as possible. In qualitative research it is often difficult to verify whether or not there are mistakes. For a reader of this study — and of most qualitative research — it is then more or less impossible to check whether or not the methods of analysis have been correct and whether or not technical mistakes have been made in, for instance, classifying the speech of the interviews into certain themes. Checking this would require a thorough study of the classification system used, and an examination of the same materials, in this case tapes, transcribed texts and videos using the same classification system. Since the experiences with the production and in the interviewing situations would be impossible to transfer to any inspector, it has to be acknowledged that even in theory it would be possible to check reliability only to a certain degree, supposing that reliability is defined in the described criteria.

The question of validity then becomes all the more important. Validity indicates to what degree the chosen theoretical phenomenon is in fact expressed in those empirical phenomena that have been selected to illustrate the theoretical phenomenon (Pietilä 1973, 247). In this study the approach is towards particular empirical material, through certain theoretical concepts. I set out to find correspondences between the theoretical concepts and the empirical material of the study. The questions then are whether or not the empirical findings respond and correspond to the theoretical frame, and whether or not the chosen empirical findings are the right ones to represent the material. The fact that findings in different empirical materials support each other in this study can be seen as an indication of validity. A reader of this study can also estimate the validity of this research, for instance, by comparing the chosen citations with the interpretations that have been made of them. If there seems to be a contradiction, then the validity of the findings can be doubted.

The issue is, then, whether the explanations given for certain phenomena are culturally credible, and whether there would have been other more plausible explanations that could have been constructed from this particular body of data, collected within certain circumstances and contexts. Consequently, what is important is that the chosen theoretical framework is used coherently throughout the empirical material, and that from this particular point of view the interpretations seem plausible in a certain cultural and social setting. As long as the interpretations remain credible, the question about validity is not actualized.

As for generalizability: this is a case study, and the aim is not to make generalizations beyond the material of the case. Some of the findings might

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have significance beyond the case, but confirming that would require another study, with a wider empirical sample.

Ridell (1998b, 111) ponders the difficulty of studying audiences from a genre perspective: "How to get hold of something that appears to be more or less unconscious and self-evident for people". Genre-related meaning-making is about tacit cultural in/competencies that are not reflected on, and because of that they are difficult to recognize and even more difficult to verbalize. Ridell (ibid., 112) points out, referring to the observations of cultural studies research on television news, that both the news text and watching the news as an action are rather unreflected by the audiences. Here, however, we can see a difference of genre. In contrast to news, which typically does not invite the audience to discuss or question what they see, television drama appears to invite the audience to assess and evaluate what appears on the screen, not only in relation to their own lives, but also in terms of whether or not the programme is well-made, 'realistic' and 'good'. The frame within which this can be done is naturally relatively narrow, as particular types of drama invite particular ways of expression. In the case of *hōmu dorama* in general and *Wataoni* in particular, these appear to be connected with themes of family, national identity and gender, while with, detective stories, for instance, the frame of reference could be completely different.

Thus, fictional television programmes do seem to enable and even invite evaluations of the serial in question. There are, however, limits and boundaries to these discussions, and it is these boundaries that interest me in this study. It can certainly be argued that genre appears and becomes visible precisely through these boundaries. In this study I have then set out to explore and write down the process of understanding some mechanisms of television, genre and gender, as they appear in the dialogue that I have had with my material of interviews, video-tapes and questionnaires.

Third culture. In anthropological research, a researcher identifies with the help of the research material the basic dimensions and boundaries of world-views within which it is possible for somebody from another culture to understand local ways of thinking and behaving. (Malinowski 1961 according to Alasuutari 1994.)

Anthropologists doing ethnography have used innumerable pages in pondering what the relationship between an anthropologist and 'native' is like, and how it should be described. The question is about intercultural communication, and how, in order to manage and find a common ground, both the 'visitor' and the 'native' adjust. One of the theories in intercultural communication is that in an encounter between two persons from two different cultures a new 'third culture' is developed. This third culture develops particularly through communication, since the people in the situation create new

rules for interaction and generate "a new system of managing meaning in the context" (Sarbaugh & Asuncion-Lande 1983, 54).

The theory about the 'third culture' has been used in various ways, some noting that a conscious effort throughout the world should be made for creating third cultures as means for better understanding in the world (Casmir 1991, 7-15). Others have implemented the notion in face-to-face situations on an individual level (Mikkonen 1997). The concept has also been employed in empirical anthropological research. Danish Kirsten Hastrup conducted ethnographic research on Iceland, and used the concept to explain how in the encounter between cultures of the ethnographer and the culture she studies they both change. Hastrup herself, and Tufte (1999, 48), who later employed the concept, seem to think that in an ideal case the two cultures somehow merge into a third one in which they begin to understand each other, despite the inevitable difficulties. 'Third culture' has then been — somewhat idealistically — defined as something that is not made up of integrated parts of the earlier cultural entities, but rather acts as a means for altogether new ways of reaching cultural understanding (cf. Mikkonen 1997, Casmir 1991). This kind of idea of an entirely new culture appears too strong for my purposes, not least because I do not consider my work to be ethnography in the anthropological sense of the word.

It has, however, also been noted that the third culture is situational, and that it can also be temporary. The purpose for the third culture is to provide a space where the persons involved in the encounter can situationally make sense of what is going on. This does not, however, necessarily indicate mutual understanding. (Sarbaugh & Asuncion-Lande 1983, Casmir 1991.)

Defined in this way the concept of 'third culture' seems to more accurately describe my experiences of the liminal space and contacting surface that emerges when a foreign researcher and her interviewees encounter each other. In that situation both are on less than stable ground, and both have an opportunity to learn from each other's background. In my interpretation that is why the topic of the discussion shifted towards Finland, families in Finland, television in Finland and other similar things towards the end of my research interviews. After having told me about their culture, the interviewees seemed to want to know something of mine or, alternatively, felt an obligation to ask for the sake of reciprocity. Especially in one of the interviews discussions about Finland seemed important. The hostess had lived in Finland for several years and was eager to tell her friends about the country. In the interview situation then, not only topics about Japan were discussed, but there were also comparisons between the hostess's perceptions of how things (especially in families) were in Finland, and how they were in Japan, and what the differences were.

For some interviewees the interview also seemed to offer a chance to talk about things that bothered them. There were, for instance, some production

staff members who appeared frustrated with their work and the pressures it caused them. They seemed to use the interview situation as an outlet for their frustration. This also happened in one of the family interview situations, when my presence seemed to act as a catalyst for the elderly couple to say a few things to each other about what they thought of each other's media consumption habits.

The interview situations, then, were not only encounters between a television researcher and makers of television or viewers of television. Especially because of the 'chaperone' present in the situations, my position often shifted into being the foreign guest. Particularly in the viewer group interviews this was the case: I had been invited by my friends to get-togethers, which had been organized because of me. In my experience it is not very rare for Japanese to organize get-togethers for their foreign guests, to get them to meet people and to get to 'show' their guest to friends and — very important — to eat together. In the viewer group situations there were features of these kinds of informal get-togethers; all of them included plentiful and carefully made food.

On the production side the 'third culture' involved other kinds of reciprocity, which included my taking part in the PR efforts of the serial. As mentioned, TBS organized a press conference where Hashida Sugako was to meet me. In advance I had been told that it would be a very small and unofficial event. It turned out that there were about 20 journalists in the room, with a tv-camera running and several flashlights flashing every time I moved my hand or head. Stories of me and Hashida appeared in several newspapers and weeklies afterwards. TBS's own tv-magazine also wrote a story on us.

During my visit I was also photographed with the players on the set of the serial[2]. One of the oddest experiences was to notice one of the serial's child players intensively staring at me from the set during a shooting break. The direction of the glance was reversed, and suddenly I, usually protected by the television screen, was the one that attracted attention, and the obvious reason was that I looked different than all the others around me. Had I looked Japanese it is most likely that I would have gone unnoticed. Both in the pictures and in the situation, when I, the 'viewer' was suddenly seen and looked at by those that usually did not see me, the roles were reversed. Still, looking at the picture of the players posing in the setting, with me sitting in the middle, makes me feel awkward. It is me in the picture, and yet it is not. It is a representation of a 'Nordic woman doing research on Japanese drama'. While it was necessary for my study to get access to the production, the

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[2] I am not aware whether these pictures have been made use of by TBS after my visit.

production also used the publicity value of their foreign, white and Western-looking female guest.[3]

Inside the production there were, thus, two parties that were trying to — to put it bluntly — make use of each other: I needed to get the 'material' from the production, and the production used me for PR purposes. It was a mutual deal which, on both sides, involved questions of how far one can and wants to go.

My being a foreigner thus obviously mattered both in the viewer interviews and in the production. It might well be possible that accessing the production could be more difficult for a Japanese researcher having no such 'PR value'. At least the routes would be different, and would probably go through the research division of the company instead of production and PR sections.

My being a foreigner also makes a difference concerning interpretation of the material. Frequently there can be detected traces of an 'educational' attitude among the interviewees. They tell me things about 'Japanese culture' instead of talking about their life and relation with the serial. This also matters concerning the genre analysis I am doing in this study. As one of my main points is that *hōmu dorama* is used as a space for defining and discussing Japaneseness, it has to be taken into account that here people talk about Japaneseness to somebody who is not Japanese. Thus, the amount of 'Japaneseness' talk in my material might be more excessive than it would if a Japanese researcher had made the interviews. However, it has to be noted that in the literature quoted in Chapter 2 *hōmu dorama* is frequently connected with 'Japan', and the genre is defined as being particularly 'Japanese'. Moreover, the *Wataoni* serial text has as one of its explicit themes the Japaneseness. In the dialogue there are lines like "It is so nice that Akari has found a real, old-time Japanese home to be wedded in" (Part 3, #48), or "they in rational America have been able to figure this thing out so much better than us" (Part 3, #49), which clearly and explicitly aim at defining what Japaneseness is about, what it is not or what it should be. Therefore it seems hardly likely that the makers and viewers of *Wataoni* would address the question of Japaneseness just for the sake of a foreign interviewer. It is, however, more than likely that they would talk about their perceptions of

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[3] I was later told that the PR division would have wanted me to make a promotion programme with the *Wataoni* players, but that some members of the production staff very strongly opposed by saying, that the PR division had no right to use me, since that was not the purpose of my short visit. A promotion piece was nevertheless made, with a brief mention of my visit and my earlier publication. The piece continued with a male American language teacher coming to the studios to teach some sentences of English language to the main actresses of the serial. As I was told afterwards, this role was initially written for me, although I was, fortunately, never asked whether I would like to play it or not.

Japaneseness in a more explicit manner than they would with an 'insider' with whom they share a tacit understanding of their culture.

In a research interview situation there is always a power relationship at play. My power, however, especially in the group situations, was diminished by the fact that I was in the position of a 'foreign guest'. The question was at least partially about language. As the periods in Japan for doing the interviews were very short, my Japanese remained somewhat rusty, and I felt rather uncomfortable about it. This was one of the reasons why I preferred to have the interviews rather unstructured, and why I let the conversations more or less follow their own pace. I did interfere when talk started to drift into altogether different topics than had been intended.

One of the features in the research situation was gender. Being a woman myself I noticed that I was more at ease with women than men, not least because I am more comfortable with 'women's Japanese', having learned the basic language skills in a family environment. When talking with men I noticed that it was easier with the professional tv-makers than with those men that were in a viewer's position. In the production interviews it was also easier for me to take a professional role. It seems that the long tradition of television audience studies with a focus on women or families as television viewers had influenced me in such a way that I found it difficult to picture the role of 'an ordinary viewer' for a middle-aged man, especially when the question was of a serial that was considered feminine. The men also seemed somewhat uncertain about how to behave; for instance in one case the interviewee kept on bringing issues of his profession — dentist — into the interview. (cf. Hermes in an interview with Ridell 1995, 79.)

Although in the situation itself my power would have seemed lesser than in an average research interview situation, it has to be remembered that in the end I have had all the power of definition. The interviews were taped, and I have been listening to them for two and half years. Despite the fact that me and my interviewees might have shared a moment of 'third culture', the bottom line is that the discursive power is mine. In writing this dissertation I have used my power of definition, which my interviewees did not have. This work is thus a construction, which is based on my background and the particular materials described here. A basic question then is whether or not this construction is coherent and credible. There is also a question of my motives for doing this research: a theoretical ambition to combine the notions of genre and gender and employ them empirically, curiosity about makership and viewership of television, and personal interest in exploring a specific cultural phenomenon in contemporary Japanese society.

5. Genre in action

As the theoretical frame presented in Chapter 3 shows, in this work my focus is on asking how the *hōmu dorama* genre invites members of its production to particular representations of gender and nationality, and how it addresses the audience. I also ask how the self-evident routines of making and watching are represented and re-iterated, and how the generic interplay of similarity and difference (Feuer 1992) is worked through in production and reception of *hōmu dorama.*

In the interviews with the makers and the audience members I have looked for two kinds of talk, which I have called genre-talk and gender-talk. A part of the genre-talk are descriptions of the institutional constraints. Inside both the genre- and the gender-talk there are various common topics. Genre-talk appears especially in describing the serial as a member of the *hōmu dorama* type of television and the place of it in the genre hierarchy of the television megatext (cf. Browne 1984). In the interviews these descriptions focus on questions of realism within the frame of family, everydayness and Japaneseness. On the production side the genre-talk also includes description of making practices and relationships inside production, which are often described in gendered terms. Both the viewers and the makers talk also about each other, and the viewers describe their viewing practices. They also describe their relationship towards the text.

In this chapter I focus on the genre of *hōmu dorama* and how it is talked about in the production and reception interviews. Issues of gender are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, but will also be touched upon in this chapter.

5.1. Perceptions of the serial

As noted, both the makers and the viewers of the serial discuss the programme in terms of 'Japaneseness', 'everydayness' and 'family'. In sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 I describe these perceptions and how the emphasis comes through in the empirical material in relation to the text.

In the interviews of both the makers and the viewers themes of 'naturalness' and traditionality are the ones that often appear intertwined with the themes of everydayness, family and Japaneseness. These themes can be discussed and some of the discourses which appear named with the help of the concepts of 'realism' and 'verisimilitude'. Oftentimes, even when the interviewees do not so much as use the word 'realistic', they talk about the same thing in different terms. In the following I differentiate between different

kinds of 'realisms' that are being used as a means of defining *Wataoni* as a programme and *hōmu dorama* as a programme type.

When describing the serial and justifying its existence the makers often use realism, or refer to what is 'real' in the serial. Also the viewers, when talking about their reasons for watching, refer to it as "being close to daily life". Themes of everydayness and ordinary family life thus appear frequently: all parties involved seem to agree that the serial is essentially about 'everyday life', or *nichijō seikatsu.*

The topics that are touched upon in this chapter involve especially issues on the presentational and representational levels in Figure 3 which was discussed in Chapter 3. On the presentational level the question concerns the ways in which the makers and the viewers express their recognition and interpretation of the narrative structure, textual and formal features and other genre characteristics, as well as relate themselves with the preferred meanings in the text. On the representational level the themes involve questions of imagined communities and cultural identities and how these are perceived, represented, recognized and interpreted.

Perceptions of family, Japaneseness and everydayness in relation to the text are generally two-fold in their nature. The makers and the viewers either address the question of the *ideal* of how the serial should be or talk about the programme as it is at the moment. Especially the producer and the scriptwriter tend to emphasize the goals and aims of the programme rather than describe it as it is, while the viewers evaluate it as it is, and relate the programme to their daily lives.

5.1.1. Realisms and verisimilitudes: everydayness and ordinariness

Empiricist realism. The makers point out that it is important to make the serial resemble ordinary life and to make the family life in the serial look like the life of any Japanese family. The script writer emphasizes her desire to write about everyday life and things that are familiar to nobody in particular but yet to anybody, and about characters that "without a doubt exist somewhere". This comparing of a television programme and 'real life' has been called *empiricist realism* (Ang 1985). In this view things are supposed to be presented in their 'natural' form. In the case of *Wataoni,* a demand for empiricist realism appears often explicitly in realizing the visual style of the programme. Each one of the directors mentions the importance of not doing "too difficult" of pictures in order not to disturb the smooth running of the drama and the everyday-like atmosphere. For some of the viewers this seems to be the very attraction of the drama, as in the questionnaires they note that

they watch the serial because it is "easy to follow and understand". In this simplicity of visual presentation the emphasis is to allow room for Hashida's dialogue, the dialogue itself appearing to be quite unrealistic in its length and form. The directors agree on the language being the main way of expression in the serial even at the expense of the visual aspects.

The empiricist realism for the makers includes the idea that the identification of viewers is very straightforward: the plotline with the theme of Alzheimer's disease is supposed to attract viewers with elderly parents. Hashida's ability to write about a large family is also a cause of wonder, since she does not have siblings herself. Furthermore, the fact that all the actresses playing such good wives and mothers are, in 'real life' single and childless causes admiring comments among the team members. One of the actresses herself notes that viewers confuse the actors with characters, thinking they also have families just because their characters do. This goes for the other players too: they do not necessarily know about the family life of each other, but make assumptions based on the roles they perform.

In viewer Group 1 the plotline concerned with Alzheimer's disease was in fact considered something that touches their lives, although their parents and in-laws were still healthy. The viewers also referred to the question of whether things in *Wataoni* could really happen and started to tell stories of how their relatives or neighbours coped with senility, as well as discussing how their mothers had experienced harsh treatment from their mothers-in-law. None of these four women, however, mentioned having been bullied or treated badly by their own mothers-in-law. They did, however, also tell stories of situations where they felt they had been treated as a servant during family occasions because they were the *yome* or daughter-in-law in the situation. The programme, thus, seems to generate discussions on its themes whether or not the experiences are shared by the viewers themselves. In any case, they look to find some kind of personal connection with the serial even through an elder relative, if their own situation is different. In this case my question most likely was the one to stimulate the 'realism-talk'. In Group 3 this line of thinking appeared without a preceding question. Reiko noted that it is remarkable how somebody who has never had any children can write about family life in such a plausible way. She saw the background of the script writer as an explanation for why all the characters were so selfish. The writer, after all, according to her knowledge, was basing her writing on second hand information heard from neighbours and friends.

In the same group Michio emphasized repeatedly how artificial the serial is, and how instead of raising the thought "oh, yes, that's right", it raises the thought "what?? that could never happen". Kiku and Reiko discussed Yayoi's change in the serial and how she suddenly turned into a selfish and unaccepting mother after having behaved in such and altruistic way until then.

"This is a place, where the artificiality of Hashida's writing does appear", says Reiko.

The viewers thus attempt to negotiate the communicative contract on the serial and genre being about 'real family life'. The genre contract becomes visible at the points when the seeming contradictions with the 'real' are addressed by the makers and viewers, and the empiricist view of realism gets to be tested. The directors of the drama note how difficult it is to make a dialogue so "unrealistic" as to look real, since in "everyday life" nobody actually talks this much, and nobody has these long of lines, forcing other people to listen idly. And the viewers stress the pleasure of hearing the characters say things they sometimes also would like to say, but that "it would be impossible to say in 'real life'". They thus recognize the feeling and situation, and find it pleasurable to hear the characters actually say what they would like to say but cannot in the name of family harmony; this connects to *emotional realism* discussed below. The makers also tell about doubts when first reading a new script, or *daihon*: "would anybody actually go this far". Consequently, it is not only a question of what is perceived as 'real', but also what is experienced as relevant, touching, and sensible.

Emotional realism. The degree of realism in the text is estimated based on the perspective. Some viewers, often women, find the programme pleasurable precisely because of its closeness to daily life and their own situation. There are some who even wonder how the serial can hook them into watching, although the reality effect is only partial. For instance Mika, a woman in her thirties, who is married with one child and does translation work in her house, notes in Group 1 that in the serial the way Nagako does translation work is completely different from the realities of that job. Despite this contradiction Mika enjoys watching the serial, and wonders herself why.

It seems that it is rather the way the serial represents ordinary people and problems as coming close to personal experience that makes the serial appear as 'realistic' for viewers. Ang (1985) calls this phenomenon *emotional realism*, where the events as such can be 'unrealistic' in terms of empiricist realism, but which instead connect to what the audience members experience in their own relationships. From this perspective the pleasure of watching television comes from identification with something that is emotionally 'real' for the viewers. Not only the viewers, but also the script writer explains her affection with the script in these terms. She refers to closeness with some characters and to feelings she has experienced in similar situations, as well as to her family relations, especially her late mother-in-law.

Viewers disliking the programme can justify their rejection by also referring to emotional realism, or the lack of it. Some viewers (among them both men and women) dislike the programme, because the reality effect in empirical and emotional sense is only partial. These viewers criticize the serial of

artificiality and excessive plotlines. Alternatively, some viewers dislike the programme for being too realistic, in emotional terms, thereby not leaving room for intellectual thinking, or for being too accurate in portraying family problems and therefore painful. Consequently, those viewers who enter into the world of the serial watch the serial knowing that it is an artificial construction, and yet consider it a representation of the 'real'. Those viewers who refuse to enter the serial's world for their part see it only as artificial and at the same time unrealistic.

In Group 1 the interviewees start discussing the motivations of the characters. In the plotline in question, Toshiko the mother-in-law, has been taken back home from the hospital because the daughter-in-law, Fumiko, could not bear how Toshiko was suffering in the hospital. Mika in the group only watches the serial at times, so she often asks questions of her friends about the programme. She is also the hostess, who has taken it as her responsibility to keep the conversation going.

> Mika: So there is things about Alzheimer's disease and so on in the programme.
> Aiko: That's right.
> [..]
> Mika: About division of work and who goes to the hospital and [..]
> Mariko: But they already took her back home, because they felt sorry for her.
> Mika: But then again taking care of [the mother-in-law] is awfully hard work also at home.
> Aiko: They have a natural food shop and now it seems that the wife has to quit working there and stay home. But [this is a situation where] one wants to say: "She's your mother, you take care of her!"
> Sachiko: But, you know, men don't want to see their mothers in that kind of stage.
> Aiko: They think that it is natural that women take care of this [kind of things].
> Mika: I think that this is true, but also they don't want to see their own mothers in so bad condition.
> Mariko: What I always think is that it would be hell if [one's parents] would go senile.

Here the discussion goes into the women's own situations. One starts by telling about her grandmother being senile, and the others continue with their own experiences. However, for a moment the viewers here talk of the serial as if it were 'real'. (This can also be seen in the excerpts used in sub-chapter 6.3.1) The programme thus acts as a springboard that bounces the discussion into the 'real life' of the group members. Momentarily the women

seem to enter into the world of the serial, where the characters are like their friends, neighbours or family, and then move onwards to discuss their 'real life' acquaintances.

When the women talk about their relationship with their mothers-in-law they express feelings of awkwardness, discomfort, irritation and insecurity in different situations, where they either do not know how they should act or are uncertain of what their mother-in-law thinks. They also describe situations where they feel they are put in between their husbands and mothers-in-law rather than situations where the husband is between them and their mothers-in-law. These discussions, although not explicitly dealing with the programme narrative, implicitly touch upon the themes and especially connect with the relations and emotions the serial portrays.

There is also the question of what is plausible for the viewers. This plausibility can either be connected with what they are used to having in a particular programme or what makes sense in relation to what they know of the world. This is handled in more detail below when I discuss verisimilitude.

Ang's thesis about emotional realism thus appears somewhat too strong. If the viewers recognize a theme or a way of considering an issue it does not necessarily mean that they would have a similar personal experience. Even if they feel something when watching this does not necessarily mean that they identify with the text. In the situation of a group interview, talking of family events that correspond with the serial is also an easy way of finding something to discuss about.

There is also the question of generic competencies. Charlotte Brunsdon (1981) lists three categories of generic competencies that soap opera requires of its viewers. Here they are modified into the generic competencies that the *hōmu dorama* genre demands of its viewers:

> 1) Generic knowledge — familiarity with the conventions of *hōmu dorama* as a genre. Includes knowledge of the history of famous *hōmu dorama* people, as well as visual features of *hōmu dorama*, and narrative structure.
> 2) Serial-specific knowledge — knowledge of past narratives and of characters.
> 3) Cultural knowledge of the socially acceptable codes and conventions for the conduct of personal life.

Brunsdon's third point actually already moves from the area of genre towards a more general cultural and social context. In terms of Figure 1 in Chapter 3 the third point would fall within the circle of 'social formation', which naturally, as noted about gender, cuts through all aspects of genre.

As Brunsdon [ibid.] notes regarding *Crossroads*, and which also holds true in the case of *Wataoni,* the serial relies on the traditionally feminine

competencies. "The fact that these skills and competencies, this type of cultural capital, are ideologically structured as natural, does not mean [...] they are natural attributes of femininity", she (ibid.) writes. Nevertheless this genre addresses these competencies, and the genre is then also marked as being feminine. The serial is being watched within not only the *hōmu dorama* genre, but also with the relation of the 'real family life', which is considered to be a culturally feminine area of life.

The concept of emotional realism has also been particularly connected with women's experiences of television. The concept can then be criticized on the grounds of two arguments. Firstly, the concept implies that television experience is always inherently connected with something 'real', and that in order to be valuable something in a programme has to be 'real' for its' viewers. If this cannot be empirical facts, then it should at least be emotions. This leads into the second argument: the concept reproduces the dichotomy of masculine and feminine television by implying that feminine television experience is inherently about emotions. These issues of gender are returned to in Chapter 6.

Corrective realism. Talking about the serial as having to "look like ordinary family life" as much as possible thus seems to be one of the defining features of the *hōmu dorama* genre. There is another one, however, which is "to make viewers think". Although Hashida stresses that she does not wish to tell people how things should be, the content of the programme does at times take a very strong stand on some issues, such as a woman's right to choose her life (within the family frame) or the way of organizing children's education. Hashida emphasizes the importance of having a message in one's writing. This kind of *corrective realism* (Rich 1980, 80; Deming 1988, 154) or *progressive realism* (Corner 1998, 73) aims at representing things not as they are, but as they *should* be. Here we then again can see Hashida's orientation towards 'educational' television. Sometimes the aim of making the viewers think is intended on a very practical level, for instance in giving clues on how to solve a difficult family situation. This is exemplified in the talk of one of the directors, when he explains what kind of things he considers to be important in a drama:

> D2: I think that it is OK to make a cooking programme inside the *hōmu dorama*. The very ordinary main character [can give the insight to the viewer] 'oh, that is a way to cook delicious rice!' or 'that is a way to make hamburgers... I see, that is a way to make bread.' I think that if the viewers get this feeling, it is a supreme success.
> Q: Is *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* a drama like that?
> D2: Yes. At least I am making it to be that way. I am trying to make it in a useful way. That is how the family inside a *hōmu dorama*, [a fam-

ily that] is in fact nothing special, becomes interesting. And viewers learn while wanting to find out what happens, they will learn "oh, I am doing the same thing", and might change their behaviour and learn [the serial to be] beneficial, and find it interesting.

The question in progressive or corrective realism is primarily of how the viewership is perceived: corrective realism includes the idea of educating the viewers. In the case of *Wataoni* the educational idea, however, is not drawn as far as to explicitly talk of 'edutainment'. Neither is *Wataoni* a part of such a conscious political project as those education-development dramas that were produced in Latin America after the success of *Simplemente María* (cf. Singhal, Obregon & Rogers 1994), although Hashida's *Oshin* has been seen to partake in an entertainment-education strategy similar to Latin American favourite (Shefner-Rogers, Rogers & Singhal 1998).

The attempt to "make people think" is discussed in more detail in 5.3.2, which focuses on the ways in which the relationship between makers and viewers is perceived.

Generic and cultural verisimilitude.

> AD1: It is only drama, basically, or mainly lies[1], but even in drama there has to be the part that is real. If that isn't there, the story[2] isn't logical. There is the part where [the makers] don't see the lack of realism. And there are a lot of people who notice this.

This is how the chief assistant director discusses the 'real' in the serial, and especially the relationship between the makers and 'realism' in comparison to how the viewers are assumed to experience it.

When the makers address the issue of the everyday-likeness of the serial they at the same time talk about generic verisimilitude and questions of how the 'real' should be represented in this particular type of television. In the making of the serial there are also different perceptions of what would be the appropriate way of portraying the 'real'. For instance WD, who is in charge of the wardrobe for *Wataoni*, notes that in his opinion the character who has Alzheimer's disease should be dressed worse than she is now: wandering around with a pyjama shirt and a skirt underneath. He, however, has no choice but to agree with the actress who refuses to dress like that, as the

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[1] The interviewee uses the word *uso.*

[2] The interviewee uses the word *hanashi.*

director agrees with her. In another scene there was a dying patient in a hospital not having a hair out of place on his head and the interviewee thought the character should be masked to look more ill. He notes, however, that "if it wouldn't be this kind of drama, I'm sure they would do it, but this is, after all *hōmu dorama*, and here it would be too much."

The viewers also recognize that there are generic limitations for representing 'the real' in the serial. In Group 1, Aiko explains to her friends what is going on in *Wataoni*:

> Aiko: There are the questions of ageing, and then somebody is maintaining a natural food shop. There is a lot going on, and to think that all of it would happen in one family is quite funny, but these are things that happen here and there. I think this is interesting.

She thus realizes that, in fact, it would not be plausible if all these troubles were to occur in any of the families she herself knows in her life, but that these kinds of things nevertheless do happen. It is the sense of cultural verisimilitude that appears for her here. In the excerpt she also expresses her recognition of the genre contract. In Group 4 Sueko, for her part, notes that the themes of the serial are very real and important, but that the way of expression is less than realistic: "For instance that case with the Alzheimer's. In reality that would be much more terrible", she points out.

Cultural/social verisimilitude in *hōmu dorama* goes only so far because it is restricted by the demands of generic verisimilitude. The directors carefully explain how the generic obligations give some restrictions to the creativity of the director. Time and money also pose limitations for creating the reality effect (Barthes 1986) in the making of the drama. The script created by the script writer is the starting point for the director to create the visual expression of the programme. This, however, has to be realized within the acceptable limitations of budget and production schedules. Certain kinds of camera movements are not only too "difficult" for the *hōmu dorama* way of expression, they are also too expensive to make. Most important, thus, is that the story is kept alive and the tension is not cut by too difficult of shots or pictures. For instance, scenes could be shot on location, but usually the crew stays in the studio, as that is much cheaper. A director describes his way of reasoning when realizing a restaurant scene:

> D4: In the case when Setsuko and Daikichi met Akari after a while, Hashida-san wrote that to happen in a restaurant. But making a restaurant setting is difficult. If it isn't made huge, it doesn't feel like a restaurant. And it is only a scene of three [characters], and doing this on a corner of a big space, it really doesn't bring out the feeling of a restaurant. But making it in a small Japanese style *soba*-shop, the atmos-

phere comes through. In this kind of cases money is thought about. And yet another thing: rather than going to a family restaurant, Daikichi and Setsuko are the kind of people who would more likely to go to a *soba*-shop. They are elderly people, you know.

In this way the director explained how the narrative is primary in creating verisimilitude, although the practical limitations are there as well. Several interviewees mention that there are certain things one cannot bring up in a television serial, and certain terms that one is not supposed to use in order not to offend e.g. minority groups.[3]

Another part of the practical limitations comes from the insistent requests of the sponsors. The *kimono* shop that provides the *kimonos* for the Okakura mother, Setsuko, would like her to appear in a different dress every time she is on the screen. The wardrobe personnel notes that the actress herself insists that it is odd if the character changes dress too often.

> WD: That's something that's not everyday-like. And that's Yamaoka-san's opinion, too. Actually I do think she is right: it really would be strange. The economic status of the family isn't that good, that she could have so many kimonos.

The attempt for likeness for the everyday then has limits that are constantly being negotiated inside the production. Another example of this is the baby character in the serial. The 'actress' for this part happened to be very shy and tended to cry at the most inconvenient occasions. That is why she was wearing the same clothes throughout most of the shooting sessions, no matter which episodes they were intended for. She was also put into bed in the narrative in her day dress, because changing her would have involved the risk of waking her up.[4] When asked about the difficulties and costs for having unpredictable elements like small children on the production, the assistant producer explained:

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[3] These terms are typically 'disabled' instead of 'handicapped'. The *burakumin*, the 'silent minority' of Japan (cf. Vesterinen 1987) are a major taboo. The representative organizations of this minority are very touchy about media representations that appear to discriminate against the group. The issue is so sensitive that bringing it up in discussions most of the time causes evasive reactions. There are, however, cases where ready-to-be-broadcast episodes of a drama have quietly been re-edited at the request of this group.

[4] Despite the efforts of the production team the child never got used to being a tv-star. She was replaced with another, less shy one.

AP: It is not that we wouldn't worry about that, but in everyday life children are born. [..] That's why, they just naturally[5] appear. That's normal, that is what's normally done and people agree with and recognize in the composition of drama. Even though [we] would have to go through great deal of trouble in making it, still one wants to see precious children raised properly, and that again turns into drama. Becoming father, becoming mother, is a seed for story.

Here appears one central feature of the way in which the makers discuss the serial. The narrative and the basic setting of the serial become the point of departure and base for justifications for certain decisions and solutions. Despite the limitations of time and money, the way in which the serial is made plausible is defined through the narrative and the nature of the characters, as well as through what is considered the *hōmu dorama* – like representation of 'normal family life'.

The assistant producer uses the expression of *dorama mawashi*, 'rotation or whirl of drama', when describing the narrative development. In the following excerpt, the second assistant director explains how the whirl of drama always returns to its starting point. He expresses some frustration with the fact that the characters remain the same despite what happens in the narrative.

AD2: At times people come to say to me that for instance Kimi's role is unnatural, having said something or done something and then suddenly behaving as if nothing had happened. [..] But this is *hōmu dorama*, and one accepts this by thinking that "maybe this is what happens in the household". Maybe [one] watches this in a different way than an ordinary drama. It isn't very realistic, but when one really thinks of it, maybe that's how people's feelings and motivations really are — varying back and forth.

This kind of cyclical repetition or iteration appears typical for *Wataoni*, and Hashida's writing in general. The human relationships repeat themselves, as do daily routines. This narrative structure is the basis for the practical production work, and also works to create the *reality effect*, as in 'real life' people also eat breakfast, go to work, come home, eat dinner.

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[5] Uses the expression *shizenteki ni*.

AP: [..] the drama whirl[6] or the development[7], I could say, it flows. Human life is something where things pile up. "Am I really different, or is that something that goes for me too?" [..] That's why, for instance, we get letters from people who are taking care of a mother with Alzheimer's. This is not about real life, for sure, but no matter what, reflection or projection to one's own life can't be helped. One doesn't want to see, but one watches anyway.

The narrative and features of characters are central for the viewers. Discussions about the serial very soon go into details about characters' lives and comparing of these life conditions to one's own. There is, nevertheless, ever present the consciousness that the production sets a frame for the narrative. For viewers this frame consists of the famous people involved with the production, mostly the actors and actresses. Aiko of Group 1 explains why the narrative was changed at one point:

Aiko: In *Wataru seken* the story can change depending on the circumstances of the players. Like there was Sawadama-san — what's her name — Hisako! The elder little sister. Some kind of trouble developed, and she quit, the actress. And then in the story her husband suddenly had a job abroad. But that home, it is quite desolate without a sister-in-law in the house, she was the most unkind sister-in-law. But now when she was gone, the younger little sister took over her place.

This is the way of discussing the boundaries of the genre, and questions of verisimilitude: what is plausible and likely within the frame of the narrative. This generic verisimilitude also touches upon the question of 'ordinary Japanese everyday life'. This is closely connected to 'family': the issue is of struggle over the meaning of 'the Japanese family'. The relationship of the serial to 'Japaneseness' and how it is defined by the makers and the viewers, as well as its appearance in the programme itself, is discussed in what follows.

5.1.2. 'Japaneseness', family and traditionality

About contemporary Japan. The makers of *Wataoni* emphasize that the serial is about contemporary Japanese issues and about contemporary society.

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[6] Uses words *dorama mawashi.*

[7] Uses words *dorama tenkai.*

Producer Ishii describes the difference between this serial and others that she has made before:

> IF: [..] in the dramas [we] did before, there was one strong woman who was working really hard ever since childhood; that kind of long development. But *Wataru seken* is about now, about what should be done in a contemporary family.

Hashida most strongly emphasizes the importance of not only taking up contemporary issues, but also of being connected to the development in the society. For her this seems to include the effort of changing things for the better.

> HS: [..] now Japan is, more than last time, Japan is in a tight spot. That's why the seriousness of Japan is reflected inside family in small details, these things have to be written about. Housewives are now talking about how dollar is high in relation to yen. Dollar is up about 5.5 percentage and yen is 0.some percentage, people talk about changing their savings into dollars. This kind of things. Really in Japan, starting from next year's summer dollar is going to be a valid currency in supermarkets too.[8] When that happens, then the times change again, really, to some extent. This kind of things have to be thought about, and it becomes different than Part 1. The society is different. [..] If one doesn't grasp what's going on in Japan [..] [People think] that it doesn't involve the family, but in reality everything is reflected down to the family. The way of thinking among the children changes. [..] In Japan, the reason why the family is now collapsing *is not* that the husband is too busy or something like that, but [rather] the thought that "if one doesn't get into university, one doesn't get to be important", this is the worst thought of all and it breaks more families than anything. That's why mothers whip their children for better and better results and the father works harder and harder to make money to pay for the cram schools.

The Japanese family is then at the centre of the drama. Hashida gives reasons for her writing by referring to what is 'really' going on in Japanese society because, according to her the family is influenced by developments and the phenomena of wider society. Another way of putting this could be that the narrative of the serial, in order to get an appropriate share of viewers,

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[8] This did not happen, actually, but investments in foreign banks in foreign currency are possible, and give better interest than yen-investments.

has to touch upon issues that people find topical. This kind of mood of the times has been called 'structure of feeling' (Williams 1977). It can also be seen that the journalistic ideals in drama making, as discussed in Chapter 2, still appear in *Wataoni*. The quote above appears to begin with a frame for news making, rather than drama making, or defining the importance of drama by explaining to the audiences what the news events mean in daily life.

The connection between society in general and *Wataoni* as trying to catch the mood of what is going on is described by one of the directors in a following way. He compares Parts 1, 2 and 3 in relation to the development in society, but is particularly worried about how the narrative development and the script will effect the popularity of the serial.

> D1: At the time of Part 1[..] well, of course it was the first time it was made, and the situation of Japan was of the bubble. Part 1 was right on the top of the last peak of the bubble. That is why all Japanese were kind of looking outwards, the feeling went all outwards, and the atmosphere was cheerfully worldly. During that part we didn't get such a direct reaction from the viewers like we have during Part 2 and Part 3. We didn't feel that so strongly. [..] this kind of *hōmu dorama* didn't get much attention, being traditional, or conservative [..] Part 2 was right after the bubble. Everybody had started to look at the household and inwards, the atmosphere of the period, the time had changed. In Part 2 we got a very direct response. After two years we then did Part 3 and again the time and Japan as a country had changed. The feeling of Japanese has also changed, last year there were these different things[9]. [..] The era had changed so much, we were worried how the viewers would be able to grasp the essential.

This attempt at being with the times appears to fail in the view of some viewers. Reiko, in Group 3, notes that the relationship of Satsuki and her mother-in-law Kimi is portrayed in a manner that would have been plausible twenty or more years ago, but not any longer. "No such daughter-in-law exists any longer. Nobody would take that kind of bullying these days", she almost shouts. Her mother Kiku notes that in her youth it was the reality; the daughter-in-law looked to the right when the mother-in-law ordered her to, and to the left, when that was the order.

'Traditionally Japanese'. Along with the themes of what contemporary Japan is and should be like, there is another thread of meanings concerning

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[9] He refers to the *Aum Shinrikyō* gas attacks in the Tokyo subway and to the Kōbe earthquake. Both of these took place in the first quarter of 1995.

Japaneseness. Both the makers and the viewers emphasize how the serial is particularly 'traditionally Japanese', as is the whole *hōmu dorama* genre. 'Japaneseness' and *hōmu dorama* are then essentially connected with each other. According to some, it is in fact typical and topical in contemporary Japanese society that a serial like this should have appeared at the beginning of the 1990's. At that time 'nostalgic' phenomena on television, such as *Wataoni, Chibimaruko-san* or numerous music programmes on the hits of past decades appeared, which together with similar phenomena in other fields have caused talk about a 'nostalgia boom' or 'retrospective age' in Japan (Akatsuka 1988, Niskanen 1996, Creighton 1997). This supposedly renewed interest in Japanese traditions is said to manifest itself especially in an interest in the countryside. The *inaka*, the countryside, and *furusato,* the home village, appear as the strongholds of traditional Japaneseness, the site of authenticity long lost in the 'Westernized' urban lifestyle. (see Valaskivi 1998 for a more detailed discussion.)

The idea of local cultures as being the source of Japaneseness has its long roots in Japanese academia, and dates back to the 1920's and 1930's (cf. Robertson 1998), rather than having suddenly appeared in the 1970's as some say or in the 1990's as others claim. This seems to be a discourse that appears at times, and *Wataoni* makes use of it by playing out contradictions that are involved. Whether or not the so called 'nostalgia boom' is an actual phenomenon of Japanese society, it is nevertheless a much-used term, and a discussion topic which is widely known. Questions about 'traditional Japaneseness' become intertwined in this discussion. Popular culture, or *taishū bunka*, has been connected with the 'Japanese national identity', as Robertson (1998, 34) explains:

> [..] we can understand *taishū bunka* as referring to a national popular culture: national in the sense that it encompasses and affects all people within the borders of Japan, and popular because it is familiar to or experientially available to all Japanese, albeit not necessarily in equitable ways.

However, the source of authentic Japaneseness has been the localities (Yanagita according to Robertson 1998) and the elderly people. Elderly people are also supposedly more interested in traditionality and things traditional than younger generations. This view appears also in my material.

As described in 2.5.1 the viewership of *Wataoni* consists mainly of women (and men) over 50 years of age. A considerable amount of the viewers also live outside the metropolitan areas. The serial is basically made by elderly people, as the most fundamental decisions about its contents are made by two women in their 70's. The idea of elderly people being especially keen on 'things Japanese' appears in the interviews of the production crew. In the

already used quote above, one of the directors gave reasons for a particular setting in the serial because the question was of elderly people:

> D4: And yet another thing: rather than going to a family restaurant, Daikichi and Setsuko are the kind of people who would more likely to go to a *soba*-shop. They are elderly people, you know.

Since a *soba*-shop sells 'traditional Japanese' food, buckwheat noodles, and is usually a small, local business with its loyal customers, it seems to be a suitable setting for an older couple. This implies that had it been a young couple with a baby, meeting their old schoolmates, a more appropriate setting would have been in a family restaurant.

This distinction between generations is also obvious to the viewers. In Group 5 Teruko emphasizes how profound and quick changes in Japanese society after the second World War have led to a situation where many things can be difficult to understand for the younger generations. She considers the *Wataoni* way of representing the mother-in-law — daughter-in-law relationship one of these.

Wataoni continues a traditional genre that is explicitly represented and talked of as a location for 'Japaneseness'. There are a few others that carry this kind of special trace, in popular music *enka* (cf. Yano 1998), in theatre *kabuki*. Things that are 'Japanese', such as country life, are supposed to be interesting for older generations, while the younger generations go for 'international', 'modern' and 'fashionable'. This is one of the popular contradictions that is made use of in *Wataoni* in a plotline that is analyzed later on.

"Traditionally Japanese" is a pair of words frequently repeated in the context of *Wataoni*. Both the makers and the viewers use it. My position as researcher and foreigner in Japan is also often seen through this frame and is expressed through wonder about the fact that I have chosen to study such a "traditional Japanese drama".

The makers wish to build an opposition between *Wataoni* as a representative of the *hōmu dorama* genre, and the supposedly prevailing and youth-oriented *torendii dorama*.

> IF: That was the time when *torendii dorama* got really big ratings. [..] it was thought that we should do something different than the *torendii dorama* all over the channels and also in TBS [in this time slot, Thursday at 9 p.m. had been previously]. I and Hashida-san, we aren't a slightest bit interested in *torendii dorama*. That is why we thought that we want to make a drama on the eternal theme of family.

The difference from the *torendii dorama* thus seems to be a rather nostalgic focus on family. The complex change of the gender system appears in *Wataoni*,

but for reasons of the dramatic structure and generic verisimilitude it is often materialized in the form of dichotomic juxtapositions. Especially when discussing the role(s) of women, the old and traditional Japaneseness tends to collide with 'modern', which often is also represented as imported. This is how drama functions: it brings things to a head in order to make them as recognizable as possible.

The 'realism' as seen in the televisual text of *Wataoni*, is sometimes formed and articulated in the talk of *Wataoni* makers and viewers through the prevailing discourses of the nostalgic 'Japanese' family as opposed to the 'modern' and 'Westernized' ideas. In the case of *Wataoni,* Japaneseness is often discussed through themes that involve gender. This is plausible also due to the fact that *Wataoni* is a family drama.

Television productions in general try to establish a quasi-intimate relationship between programme characters and the audience. This is often done by creating a sense of national, local, cultural or racial unity or a sense of unanimity (consensus, common sense and identity) (Painter 1996a, 198). In *Wataoni* one way of establishing this quasi-intimacy, is by representing the common sense understanding of gender and in attempting to create the sense of national unity by representing nostalgic ideas of the traditional Japanese family as opposed to 'foreign' influences, which occasionally can be seen as progressive, but nevertheless are featured as imported.

The juxtaposition of modern, 'international' ideas on gender with the 'traditional Japanese' way of perceiving the place of women and men makes sense in the framework of the genre contract, appearing plausible within it for the viewers. The juxtaposition is often expressed in the form of contradictions between the countryside and the city.

Wataoni makes use of this in a plotline that many viewers note as being one of the most memorable ones.[10] This plot plays out the contradictions mentioned above by breaking them on the surface, and thus opening up a space for negotiation over meanings: Akari wishes to go to the countryside from urban Tokyo and start learning the cultivation of *nashi*. She does this, and eventually also wants to get married to a country-boy and build her whole life in the countryside. Her mother Yayoi, however, opposes the marriage strongly, as she wishes her daughter to return to the city and get married to a *mukōyōshi*, or bring a son-in-law into the house. In other words, the 'modern' mother, leading a contemporary city life, sets a very traditional model for her daughter's life, while the daughter's wish to return to the nostalgic countryside appears as a progressive and radical thing to do.

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[10] This appears in several questionnaires as an answer to the question "what has been the most memorable plotline in the serial". It has to be noted, however, that this plotline was also the most recent one when the questionnaires were filled in. The plotline is mentioned in some of the viewer interviews, as well.

During the process when the mother tries to get her daughter to change her mind, the daughter is frequently warned about the obstacles of country-life. Even her mother-in-law-to-be keeps on repeating how it is not a suitable place for her because the country-life is so hard. And yet, the hard-working and ideal daughter-in-law seems to do everything in such an easy way. For her everything is fun and enjoyable, like a hobby.

This plotline seems to idealize the hard-working countrywoman who even takes the hardships with a gracious smile. There is also a sense of purification in this transition of the woman from the city to the *inaka*. In the city she had to go through the difficult search of her call, which had led her also to do striptease. In the countryside, however, she could be cleaned from the pollution of the city to become a good and decent woman – and wife. To sum up, the nostalgic, Japanese *inaka* with its traditional, hardworking idea of woman's place is offered as an alternative to the urban, polluted, busy and more international life. The *inaka* is also a local setting and thus supposedly the haven of traditional Japanese values.

Some viewers oppose the communicative contract on genre which is formed on a nostalgic understanding of 'real', and which thus includes traditional family values. As noted, for some the nostalgic focus on the family in the serial does not seem 'realistic' in a society where the divorce rate has almost doubled in less than thirty years and where a sense of security is shaken because of experienced disasters: a major earthquake, acts of terrorism and deep economic crisis. Yet, according to some theories the nostalgia appears precisely due to this sense of instability, as a television drama with its 'safe' family frame can provide — if only temporarily — a feeling of security (see e.g. Joyrich 1992) and a hope for a better future (cf. Dyer 1981, who talks about the 'utopian function' of drama).

Interestingly enough, the *inaka*-plotline intersects with another, where a relative comes from Hawaii for the wedding to solve a different family problem. The second daughter, Fumiko, and her husband, Tōru, have been fighting over the care of Tōru's mother, who has Alzheimer's disease and lives in with the family. After different phases the wife declares to her husband that she will not stay in the house any longer, but will replace her husband as the head of their family business and leave him with the responsibility for the mother-in-law. At this point the old wise aunt from Hawaii suggests that the couple divide the week into two and work for the business in three day turns. As this piece of advice turns out to solve the couple's problems, the happy wife is shown expressing her gratitude and telling her parents that: "Tamako-basan, who lives in rational America" could offer a solution to the problem. "We, the Japanese, although we would understand the equality between sex-

es[11] in our heads, we haven't realized that it means sharing work both in and outside home" (Part 3, #49).

In this scene, questions of national identity are explicitly articulated. A solution that is represented as basically foreign is made to appear acceptable by settling it through a family member, a Japanese messenger. Hashida herself points out that her aim was to instruct for a more equal division of housework. For her there is a genuine aspiration to educate the viewers on family issues and to help people solve family problems. She does not think that the piece of advice came from a Japanese in particular, but from somebody who "has been" there, that is abroad:

> HS: Well [..] living there for a longer time, [learning to understand] the way of thinking there. [People who have been living there know how to] bring it to the Japanese [self-evident] ways of thinking. The new winds blow from there, from a person who has been there, in Hawaii for long time. But it is not that it is a Japanese, but as I think, a person coming from Hawaii, saying it with the expression of experience. This is how the problem is solved. It is not that it is a Japanese person saying it, but somebody that has been living there, saying things about individualism, can notice skilfully things like that. She [said that] Japanese are like this and this is why they don't understand, and she opened our eyes. [..] As I think, it requires somebody who has been abroad.

However, it is not a coincidence that the carrier of the good word is a Hawaiian-Japanese aunt[12]. As there is the educational aspect of instructing the audience, the piece of advice has to be presented in an acceptable form. Had the advice been given by a native mainland American it might have been too easy to dismiss it as foreign. Had the adviser come from Korea or mainland China, it would have been a sign of bad advice, something not to follow[13]. Instead, coming from an aunt, the piece of advice is at the same time foreign and familiar — and thus acceptable. It is also important that it was an aunt instead of an uncle, an aunt being a plausible and reliable source of family advice, because she is a woman and also elder, one that the niece was likely to listen to. An uncle would not have been specialist enough in family issues. What is important about the 'foreign' here is that it is identified as such and

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[11] Uses the words *danjo byōdō*.

[12] Considering the narrative, the Hawaiian aunt was a natural choice, as she has existed throughout *Wataoni*, appearing every now and then.

[13] See Davis (1983) and Befu (1983) for discussion of the "internationalization" of Japan as directed towards "the West", mostly US, instead of Korea or China.

then introduced as a model pattern for the viewers — but only after having been domesticated, as the advice does come from a family member. Consequently the borderline of *uchi* and *soto*, inside and outside proves to be flexible and situational, yet it exists and is demonstrated and reproduced (cf. Painter 1996a).

Here opens up a space for struggle over the intertwined meanings of national identity and gender. Labelling some ideas as 'foreign' and some as 'Japanese' is a strategy of defining these concepts. In this case the 'traditional' division of work between the sexes is ridiculed, and the Japanese way of thinking shown to be backward. This line of thinking has irritated some of the viewers, as they had been priding themselves on having thought of the same idea before it was introduced on the screen. Since it was then signified as a 'foreign' idea it seemed that they had been deprived of the possibility for such a solution themselves, because they were Japanese.[14] In the viewer interviews a clear interplay of the traditional — in the form of customs, folk craft or martial arts — and 'international' — in the form of travelling, shopping, books and television programmes — appears to be an internal and self-evident part of people's lives, and the different elements do not appear as mutually exclusive.

The *inaka*-episode looks back to the old ideals of womanhood, while the foreign piece of advice actually proposes a change in woman's responsibilities. Within the family frame the suggestion is, however, domesticated in a scene that follows the Hawaii-monologue: The wife praises her husband's understanding nature (in fact hinting that he is doing something more than he should). Later the wife is also seen in the kitchen explaining to her husband how she does not want to demand that he cook. For her it would be enough if he took care of the mother-in-law. And as the husband promises to cook anyway, his remarkable flexibility becomes even more pronounced. But then comes the limit: the proper places of men and women within the family become defined and expressed when the wife asks the husband to take a business associate out the following week, as this kind of entertaining is something that she as a woman definitely cannot manage. Thus, although there is a serious discussion on the definition of gender taking place, the cultural status quo on masculinity and femininity, as fixed properties of man and woman respectively, is in the end maintained.

Considering men's roles in these scenes, the 'international' choice really brings a change to the traditional way of perceiving man's role in the family, suggesting that the spouses should divide housework equally. While the 'tra-

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[14] Discussion with students at my lecture at Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture. Lecture "A good piece of advice from Hawaii. Internationalizing gender in Japanese *hōmu dorama*". Nov. 27, 1997.

ditional' *inaka*-choice allows the man to remain unchanged, the young woman is to change 'backwards' from the 'modern' lifestyle to the farmer's life. Typically in *hōmu dorama* the men are not really heard on the issue in their case. Later a big deal is made over a man cooking in the kitchen, as the circumstances are seen as being exceptional. The husband is seen and presented from the wife's point of view, which is quite typical of *hōmu dorama*, while it is exceptional in many other genres. (Part 3, #49.)

In the text then, family issues remain the woman's responsibility and problem, and a satisfactory solution to the problems are women's victories. Whether the solution comes from abroad or from the *inaka* does not really matter as long as the individual woman in question is satisfied. The negotiation between different choices for the individual has some genre-based limits, though, and as it is *hōmu dorama*, the limit is family. The family is not ultimately altered. The family — constructed around a gendered division of work and sustaining a particular view of nationhood — is something that remains unquestioned as a basis, and neither 'international' influences nor 'traditional' solutions should contest that.

Consequently, a juxtaposition between these conceptions in the serial can sometimes feel artificial for the viewers. It nevertheless makes sense, as it is plausible and recognizable.

A feature of the serial's traditionality, then, can be seen in the strategy of representing some ideas as 'Japanese' and others as 'foreign', either in good or bad. Eventually the question does not concern the origin of ideas, but of representing Japaneseness as opposed to 'international', mostly American influences. The us/them distinction is represented here, as is the nature of us as 'emotional' as opposed to the 'rational' America. America is represented explicitly here as being rational and individual, while the corresponding things about Japan (emotional and group-oriented) are only implied. This is how the self-evidence of the juxtaposition is in fact reproduced. At the same time the combination of the *inaka* and the international piece of advice as intersecting plotlines give the assurance that "Japanese identity will not perish in yet another wave of internationalization" (Creighton 1997, 252).

Through the themes of Japaneseness, family and everydayness the makers and viewers define *Wataoni* as a part of the *hōmu dorama* type of television. While doing this they also constantly define and redefine what *hōmu dorama* as a televisual kind is. The primary community represented here is the family, but it is on a meta-level considered to be — if not the symbol of Japan — at least the indicator of the stage in which the society is in. Underlying are the definitions and redefinitions of national identity and the ways in which they are structured along gendered lines.

5.2. Descriptions of practices

In this sub-chapter I move into discussing how the makers and viewers describe their practices of making and watching television in general and especially in the case of *Wataoni*. These themes involve mostly issues on the practical level described in Figure 3 of Chapter 3, such as views and opinions on the actual production, the status of the programme in the schedule, as well as the activities of using and interpreting the programme.

Here I also briefly discuss the ways in which the industry appears as a condition for genre in terms of all the aspects mentioned in Figure 3. As noted already, industry is not the central interest in this study, which focuses on the triangular relationship of the makers, the viewers and the text. As the industrial practices, however, frame the triangle, and also surface in the interviews, they cannot be overlooked altogether. The conditionality of the industry for genre thus appears throughout this sub-chapter.

5.2.1. Practices of making

In the production interviews the starting point for the process of making the serial was clear to all: the script. When describing their work, all the directors, the assistant producer, and assistant directors, as well as the wardrobe personnel and the actress emphasize that the process starts by reading the script or the *daihon*.

> D2: Well, as a director one does do the directing of the actors etc. and deciding the cameras and saying that this is an important scene, so take it well. And saying how to look like when somebody is talking and how that should be shot, but that is a technical problem. *But the main task is first to read the script written by the script writer. And trying to interpret 'this time she wants to say this, this is the feel that should come trough'.* Right, this is the thing the writer is saying and I also got the resonance, this is how the composition ability must be used. After that there come the lighting, deciding cameras, and the rest is just technique.

Consequently, for the daily production routines, the strongest conditions appear to be the narrative and the demands of plausible narrative development. Solutions for making the writing into a visual form have to be made within limits of time and money, but nevertheless the narrative plausibility — framed and defined by the generic and cultural verisimilitude — has to be there.

Both Ishii and Hashida talk in a quite identical way about the process of how *Wataoni* got to be what it is. They describe how they discussed the basic setting, who the characters would be and what their history would be like. The basic conflicts were built in the setting where the main couple, despite their hopes, had only gotten girls — five of them — and how these girls then one by one either had left the house or left in the course of the serial, and found their way of life.

> IF: There is the meeting where to locate the home, the Okakura home is around Setagaya, by the way. And in what kind of house they live in. This is made through discussions with the director. The own house is built piece by piece. And then the actors are decided and the characters are made to live in that house. What they are wearing and what they eat is thought of and this is how it develops.

As the serial by definition is to be "close to everyday life" the production team goes to a considerable amount of trouble in order to check details for the reality effect. Already in the writing stage the script writer, sometimes with the help of the producer, does research on details, and writes accordingly. For instance, when a character is to take a professional test all the details of these examinations are looked into before the scene is shot, or when a character decides to study senior high school over the Internet the site is checked, and also shown on the programme. This kind of detailed, even 'journalistic' information in a drama programme is in line with the ideas of creating progressive realism, in the sprit of educational drama, although, naturally, there are the generic limits in the degree of how much these details are used, as described above. Often the research is done by the ADs before the shooting takes place.

The makers of *Wataoni* emphasize that the making of this particular serial differs somewhat from other drama serials, mainly because of the length of the programme. As noted, dramas that last as long as a year are rare in Japan. Several production members express their anxiety over the making of such a long programme. When taking temporarily over for Ishii during Part 3, the producer/director D1 compared this kind of production with running a marathon: one has to be able to control one's strength in order to sustain the long way.

Both the directors and ADs agree that *Wataoni* is not a very hard production physically. It is mostly shot in the studio, and since locations are few there is not much moving around and moving things around. The length of the programme is then a bigger source of worry. One of the ADs note that when one gets used to the less strenuous style of production in *Wataoni* one might lag professionally behind and lose touch with harder work.

Another difficulty in a long programme is that the players also tend to take other assignments along with *Wataoni*, which often causes trouble in making the rehearsal and shooting schedules. At this point many staff members compare the Japanese production system with the one in the US. They would prefer exclusive contracts, which are not the practice in Japan, but should, according to them, be imported from the US. The players for their part emphasize how difficult it is that the schedules are not fixed and keep constantly changing. According to them it would be easier to do other work during the making of the serial, if the schedules were clear. This would, however, require close planning of the narrative development in advance — a thing that Ishii is very reluctant to do, as discussed below.

Hashida as a script writer is praised by the producer and some of the staff members, because writing such a long serial is considered to be exceptionally difficult. The producer uses this again to differentiate between *Wataoni* and other serials:

> IF: There aren't many writers who can write original stories [not dramatizations]. If there is an original story [to rely on], it is easy, but writing a completely new story, that is quite difficult. There are only few [writers] capable of this. And then the production team and the players are reluctant to make a one year drama, so it is getting more and more difficult. Also NHK dramas are getting shorter and shorter — this goes for the *asadora*, as well. And writers who can write a programme for one year, a process of long life, are really few. That's why dramas get shorter these days, 20 episodes at their longest, even half-a-year dramas are getting fewer.

This statement can be read as a praise for *Wataoni,* that *Wataoni* still keeps alive the supposed standards for proper quality and professionalism that used to be there, but have now disappeared elsewhere in television production. Ishii discards here economical reasons for making quick and light productions, nor does she refer to audience behaviour in relation to the length of serials. Her focus is on personal abilities and likings: long dramas are not made any longer since there is a lack of capable writers — and willing staff members. Structural and industrial explanations are missing from this description.

Obviously then, the length of the programme is something exceptional and one of the important conditions for the making of *Wataoni.* All those that I interviewed mentioned the length as an exceptional feature, and also described the consequences of this. When the year was nearly over in February 1997, the assistant directors said the year had been very long. Compared to shorter productions this kind of work is less intensive, and in some sense also less demanding, but it also causes tiredness, and touch is sometimes

lost. "It is difficult to keep the interest and the tension span throughout the programme. One loses the enthusiasm", says one of the ADs. Obviously for him not knowing what is going to happen in the next *daihon* is not enough to keep the tension span in the work itself high enough. Ishii, however, emphasizes that it is important that the narrative development is not decided in advance.

> IF: The staff likes it too, when there is a capable writer. Often there is this frame that is made in advance, things like in which episode there are what kind of developments. That's something that shouldn't be done. The frame restricts too much, it's like trying to write in a box. Freedom there is important. In the case of *Wataoni* the suspense is what's going to happen next. The writer must be feeling the same, she doesn't know herself, what's going to happen next.

Ishii also focuses on the difficulty of making and sustaining the tension span in a serial where a starting point is not *jiken* or a particular case or event, but rather the *nagare* or the stream of daily happenings. A director's view on the tension span is that it should not be disturbed with too difficult of visualization: in Hashida's writing the dialogue is central, and the visuals should not get in the way of that. One of the directors note:

> D3: In the case of *Wataru seken*, one scene is really long, two-three pages. Occasionally there are scenes with 11 pages. When that is done in continuity by the actors, a tension is developed. In this programme the most interesting thing is this continual tension. That is why if this carefully developed tension is broken by difficult pictures, it is no good. That is why stylish pictures have been given up for the tension. Pictures are put in succession and the aim is not to stop the 10-20 page scene in the middle. This is the easy, cheap and less time consuming way. Not to think of in economic terms but the internal economics of the programme. It is better to respect the continuity.

5.2.2. Practices of watching

Although a discourse of everyday-likeness in the serial is present both in the talk of the makers and the viewers, the context and perspective for the matter differs at each end. The predominantly male production staff refer to the likeness of the serial with the daily life of the *viewers*, while the viewers are talking about their *own* life. When referring to their own daily lives the mak-

ers tend to make a separation between the ordinary viewers' lives and their own.

As a result, the makers see the serial as coming close to the everyday life of the viewers, and give this as an explanation for its success. Occasionally they also relate the narrative to their own life, but more often to the production practices and to the requirements the narrative poses to the work in practice. The viewers, for their part, relate the serial to their own life. This setting also brings up gender: as the production staff members (the assistant producer, directors and assistant directors) are male, and the viewers are perceived as being female, there is a gap between the worlds. The production members, imagining the daily life of the viewers, assume an "ordinary" housewife.

There are, however, two common features for both the makers as viewers and viewers as viewers: among both there are those who emphasize how they use the VCR for taping *Wataoni* if watching is not possible at the time of broadcasting. Among both the viewers (questionnaires) and in production there are men who note that watching with their wives or other family members is an important part of watching *Wataoni*.

Makers as viewers. When talking about their watching of television in general and *Wataoni* in particular, the makers often relate themselves with the "ordinary viewers". Some draw a sharp line between themselves and the viewers by emphasizing their professional status and thus the impossibility of watching as "an ordinary viewer". Having read the *daihon* they already know the story, and thus have also already missed the anticipation of "what's to come". One of the ADs notes, however, that when first reading a new *daihon* he tries to take the viewer's perspective. Among both the directors and the ADs there are those who point out that they would not watch the serial at all if it was not for their work, as an "ordinary *sarariiman* of my age doesn't watch this kind of programme".

One of the assistant directors in his mid-twenties emphasises how difficult it is for him to really understand what is going on in a serial that is about elderly people and which is also meant for elderly people. He says that sometimes when he watches the programme (it is his job to check the final version before it gets broadcast) he thinks about the narrative through his parents or grandparents and tries to understand it through their way of thinking:

> AD3: There are things that are difficult for us [young people] to understand, but at times I think "that's how my father might think too" and realize how it can be fun for some people.

When listing their own favourites among television programmes, many makers mention sports, news and documentary programmes, and other informational genres. One director notes that watching drama on television is altogether dislikeable for him, because it feels like work with all the comparisons springing in mind with the productions he has been involved with.

> Q: Do you watch it?
> D1: Not really. In general I don't watch drama at home. It's because no matter what, [I] can't watch from the position of a viewer. Other programmes, dramas either. No matter what, one watches partly as a director and can't enjoy, one always watches professionally[..] The pain and the fun[15] are missing. Sports events, news, documentary, which can be watched with no relation to one's work, those [I] enjoy, but not drama, because there is the comparison to one's work. Actually, maybe [I] should watch it, but[..]

However, some of the production team members watch the drama themselves, and some say that they like it. Liking, nevertheless is often contextualized with the fact that despite everything, the question is one of work. An actress notes that she cannot say whether she likes the programme or not, because she has not watched it "objectively". Maybe this is why only one of those who admits liking *Wataoni* says that he would also watch it if it was not work. Watching the programme is part of work, and many say that they watch it if they are at home, which implies that they perhaps often are not. They also talk about watching the drama with their wives, some of whom wish not to hear what is going to happen, while others constantly ask about future events. Wives and other family members are mentioned by the directors and assistant directors as those who act as the 'representatives' of the audience for the staff. One of the ADs notes that it is good to know the opinion of somebody who has not seen the programme from the inside. He often watches the serial with his wife, who also always videotapes it.

Hashida says about the watching of *Wataoni* that she enjoys it because she never knows how her writing will appear on the screen.

> HS: It is fun because it doesn't appear like I thought it would. If it did, I wouldn't do television, it'd be too boring. "Oh, they did it that way!" or "that's really terrible" — like sudden music on the background. I think that music should be left out altogether, it is just noise. [..] It is enough that they use the dialogue and the lines I've written. I hate it when they make mistakes in their lines, and the articulation should

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[15] Uses the expression of *kurushimi, tanoshimi*.

also be clear. And after that, it's better if I'm surprised. "Did they really do it THAT way?" — this is why it's interesting. In novels, there is only the text that the writer has written. That's nothing really. There isn't anything more than the text one has written. But in television the text that one has written stands up in different forms, borrowing the body of the players, borrowing the work of the directors. The "printing type" one has chosen comes out in different forms. Each time I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of form it takes. There is no case that I wouldn't approve, it's just fun. This is why I like television.

Consequently, although the narrative and the dialogue are central to the programme, it is also important that it has its specific visual form. Although simplistic in its televisual expression, *Wataoni* is naturally made to be a television programme, and also watched as such by all the members of the maker team. Although the maker team members are unable to watch the programme without the context of the making, many nevertheless describe finding a sense of fascination in watching it. For 'assisting' production members, who are not part of the staff — such as the technical, wardrobe and make-up personnel — the relationship with the serial sometimes resembles more the relationship of the 'ordinary' viewers. This is exemplified by an excerpt of the interview with the wardrobe personnel.

> Q: Do you like *Wataru seken* as a programme?
> WD: Yes, I do.
> Q: Do you watch it yourself?
> WD: Yes, yes, I do. It's easy to watch. And if you miss one episode, it doesn't spoil the suspense.
> Q: Although you have read the script?
> WD: Yes. Earlier I used to take it on tape if I couldn't get home in time to watch it. But now I don't do that any more.
> Q: Do you watch it by yourself?
> WD: Yes I do. Even if I'm home in time, my kids don't really like to watch it.

The assisting personnel obviously is not that deeply involved with the narrative and making the overall appearance of the programme, that there is enough suspense and tension for them to enjoy the programme when it is broadcast. They also are often proud of being close to such famous people, of having the same sort of admiration for celebrities as do 'ordinary' viewers.

Viewers as viewers. Theories of television have until recently often claimed that watching television is by nature sporadic and unconcentrated, especially compared to cinema. Reasons such as the domesticity of the medium have

been given for this distinction. Especially the notion of television as *flow* (Williams 1975, Ellis 1992[1982], Fiske 1987, for a overview of the concept see Corner 1999) has led to the belief that television viewing experience would be more or less distracted. Recent critiques of the concept of flow have, however, emphasized that there is a difference between considering the programming as flow and whether the experience of watching corresponds with 'flow' (Ridell 1996b). It has also been noted that in the case of certain programmes there is rather an attempt to distinguish clearly from the 'flow' and create a separate own narrative image (Caldwell 1995). Caldwell (ibid., 27) also notes that "theorists should not jump to theoretical conclusions just because there is an ironing board in the room".

The empirical findings of my study support the idea that the watching of television is not inherently or naturally distracted, but that viewing habits and patterns are rather genre-specific, and that especially drama programmes with narrative structure and characters that become familiar are mostly watched with concentration and investment (for the concept of 'investment', see Grossberg 1995).

On the questionnaires I included two questions concerning television viewing in general. In the first one of these I asked "What kind of television programmes do you watch?"

In the second question I asked "Are there times when the television is on, but you really are not watching? If there are, what kind of programmes are on then?" (English translation of the questionnaire in Appendix 3).

Both men and women had a similar "top three" for the most watched programmes: 'news and documentaries', 'sports', '*waido shō* or news entertainment magazine'. These were also the ones that were most often on when television was not watched in a concentrated manner. The most watched television drama programmes for men were *torendii dorama* and *jidaigeki* or historical drama, and neither of these were mentioned by any of the men as being on when television was not watched in a concentrated manner. For women the number one was (after films) *hōmu dorama*, which was not mentioned as being on when television was on in the background. None of the altogether 84 respondents said that the tv was on, even though nobody was concentrating on watching when there was *hōmu dorama* on. (See Appendix 4, Tables 2-5 for detailed figures.)

The way of watching television seems to be structured by genre, and cannot be lumped into the sweeping category of flow. Saying that watching television is a particular kind of experience is as misleading as saying that the reading of books, poetry and newspapers is done in the same way. This is also a cultural phenomenon. Different genres of television are most likely watched in different manners in different cultures. Generalizing about 'television' is then very difficult, as practices are different depending on the institutions and traditions in different cultures.

For some of the viewers *Wataoni* is especially important among other programmes. They videotape the serial if they are unable to watch it. Aiko in Group 1 notes: "There is so much going on in the house at that time that I can't watch it then. I take it on tape, and watch after everybody else has gone to sleep".

Wataoni appears in my group interview material as even more a 'women's serial' than it would appear to be by reading only the TBS statistics. Those few men who took part in the group interviews were all either indifferent or hostile towards the serial. They told me that if they watched television they watched informational genres, or historical dramas, not these kinds of dramas that are meant for women. This issue is elaborated upon in sub-chapters 5.3.4 and 6.1.

5.3. Perceptions of relations

The focus in this chapter is on the relations within production and production team members to their work, of viewers to makers, of makers to viewers and of both groups to the *Wataoni* text. These appear mostly on the representational level of genre (Figure 3, Chapter 3). The questions involve perceptions of the audience and makership, as well as the narrative image, and recognition of genre hierarchies. As feelings and emotions are often important in relationships, I attempt to bring out this aspect in this chapter. Especially in viewers' relationship towards the text, but also in the relationship of makers towards the text, there are feelings involved. Questions of liking and disliking, attachment and estrangement, love and hate necessarily appear.

5.3.1. Hierarchies and personal relationships in making

As noted in 2.5.2, the production of *Wataoni* is organized hierarchically according to the age, status and working years of the team members. The hierarchy also includes the feature that those working for TBS are considered superior to those who are employed by sub-contractor companies.

Within this system, an assistant director, when first employed by the sub-contractor company, always starts as the fourth (or fifth in some cases). This means catering for the crew members and the actors and actresses, as well as seeing to their physical well-being during the shootings. The system, however, at the same time guarantees that within a year or two a fourth becomes a third and so forth. Within time the first AD gets to be the youngest director.

This is a structural feature of the Japanese (television) industry that is not any way particular to *Wataoni.*

Making television drama is also teamwork in those rare cases where the *auteur* can be easily detected, as in the case of *Wataoni.* The programme is a final product of a 'machine', where each part has its own task and role. The importance and proportion of these roles, however, is not equal. Some posts are more important than others, some jobs more valuable that others and some more independent than others.

The directors take turns in sharing the responsibility over the episodes, while the overall responsibility is the producer's. When a director is in charge he has the power. In this sense the directors are equal among themselves. There is a ranking of the directors, according to their working years and age, as the case is with the ADs. The assistant directors, however, are a in more hierarchical relationship with each other, as to some degree the elder and more experience AD is also always boss of the younger. The boss for all the ADs is the assistant producer, although in practice AD1 also has managing and supervising responsibility over the whole AD crew. The assistant directors also each have their own, separate tasks, while the directors take turns in doing the same directing work, and are not in charge of each other's work.[16]

When describing their work profiles the staff members often compare their work with that of the others. One of the directors who only recently had been promoted to directing from chief AD emphasizes that the difference is in how independent the work is and how much one has to rely on oneself and one's own imagination in accomplishing the tasks.

> D4: Hashida-*sensei* writes her drama starting from zero. I think director's work resembles that. A director has to give an idea based on only the script, and to make an image out of that. This starts from zero. The beginning for AD's work comes from the director. Each AD might have different ways of accomplishing their tasks, but the main thing is to reach the goal [set by the director]. There is a difference between accomplishing a task and deciding from zero what should be done. That's why although the titles [for assistant director and director] are alike, the cause for getting paid is completely different.

The question with power, thus, is that it comes along with responsibility. The producer/director describes the difference between his two jobs in the following way:

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[16] D1 was obviously an exception during the time he acted as producer/director in Ishii's absence.

D1: [The job of] director is, how should I say, if there is a 'script', it is enough to pay attention to the inside [of the script]. Producer has to take care of the surroundings of the *daihon*, that is why the way of thinking is also entirely different. Doing both is rather difficult!

The director/producer who took over for Ishii during Part 3 seemed somewhat reluctant to taking the responsibility in this case. The circumstances were naturally exceptional, and taking over for Ishii did not seem possible for anybody, as the serial was hers and Hashida's from the beginning. In this case, however, the length of the serial seemed to be an advantage, although also a consuming factor.

D1: Well, if this would be the first time, Part 1, I think there would be more different difficulties, but this has been going on already for two years, so basically people know what is happening. In that meaning, the relations here are not so difficult. But, doing this around a whole year, that is really a terrible thing. Usually, the end comes in about three months, but this time the end doesn't seem to come at all[..] And people, everybody have their personal moods the waves of 'tension', and in the downwards points it really doesn't go well. In these places the task of producer would be to balance, but[..] Doing it for one year[..] it is like running a long run, 'marathon'. During that [one] has to drink water and make one's own rhythm to reach the goal. I think that everybody is doing [this] while 'controlling' themselves. If one runs too fast, one falls[..] This is difficult[..]

Apart from the hierarchical structure, personal relationships are important in all television productions (cf. Painter 1991, 5-8). In the case of *Wataoni,* most of the crew members have been working with each other for tens of years, having started out with the *Toshiba Nichiyō Gekijō*, which was produced by Ishii for tens of years. Terms like "Ishii family" and "Hashida family" describe these kinds of team combinations. The assistant directors, of whom some are newcomers to the 'family', describe the process of becoming a member. The chief assistant director explains how he has come to be reassured about being ready to take over directing tasks.

AD1: Right after coming here, [working as a director] would not have been possible [for me], but [now I have] a long relationship with the actors. A trusting relationship takes time to develop. Especially the people at *Wataoni*, they have been on *Nichyō Gekijō* too, so in my case I know them all. I have only been on *Wataoni* since Part 3, but [people refer to previous experiences constantly] "That time we did this", thinking that I was also in Parts 1 and 2, they say that I've been

on since 1. [..]Though I'm a first-timer here, all the players remember me [from *Nichiyō Gekijō*] and they accept me in an easy way, without difficulties.

Consequently, although up to a certain degree a succession of promotions is self-evident for a new AD entering the television industry, the final career development is dependent on whether he or she is working for a sub-contractor or the main company, and especially on the personal relationships to people with whom they have since been working. In the case of the Hashida family there is some anxiety among the staff members, as both Ishii and Hashida are elderly, and their career will inevitably end in the near future.[17] The talk of the team being like a family is used mostly for PR purposes, but also to some extent for creating the sense of a team.

Essential in the system is that to become a member of the hierarchical structure you have to have a network. After you have established that, you will be part of the group (which is formed hierarchically). My study does not cover this extensively, but this networking could be seen as one of the things making it difficult for women to enter the hierarchy via the ordinary route, despite claims that women who enter firms as *shain* or full-time company employees are taken as equal workers and are promoted as often as men are (cf. Nakane 1970, 32). Consequently, at the level of hierarchy women are treated as any member in the career-line, but in personal networking their possibilities might be less equal. Hashida expresses this in her description of the difficulties in getting the first scripts accepted:

> HS: I for example, when I was 36, I was trying to get to the television companies, and [I experienced how] they don't receive [you]. They do take the script to be read, but when you go to meet the person in charge, they say that he is busy today, or. [..] KS-san was involved with a programme called *Okāsan*, a thirty-minutes programme for newcomers to write. I applied and applied for it, and KS-san was the lowest assistant director. And the highest director was such a bossy, unpleasant person [laughter]. He went on saying: "Thank you, I'll read it, I'll read it". KS-san told me: "Yesterday [the boss] said OK and today he is saying no." KS-san brought me coffee when I came in, and encouraged me: "Don't give up, it won't happen in an instant. You'll

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[17] The first sign of this was when Yamaoka Hisano, the main actress and mother figure of *Wataoni,* fell ill before Part 4 started production. The character was written out as dead from the narrative, and Yamaoka herself died half a year after the broadcasting of Part 4 started. (There was in fact quite an amount of nasty publicity for Hashida and the programme because her solution to "kill" the character when the actress was deadly ill was considered inhumane. Hashida apparently was not aware of the seriousness of the actress's illness.)

learn while writing." I will never forget his friendliness. He is still younger, about ten years younger than I am, but he was ready to encourage a woman — I was still a woman, not "a granny" like now — but he encouraged me. I thought that I want to become like he is. That is how I went to take for reading tens of suggestions for *Okāsan* and they were returned and I took them back home and again to the company. It is really funny how things go with the people you meet. If you are given back your work by an unpleasant person, it makes you feel like wanting to quit the whole thing, but because I met KS-san, I was fortunate.[18]

Hashida's expression of wonder at the fact that somebody was willing to help a woman forward can be read as an indication that this was not normally the case. However, the scene Hashida describes happened close to 40 years ago and thus things might have changed in between. The questions and complaints which the young to-be-script writers discussed at the same instance seem to show that these difficulties have not become any easier. However, breaking through is difficult enough for men as well.

What Hashida-san, nevertheless, is describing, is the give-and-take of human relationships which leads into debts of gratitude or *giri*. The assistant director, KS, is now prestigious director at TBS. He was also a guest speaker for the Hashida Foundation seminar for young would-be writers. Thus, the connection was not only lucky for Hashida, but also led into a network relationship that has continued through the career of both. The *giri* is strongly connected with the *ninjō*, or the [human] feelings at stake. This is how the relationships in the working sphere are formed, through an interplay of favours and counterfavours.

On the previous excerpt AD1 described the importance of a trusting relationship and a feeling of in-group in order for the work to be successfully carried through. Consequently, *ninjo* plays a central part in the production process, along with the *giri* that has been developed in the give-and-take - interplay of favours. This network of relationships is also about power: powerful people know other powerful people and are on good terms with them. In order to gain more power, it is crucial not only to be promoted in the usual succession, but also to get to know important people.

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[18] Hashida Foundation seminar Nov. 22, 1997.

5.3.2. Makers' relationship with the viewers

Educating and entertaining. As referred to in Chapter 2 there seem to be different ways of perceiving the audience and the 'goal of communication' inside the production team. On the one hand there are those who consider the aim of television drama to attract as large an audience as possible by "giving the viewers what they want". On the other hand, others think that it is more important to educate the viewers, "to give them what they need", and thus not offering mere entertainment. This also reflects the way in which the audience is perceived: either as consumers and customers, or 'citizens' who need certain skills in society. In neither case is the audience conceived of as a public, having a right to speak up and take part in public dialogues. (cf. Ridell 1998c.)

In the one production which is under attention in this study there seems to be a generational division between different views on drama. Those who have a long history since the early days of television ponder often and eagerly upon the social significance of television and appear to think of drama in terms of 'what it can do' for the viewers and the society at large. Some of them tell about their views on the medium itself, and of their perceptions about how this medium should be made use of. Often these views connect with ideas of what television does to the viewers and what it should do. There are also efforts to make a difference in society. (cf. corrective realism above.) One of the directors gives an example.

> D2: My wish is to give even little enlightenment for the viewers[19] who watch the drama. Television is a part of public service and is doing public work. But there also has to be amusement. But it is not enough to flatter the audience with entertainment, and that's why borrowing a family frame or a problem of mother-in-law — daughter-in-law and it is enough to have one, two, three themes of life and living [in a drama]. And then people watching the drama can think: "I wish I had said that then, everything would have been fine with the daughter-in-law". Details about the thing "life". One or two things, or as many as you can get, inside one hour drama.

Latecomers, for their part, appear more worried about the ratings, or at least do not express such a clear vision about the task of television. There are also those who explicitly discuss the contradiction between making entertainment that should get a good rating and 'good' television programmes. For instance, the assistant producer says:

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[19] Uses the word *okyakusan* a honorific form for 'guest' or 'customer'.

AP: [We] cannot make programmes that don't sell. There should be the certain standard amount of viewers. It is not the question of if [we are] the first or second, but if [viewers would think] "that drama was really good", that's the best assessment, I think. Entertainment programmes should not be about how big the rating is but if they make some kind of impression, if [we] could do that, [the programme] would be one great sage, one broadcast discussion, that would be better. If quality programmes are not made, we get drifted away. This is one thing that [I] want to pay attention to, I think.

The generational differences in the perception of the audience can also be related to the fact that it tends to be the older people who have the power and responsibility to define the aims of the work. They also might, within this frame of being responsible, talk about the ideals of programme making and how they would like it to be, instead of focusing on the practicalities of the work. In some occasions Hashida has appeared as even casual about the ratings of *Wataoni*. Since the ratings are so good, she can make statements like "I don't care if men don't watch". Because the programme has steady, and good ratings, the importance of good audience figures seem to diminish. As the saying goes: "Money doesn't matter as long as you have some", it also appears that ratings do not matter as long as they are good.

One of the older generation directors agrees with Ishii and Hashida when he states that there is an important educational aspect to the drama and that is why it should be valued more. This, however, is because the putative viewer is an imaginary housewife needing education and practical guidance in order to get through the trivialities of her daily life, as the following already-used example shows:

D2: I think that it is OK to make a cooking programme inside the *hōmu dorama*. The very ordinary main character [can give the insight to the viewer] 'oh, that is a way to cook delicious rice!' or 'that is a way to make hamburgers... I see, that is a way to make bread.' I think that if the viewers get this feeling, it is a supreme success.

One can speculate, however, on whether or not these ideals are in the wrong place at the wrong time. The form and content of *Wataoni* in its 'traditional' frame seems to fall into being part of the 'old fashioned' public service ideals of giving education, even while entertaining[20], and yet is broadcast on a

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[20] Interestingly enough, Hashida Sugako continues to write also for NHK and those of her scripts that have been made into '*asadora*' or 'morning television novels' have been extremely popular. *Oshin*, the one Japanese television drama also known in Europe, was written by Hashida.

commercial channel that has a 'dynamic' and youthful image and is hoping for a youthful audience.

This youthful audience is said to like a more rapid visual style, being happy to see celebrities in different roles and following the clothing and music fashion on television as opposed to the slow pace and focus on dialogues and stage-like acting the middle-aged and older generations require[21]. The definition of the 'wants and needs' of the audience is in fact made by the producer (in this case together with the scriptwriter), who has the responsibility for bringing in good ratings. As a result the middle-aged audience is represented for the staff by the women in power in the production, and in fact the episodes are made in a way that pleases Ishii (and Hashida) rather than being addressed to the audience by the staff. Most of the directors then emphasize that they are merely trying to put 'the spirit' of Hashida's script on screen as faithfully as possible[22]. Defining *Wataoni* as part of the *hōmu dorama* then appears to be in the hands of the script writer and the producer. The genre then invites the makers to follow these definitions.

By emphasizing the importance of making 'the spirit' of Hashida's writing appear on the screen, the makers indicate that they do not have a very strong investment in the drama and shift the responsibility for the represented meanings onto the scriptwriter, although their intention is nevertheless to do the job as well as possible. Here is another paradox: the makers of the programme are proud of the quality of their work and their professionality, and yet do not appreciate the 'product' as it is enjoyed by wrong 'consumers'.

The communication contract thus sets the framework for the expectations concerning a certain programme formula that belongs to a certain genre. In the case of television drama the makers relate themselves to the text of the serial in question, through the demands the narrative created by Hashida poses on their work.

As discussed earlier, to a certain extent the narrative as written by the script writer is primary to the production. The rotation, or the whirl of the drama, *dorama mawashi* is something that is considered essential in the planning of the visualization of the script. *Dorama mawashi* is something that in the practical work of making the programme is far more central to the production practices than are the opinions of the viewers. The viewers do write letters to the script writer and the actors expressing their wishes and comments but the shooting schedule alone is enough to make viewer responses

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[21] In *Wataoni* there are an average of 15-18 scenes per one hour episode, while in the other, more 'youthful' dramas there may be as many as 70 scenes per hour.

[22] For a more detailed discussion see Valaskivi 2000 (forthcoming).

irrelevant for programme production: often the episodes being broadcast have been made weeks, if not months in advance and thus reacting to viewer responses is impossible. The audience then is first and foremost perceived as the receivers of the programme, not as consumers actively using the programme or as a public that has the right and capability to participate in the production of media contents. The opinions of the people in front of the television set are used only as a means to check whether the programme is on the right track for attracting the largest possible audience.

Imagined audience. The makers have a fairly coherent view of who is watching the serial, and a typical answer to the question, "who do you think watches the serial?" is that the main group are women in their 40s and 50s, but that the serial is also watched by "all kinds of people, from children to the elderly". The perception of the audience is formed on the basis of the rating information, comments of friends and family, and newspaper columns on the serial. Two people in the production team had noticed a newspaper article in which a columnist told about a friend's young daughter who watches *Wataoni*. This article was used as an example or proof that younger people also watch *Wataoni*.

When making the serial, the makers do have an imagined audience in mind.

> Q: Do you think about the audience?
> AD1: [I] don't especially think about anybody, but when I first read the *daihon*, I do it from the point of view of the viewer. [When I come across something that makes me think] "this is strange considering the things that happened before". Reading the *daihon* from the point of the viewer, and after that moving on. So the viewer is thought about. And during the shooting [I] also think "is this strange", thinking about how the viewer would see it.

Consequently, despite the fact that there is quite a clear view of the audience within the production, the makers do not picture somebody in particular as their viewers. Hashida Sugako herself says that she writes about families and situations that she knows from her own and her friends' lives. In this way the experiences of viewers are put on the screen. According to some programme makers the important thing is to make characters appear "possible". *Kanarazu iru,* or 'definitely exists' is a desired audience reaction towards the characters and narrative developments. Often it is very difficult, almost impossible, to get the interviewee to talk about the viewers, but the discussion drifts back to the narrative and the making. When asked about whom she thinks watches the programme, Ishii answers:

IF: I think the usual people. People that live in any house. At first in the drama there was a family with a *sarariiman*. In Japan there are a lot of *sarariiman* families. And then there is the small-business *rāmen*-shop. Small-businesses are also a big proportion. [..] The thought is that no matter where you go in Japan, there are this kind of people. [..]

The view of the audience is quite technical in fact, and the empiricist view on realism comes through: people are supposed to be interested in watching a drama about people similar to themselves. Ishii, however, is the one who is supposed to think about the audience in the eyes of the players, for instance.

Q: When you are making the programme, do you think about the people who watch the programme?
A1: No, I don't very much. Without even thinking, there are people who watch [..] This is because the directors and the producer do think [about the audience], I think.

One of the directors notes that it is not so important to make the viewers happy, but to be faithful to Hashida's script, which indicates that the final responsibility lies there. Another director emphasizes — along with the lines of Ishii's view on people wanting to see people that are like themselves — that different scenes are aimed at different people. Accordingly, in making the show he tries to reflect the feelings of the most likely audience, be they young women or older men.

The connection between production and reception appears as important and self-evident in the talk of the makers. It is clear to everybody that the programme is made to be watched. However, when it comes to the actual viewers in front of their sets there seems to be a sense of wonder in the air. The ratings are known, and letters and phone calls come (as will be discussed below), but the reason why something is a success and something else fails remains a mystery. Within a particular genre, nevertheless, the view of the audience is more of less fixed. This can be exemplified by two excerpts. In the first a director compares the making of daytime serials with prime time drama:

Q: If you compare daytime drama with *hōmu dorama*, what is different?
D2: That is a time for housemothers, who have lunch or have to hurry to get their kids from kindergarten. It is something that is watched while doing all these chores. Something for the time if lunch is a bit late. And then the housewives, they have already done the morning laundry, the father is at *kaisha*, children are at school. She has some time and watches some drama after lunch. It is made in a very easy

way, easy to understand way, strong feelings, that are easy to pick up. That's how it's made. Something that is made to smoothly adjust the audience empathy.

The view on audiencehood is then strongly connected with the broadcasting time, the way of making being adjusted accordingly. In the second example another director explains his view on the *Wataoni* audience.

D1: [..] saying 'target' might be strange, but since this programme has been made already two years, well two times, Part 1 and Part 2 and we have made more than 100, more than 100 hours, we already know the system. The biggest watching age-group is 40-50 years old women. That is the core. But we are not making only for those people, that would not lead into success. Making the target too narrow won't bring success. [The aim is to make a programme] that 'appeals' people of different ages.

These two examples demonstrate how the industrial practices of scheduling, targeting and programming act as conditions for production. At the same time these examples show how integral the image of the audience is for the making.

There is something reluctant on the part of the (male) programme makers to have elderly women as their primary actual audience. This also indicates the status of the *hōmu dorama* in the cultural hierarchy of television genres. *Hōmu dorama* — aimed at middle-aged women and also mainly watched by them — falls into the category of the less appreciated genres. *Hōmu dorama* is also often referred to as soap opera in English language literature, which in my interpretation originates chiefly in the fact that *hōmu dorama* — like soap — is also considered a women's genre (cf. Schilling 1997, 168-169; Niyekawa 1984, 62; also Valaskivi 1995, 10-15, 40-49). Despite the fact that *Wataoni* can be seen as using the conventions of soap opera, the makers of the serial explicitly reject the connection between their programme and the soap opera genre, the image of soap opera being a melodramatic, stereo-type-based women's genre excluded from the domain of 'serious' television.

Being a prime time serial *Wataoni* does have a certain (financial) appreci-ation among the company executives, as the *golden time* is the most profita-ble time for (commercial) television, the time when it is possible to draw the largest possible audience in front of the TV set. Prime time as the program-ming slot attracting the largest possible audience then becomes problematic for the makers who would like to make something that is supposedly also more widely esteemed. Yet by looking down at their work the makers active-ly take part in the cultural contempt for the genre. There is something para-doxical in this situation. On the one hand, the serial is what the scheduling

and marketing departments desire: it attracts a large audience of middle-aged women who have plenty of consumption capacity. For this reason the serial is made with considerable time and effort. There are, however, women who consume even more and more expensive goods — the young late teens and early twenties group — who would be more preferable, despite the fact that the current audience of *Wataoni* is just what the sponsors of the serial wish to have. On the other hand, these desired consumers do not seem to carry the intellect of the most desirable audience, which would certainly be younger (and possibly male) and seemingly beyond the reach of an educational family genre. The current audience, for its part, is seen to be in need of education — this fits with the genre of *hōmu dorama*, which is said to give its (female) audience practical guidance in every-day situations (Hoga according to Niyekawa 1984, 62).

In touch with the audience. In the daily practices of making the programme, the relationship between the makers and the audience lies mostly on the imagined level. There is a particular perception of the audience in the background, but actual connections are few. For most of the maker team the daily representatives of the audience are their own family members. "All my relatives watch it. So [when making the programme] I think of them and what they might like", one of the ADs puts it.

The family as audience is at the same time considered biased, and not as reliable as the "ordinary" viewers. Because the family monitors are considered less than un-biased, the possibilities of using the new technology to obtain the 'real feeling' of the audience excites two directors in an interview, which was in fact meant to be an interview of just one of them.

> Q: Do you meet people who watch the serial?
> D2: No, I don't. It is enough if they get the feeling of this through television.
> Q: Have you ever heard people say that they have experienced this what you describe?
> D2: No, I can't say.
> D3: But his [D2's] wife, she watches
> D2: My 'wife' is the 'monitor'.
> D3: You listen to her thoughts.
> D2: Yes, and I make the programme. And then the neighbourhood, and my wife's friends and so on. I do a lot of consultation with them, that's true.
> D2: And [..] now, there is this club of people who watch *Wataru seken*.
> D3: Well, there is this e-mail list, for *Wataru seken*. And there are people who are fans sending their opinions. [..]
> D2: Using the computer, they discuss *Wataru seken*.

> [..] But in fact this way there are ways of knowing what people think
> about the programme. "At this point they felt what we meant. And
> here there didn't." It is a learning experience.
> Q: So you do this kind of learning.
> D2: Oh, yes. And the reaction is really strong, people do get together
> in the web.
> D3: [..] With friends and acquaintances it is quite difficult to get the
> real opinion. They don't really say what they think, because they are
> reserved. But this forum is something that is there without us, but ac-
> cessible. And they say both good and bad things.

The e-mail list is thus considered exceptionally valuable because it is there,
independent of the production, and supposedly real opinions are exchanged
between the viewers and fans of the serial. In a sense the list provides the
maker team a peeping hole into fan-discussions, which had been inaccessi-
ble until now, although many viewer responses have been received through-
out the broadcasts of the programme. The assistant producer explains:

> AP: [..] for instance fan-letters come from high school students to gran-
> nies over 80 years of age. [In the letters] there are individual impres-
> sions [about the programme]. But I think that maybe they are watch-
> ing the programme in considering their own life and their human life
> and their own place inside the family — watching in relation to one's
> own life. That is why the audience is so wide. [..]
> Q: When you get letters from the viewers is it you who reads them?
> AP: Well, I look them through and also everybody, staff members read
> them.
> Q: How much are there?
> AP: Well, fairly much. I can show you next week, those which have
> been taken out [for reading] are about this much. [shows with hands, a
> pile of about 15 cm]
> Q: In a month, how much?
> AP: In a week about 200.
> Q: Really. [Do you use] things written in the letters for the drama?
> AP: Things written in letters are only taken as the feeling that comes
> through. We, among ourselves use them as ingredient. They do live
> among the drama making, somewhere.

Although the makers express a desire to know more about the audience and
especially their opinions and feelings towards the programme, each member
of the production seems to have a theory about what kind of mechanisms are
at work in the audience, and who watches what and how. An actress gives an
example:

Q: When I come in February I plan to interview viewers too.

A1: That's something we would like to hear too, what they think. But in fact it depends on the age of the viewers, the way in which they watch. Like my friends, they follow me; and K-san's[23] friends are suspicious of me and support him. All [viewers], each have their representatives.

Despite the desire to know what the audience wants, the actual contacts of viewers are sometimes considered as burdensome and confusing. In the daily routines there is no way to take the viewer opinions into account. Often the opinions of the viewers are then simply rejected as being beside the point and with the justification that not everybody can be pleased at the same time.

AD3: [..] There are viewers that call quite frequently. They give their opinions. Like somebody hates some player and says that s/he is unsuitable for a role; another can say the reason for watching is just the same player. There are big differences. When that kind of calls come, it always bothers me.

Q: Who answers the phone?

AD3: Depends on who is there, anybody.

Q: Are there a lot of these calls?

AD3: In the first season there was. Now they have been getting fewer. For instance about Kinomi Maeda-san, who is the mother at Iwaki. Her image was considered unsuitable for this role by some.

Q: How do you answer these viewers?

AD3: I can't just say: We understand, we'll change it. So one says: Is that right? Is that your opinion? One can't start arguing, it'll be in vain anyway. Just saying 'is that right', and they'll get tired. Then saying that "I have to go" and cutting the conversation by hanging up.

Q: Do you talk with your boss about these?

AD3: Yes, we report these. But it is more like "I see. So that was the end of it, right?" -type of dialogue [with the boss].

Some exceptional cases force the makers to think of not only the ratings, but also the effects of television.

AP: [..] Toshiko-san developed Alzheimer's, right. That is a sickness that cannot be cured. This was so strong an influence for one viewer, that there was a murder case. [He] killed his wife with a knife. There

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[23] Refers to an actor playing a role in *Wataoni*.

was an enquiry from the police: It seems that he hadn't known the reality about Alzheimer's. When he watched [the drama] he realized that [the sickness] was never going to cure. The desire to live seem to have died and the knowledge of this was from *Wataru seken*, since there was this mother, who had Alzheimer's. Concerning this there was an enquiry from the police, asking whether there had been [this kind of plotline in the drama].

Although these kinds of cases appear to worry the makers; they reject responsibility over such cases and note that it is simply impossible to take into account such extreme reactions.

5.3.3. Viewers' relationship with the makers

Hashida notes that the most difficult thing with a long-term serial like *Wataoni* is having the endurance to continue until the viewers have become familiar with the characters, and have started thinking about them as their family, or acquaintances.

It seems that Hashida is right in the sense that those viewers who like the serial in fact express this kind of attachment with the characters of the serial. However, it is not only the characters, but the famous members of the maker team, especially Hashida herself, and also Ishii, that have made the viewers' acquaintance. With their long history in drama making Hashida and Hashida dramas are a concept that is enough to 'sell' a programme for viewers.

Interviewees in Group 1 tell about having seen Hashida Sugako on television in 'wide shows', and having thought that she looks like an ordinary *obasan*, an aunt, or older lady. A fascination for famous people and a desire to know more about what is going on behind the scene are apparent in the viewer interviews. The viewers also know gossip about how narrative development can change due to personal reasons of players or personal relationships within the production.

As the players are a part of the Hashida family, the viewers know them from numerous roles throughout the years. Some are attached to a particular actor or actress and watch the serial for this reason rather than because of liking the programme itself. Earlier studies of soap opera audiences have indicated that people tend to feel attached to a character and talk about the players using the character names (cf. e.g. Ang 1985, Virta 1994). It has also been claimed that the 'star system', or feeling attachment with particular actors or actresses, is something inherent only to cinema, and television with its domesticity only makes viewers feel close to the characters (Lange 1981). However, in the case of *Wataoni* the situation is just the opposite. For in-

stance, in the questionnaires a female viewer wrote down as her most disliked character "the sister of Izumi's husband". Izumi Pinko is the name of the actress playing the role of Satsuki, and the viewer is referring to Kuniko, Satsuki's sister-in-law. However, as Izumi Pinko, the actress, has played tens of roles in family dramas, she is famous under her own name rather than under the name of the character and viewers tend to remember her name. These kinds of examples are fairly frequent and also appear on the production side, where mostly the makers use the names of the players also when talking about the characters, but when referring to a role played by a less known actress sometimes use the character's name.[24]

The viewers also refer to the scandals the players have had, and they often also have a view or an opinion on the character of the most famous players. Izumi Pinko is again a favourite subject in these cases.

There are also reasons for disliking the programme because of what is 'known' and thought of Hashida and her team. In Group 3 Michio explains his dislike of *Wataoni* and all the work of Hashida, with his perception of an incident in the production of another serial, where Hashida and an actress supposedly had had a difference of opinion and eventually the actress was replaced by another one, one from the 'Hashida family'. "I don't know what happened, but I think that Hashida Sugako must have this tempestuous nature", he explains. His perception of Hashida is that she herself has never actually seen what real life and hardship means, and she has to find the topics for her work in literature and drama. After saying this, he contradicts himself by saying that there are works of art that can give an experience equivalent to real life sufferings. "But this drama! Well, I simply cannot receive it", he notes on *Wataoni*.

5.3.4. Viewers' and makers' relationship with the programme

Personal feelings. When discussing the programme both the viewers and makers focus on the narrative and the characters. They discuss the motivations of the characters as if they were actual people. The makers of the serial talk of the importance of understanding the characters and their motivations from their point of view in order to depict the characters in a plausible way. This is often connected to what 'real' is defined as in the context of *Wataoni*.

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[24] I would suggest that this difference is at least partly generated by the television industry system in Japan, which does not make never-ending serials. That way an actor or actress becomes familiar from different roles in different media, such as theatre, television and film, rather than appearing for several years as some particular character. The case is similar Finland, where the first never-ending serials have been developed in the 1990's.

One of the directors describes how he has been able to direct a character, whose motivations he did not understand at first.

> D3 [..] when I read the *daihon* there are moments when I lose track, because this is so new. [I] read again, think again, talk with people and get to follow.
> Q: For instance what kind of things?
> D3: Well, for instance[..] It is still OK that Yayoi-san wants to have Akari married, but recently she has started to say that she wants Akari always to be at hand. It is not that I would not understand that, wishing to have the child she has given birth to, to get a *mukōyoshi* and have her to live in and make her to take care of her. It's not that [I] wouldn't understand that [..], but Akari has already left home and is working at the farm. Yayoi-san's feeling is all the more difficult to understand, since Akari has left home and has her own life. This is something [I] have thought inside [my mind]. [I] become a woman and [think] if my daughter would leave home, finally I would like to grasp [her]. Since it is not that I wouldn't understand the feeling of wanting to have the daughter at hand, I just make that a bit deeper and wider, and that is how [I] might be able to comprehend. [..] I might be kind of simplistic compared to Hashida-san. It is because no matter what, these have to be shot, [I] have to put myself into it and try to understand every person's [character's] feelings.

Likes and dislikes of characters and/or narrative developments sometimes appear quite strongly in the interviews of the viewers. Michio in Group 3 appeared to fiercely hate and despise the programme. He had watched this serial for the first time for the purpose of the interview, and he also had prepared half a sheet of paper with his opinions on the serial. He notes that despite the fact that his wife watches every episode, he had not watched the drama. This was because it had the "undignified and vacuous Izumi Pinko" on it, and that he already knew from experience that these kinds of dramas are really worthless and trivial.

He explains that when watching television he wishes to have a break from the daily stress of work, and from communicating with people. For that purpose he uses, for instance, suspense dramas: "they give another kind of stress". "Good drama is natural, the events are things that don't normally happen, but otherwise it's natural. And that's missing [in *Wataoni*]. It feels forced and artificial, and that's stupid."

This is a fairly extreme example — most of the time the expressions for and against the serial are milder. The makers at times express feelings of affection with the programme, the assistant producer in particular appears to

feel quite sympathetic with the serial family, as he himself is also from a large family.

Like the assistant producer, also the interviewed viewers — those that are positive about the serial — also relate the characters and happenings in the serial to their own lives. For instance Aiko (Group 1) explains how she has always wanted to have girls as her siblings. She enjoys watching the Okakura sisters because of this, and envies the family of *Wataoni*, because the girls always get together if one of them has a problem. Others in the same group note, however, that families are different and that not all families are like that, in this way referring to the constructed nature of the serial.

Narrative image and success. Discussions about *Wataoni* are framed by its success. The serial has been a hit in terms of the audience size, and both the makers and the viewers of the programme try to give explanations for this. Most typically the comments are connected to the content or the form of the programme. The success of the drama is explained by connecting its narrative with the 'real' and the everyday life or *nichijō seikatsu*.

This strategy of explanation sees the success of the serial resulting solely from specific features of the televisual text. There are, however, other reasons too. In the case of *Wataoni* a major factor was the 'narrative image' (Ellis 1992[1982], 30), created through marketing even before the beginning of broadcasting. This narrative image is the whole concept of the serial, the 'aura' it has in the mind of the viewers. The image is created, not only through the televisual text itself, but also through the so called supertext (Browne 1984), which consists of all texts surrounding the given programme[25]. Fiske (1987) and Bennett & Woollacott (1987) consider this as one form of intertextuality.

Thus it is in practice impossible to say to what extent the viewers emphasize for instance the likeness of the serial to the everyday, because they have adopted the marketing discourses and the other supertexts surrounding the serial. As noted, Hashida is a frequent figure in Japanese popular media, always willing to give her views on the drama. It is likely that her opinions as printed in the weeklies or broadcast on the variety and talk shows circulate back to the expressions used by her fans and also by less attached viewers.

To take an example, stories about Hashida often repeat how she is known for long lines. She has, for instance, been reported to have said that "I worry that short dialogues may not say enough. So when I watch other TV dramas, I tend to think 'Don't just look at each other like that — say something'" (Daily Yomiuri Dec. 3, 1998). Not very surprisingly then, in group inter-

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[25] Such as the television critiques in magazines and newspapers, the advertising and PR done for the serial by the production company/television company, etc.

views the topic of long lines comes up: "When watching one can notice that they really have long talks. Sometimes it seems that the other just has to listen and [he/she] can't react", says Aiko (Group 1).

The viewers do respond to marketing strategies. Women watch *Wataoni* more than men, and men often oppose it as they are also expected to do. The production system and the promotion that is given to products seem to formulate the frame of reception. Men tend to watch less, which is then often explained, not by the fact that the serial has been marketed for women, but by connecting some features of the drama text with femininity, thus marking it as a 'women's programme'. Another possibility is to emphasize the difference of lifestyle between men and women and note that men are not around at the broadcasting time. The narrative image then seems to mediate to the viewers a sentiment of the generic competencies that are preferable and desirable for reading this particular programme.

In Group 1, Aiko suddenly realizes why she has been so attached to the drama, when her friends explain that the script writer is the same as the long-lasting serial *Arigatō*: "Is that right! That's why I am so fond of [*Wataoni*]. I watched *Arigatō* all the time". The group continues to discuss different serials that Hashida has written, and note that they have liked most of them, except for one of the most recent ones (*Haru no koi*): "That was dull", they agree. "But I watched it anyway", says Aiko, and some of the others agree.

Creating a positive narrative image for a television serial or a film can be a time and money consuming effort. As regards *Wataoni* the PR people were well off from the beginning, but there was still a big campaign for the serial including posters, press conferences and commercials.[26] The construction of the narrative image was easy, because of the *Hashida famiri*[27] status in the field of television drama in the minds of the Japanese press, television audiences and the programme makers. *Hashida famiri* refers to the actors/actresses and staff behind most of the dramas written by Hashida and *Hashida wārudo*, (e.g. Matsuo 1997) to the televisual text and narrative contents of her dramas. These expressions demonstrate how serials made by Hashida, Ishii and the other professionals connected to them practically form a genre of their own.

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[26] Posters were printed and distributed around Tokyo (in for instance subway stations), press conferences were held and commercials for the programme on TBS were aired. Especially with Part 3 the focus of PR was based on a defensive strategy, as many of the actors and actresses had scandals in their lives, and the tax evasion of producer Ishii Fukuko shook the whole production.

[27] Identifying a certain group affiliated with a famous name as a 'family' is common in the Japanese pop world. For instance the pop artist, composer and producer Komuro Tetsuya has an associated branch of performers and singers called by the name 'Komuro family'. It is characteristic of the specific 'Hashida family' that it carries 'traditional family values' as its trade-mark.

Part of the narrative image of the serial is condensed in this talk about 'the Hashida family', a term some of the production staff members find artificial and suitable only for PR purposes[28]. The viewers recognize the term as well. The people working in this family are supposed to be making *hōmu dorama* in its 'traditional' form. A certain simplicity of both narration and visual images are central to this. It also seems that for both the makers and the viewers the traditionality of the serial is connected to the people who make the drama, the *Hashida famiri*.

The *Hashida famiri* and Hashida herself are not only positive figures for the viewers. Reiko (Group 3) explains how in her view Hashida's dramas are very extreme, and how Hashida herself, being rich and beyond criticism, has an attitude of writing from over the heads of her viewers. Reiko's mother, Kiku, opposes this and says that, for instance, a recent NHK drama was based on Hashida's own experiences. Reiko does not give up, but insists that it was too big a bite for Hashida. Despite her negative images of Hashida and her player team, Reiko does watch *Wataoni* and other of Hashida's serials. "They are exciting to watch, but definitely leave no lasting impression. Afterwards I never feel like having had a great experience", she says.

The genre contract covers not only the way in which the serial is produced, or the televisual text as seen on the screen, but also the way in which the audience is invited to watch the drama. This includes the narrative image created in the supertext. In the case of *Wataoni* it also contains the long history of *hōmu dorama* production that the members of the maker team have behind them; thus a specific tradition frames the viewing of the serial. The contract is also realized in small things at the level of the televisual text, such as family-orientedness, exclusion of explicit sex scenes or keeping the shots mostly at maximum medium-close-up level. These practices are also often imposed by the practical constraints of time and money, which in this way come to define the genre-specific features of the drama.

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[28] Some note though that the production team and the players do make a group, which is like a family, "in good and bad".

6. Gender in action

In this chapter I move from the more traditional genre analysis into bringing in the gender aspect as it appears in the empirical material. The chapter begins with a discussion on 'gendered genres' or, more specifically, with relating the assessment of *hōmu dorama* kind of television programming with other forms of popular drama and illustrating the gendered nature of the hierarchy of genres. I contextualize *Wataoni* with common genre definitions such as soap opera and *hōmu dorama* after first having discussed the general place of the *hōmu dorama* genre in the megatext of Japanese television, using gender as perspective. This discussion is in fact, a more analytical way of expressing what was said in Chapter 2. The chapter ends with an analysis of 'gender-talk' and the ways in which the struggle over meanings of gender appear in the empirical material of interviews and questionnaires (6.3).

6.1. Gendered hierarchies of genre

Taking a closer look at genre hierarchies makes it obvious that these hierarchies are deeply gendered. Programmes are ranked depending on genre, and genres are partially valued on the basis of imagined audiencehoods and ways of representing gender. Ranking of programme types depends on at least the kind of 'realism' the programme type employs; the news — and sports — are obviously at the top of the pyramid. In news and sports the gender system appears in its most common sense form as unquestioned, self-evident and assumedly transparent — it is represented in a way that seems plausible, 'normal' and 'real'.

The gendered nature of genre hierarchies has been given attention to by many feminist television scholars, who have especially discussed the 'feminine' kind of television, the 'soap opera' (e.g. Brunsdon 1981, Hobson 1982, Brown 1989, Geraghty 1991). In these studies the expression 'soap opera' has been mostly defined in quite a loose way. Often the definitions have been induced from textual features of certain programmes and by reproducing the implied audience as female. These studies have also discarded production, thus being able to call very different serials as soap. From a production point of view, *Dallas*, The Soap of academic studies, could never have been a soap, as it was broadcast in prime time and was also made with a significant amount of money and resources. Naturally the serial used the conventions of soap, but so does all melodramatic fiction, which includes Westerns, the classical example of 'masculine' genre. 'Soap opera' in feminist studies of television has then come to refer to almost any kind of serial

melodramatic drama that focuses on family and relationships and contains a female audience expectation.

This reproduction of the genre hierarchy also continues in areas other than feminist studies. For instance Tulloch (1990) sees the genre world of television as cut into two for 'masculine' and 'feminine' genres. 'Soap opera' also often appears as the ultimate opposite of news in the hierarchic understanding of genre.

Many feminist television studies have focused on the viewers of soap opera, and emphasised the competencies that the *women* viewers have (Ang 1985, Press 1991). As a result these studies have ended up not only representing women as the 'normal' audience for soap opera, the 'feminine' genre, based on the assumption that the rhythm and narrative of the kind corresponds to the psychological structure of women (Modleski 1990[1982]), but also reproducing the genre hierarchy by saying "look, we know that this is junk, but hey, these women hooked on the crap are still good and sensible people". The message has been that soap opera is actually better than its image because its audiences are actually more clever than they have been thought to be and also have valuable competencies. As Ang and Hermes (1991), among others, argue, the serials might indeed contribute to empowerment and give rise to pleasure or resistance, along with the obvious escapism. In these studies, however, the basic question of genre hierarchy itself is left intact. Thus the project ends in the mere attempt to reverse the hierarchy. As a result, genre hierarchies as structures that take part in maintaining the socio-cultural frame of gender are neither scrutinized nor problematized (cf. Ridell 1998b).

Genre addresses audiences differently depending on the socio-cultural competencies the viewers have. Television institution relies heavily on the commonsensical ideas of what constitute 'women's' programmes and what is aimed primarily at men. Production members work with an internalized idea of the imagined audience, and this frames the making. As a result, genres are produced for gendered audiences, and the way in which gender is represented in the different types of television also depends on genre. As noted, in some genres gender and the division of labour between the sexes is rendered invisible, as a part of 'normal everyday common sense'. In some programme types, however, gender is the very focus of interest, and is an issue that is negotiated.

It is not a coincidence that prime time (*golden time* in Japan) is defined as being in the evening. From the point of view of the television companies it is the time when it is possible to get the largest possible audience. The term prime time, however, is interesting because it seems to carry a value orientation. For commercial television the most important audiences are those that consume the most. According to some theorists (cf. Clammer 1997 among others) women are the ones who consume the most, and whose task is also to

consume. Following this logic then it would seem more plausible that at least in those societies where women with small children are mostly housemothers, the prime time would be the daytime, when it is easiest for these women to watch television. For instance, some of the women I interviewed noted that they are unable to watch *Wataoni* when it is broadcast, and thus always videotape it in order to watch it in the evenings or nights when the rest of the family has gone to bed. Prime time for the television industry, however, is defined as a time when men are also around to watch the programmes.

6.2. *Hōmu dorama* in the megatext

There is an obvious contradiction when a drama that is, after all, quite often considered to be 'good', is less than respected in the genre hierarchy. These issues are intertwined with questions of gender in the text and within production, as well as the descriptions that are used of the types of television texts involved here, such as *hōmu dorama* and soap opera.

During the time I was collecting material on the production of *Wataoni*, Part 3 of the serial was being broadcast. The serial was at the peak of its success, at its highest getting ratings of more than 34 percent per broadcast. Inside the company, however, some of the members of the production were feeling that they were not appreciated accordingly within the company. For instance, a director openly stated that a serial drama focusing on family issues does not gain the respect it should. "When you make a television film on family, it is art, but when you make a serial on same matters it is *hōmu dorama*", he complained, thus implying that being named as *hōmu dorama* is not an indication of appreciation for a serial. The serial form then appears as less valued than a single piece of (artistic) television text.

The *hōmu dorama* genre, for its part, has a two-fold position among other genres. On the one hand, the low appreciation is partly due to the serial form, which is considered 'industrial' and mass-production as opposed to 'unique' works of 'art' by *'auteurs'* (cf. Tulloch 1990, 90). A serial is considered as something less than valuable according to artistic standards; a serial is for masses while a two-hour drama show would be 'art'. (cf. Chapter 5). *Wataoni* is considered a 'good' serial, but it is nevertheless a serial. In the 'artistic' standards it is a better kind of a serial than, for instance, *torendii dorama* and *hirudora*, or day time soap opera. Prime time *hōmu dorama* is better drama compared to these because it is broadcast during the time that the television companies have defined as the most valuable. This kind of distinction between art and mass-products can be detected in many of the interviews.

On the other hand, especially in *Wataoni*'s case it is considered to be 'good' drama (cf. Matsuo 1997). This goodness can be traced back to some (re)presentational features, such as the 'everydayness', the 'traditional' focus on the family, having no sex scenes, etc. There are some other reasons why *Wataoni* in particular is considered as 'good': it belongs to the old and nostalgic genre, with an experienced maker team behind it, and it is produced with a considerable amount of money to be broadcast in prime time "for anybody to watch". As noted in Chapter 2, it can be seen as a part of the way of perceiving the *taishū bunka* as a part of the national culture. It explicitly discusses 'Japaneseness' in its dialogues. A genre that gains the status of being essential to or essentially about national identity obviously will have a special status among other types of programmes[1].

Wataoni in its length has basically gained an institutional status, which has also made it appear as ordinary and usual. Thus, the popularity of *Wataoni* has become so self-evident that it is hardly noticed, which some find unsatisfactory. One of the actresses notes:

> A1: [...] this is really a big thing, and that's why it's awkward that the world is not making a fuss about it. Usually, when a programme has this kind of ratings, the world could make a bit bigger fuss, but it seems that people have got used to this, it has become an every-day phenomenon. It is something like *Sazae-san*[2]. Every week, on Thursday this family appears, that's an inevitability, self-evident. Nobody makes a fuss. There are so many things in the programme and it gets such a good rating, it's a great programme, like people who act in this serial, they are those who usually appear in 2-hour dramas. This kind of people get together to make a programme like this and nobody makes a fuss. As if it would be nothing significant, it just flows without noticing. It's strange. It's strange that's so self-evident. At NHK, a programme like this would have been wished to be seen by many people, a largest possible audience, but this is *mimpo* [private, or commercial television] [..]

The genre hierarchy appears in this excerpt. An indication of the goodness of the drama is referred to by noting that the players also appear in the prestigious two-hour dramas.

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[1] Television news in many countries (especially in those with strong public service television) is a good example of this.

[2] A popular and long-lasting (since 1969) cartoon on Fuji TV. *Sazae-san* is *hōmu dorama* in the form of television animation.

This kind of hierarchy has been illustrated by Tunstall (1993, 111), who presents the reciprocal relationships between the different types of television drama. Although Tunstall's description is from Britain, it does also indicate the situation in Japan.

British TV drama: prestige correlates with cost per audience-hour (Tunstall ibid.)

Format	Audience size	Prestige	Episodes per year	Typical transmission time	Minutes used pay day of filming	1992-3 cost per hour (£000)	Cost per audience hour (p)
Soap	Large	Low	104 or 156	Before 8.30 p.m.	15	100-150	1
Continuing series	Large—medium	Medium	6—15	8 p.m. or after	5	300—800	5—10
Serials (short-series)	Medium	High	3—8	9 p.m. or after	3—5	500—700	10—15
Single drama	Small	High	1	9 p.m. or after	3—4	400—800	15—25

This table sheds some light on the position of *Wataoni* in the drama hierarchy: *Wataoni* is made for prime time. Having a serial form and a considerable audience, it cannot be categorized among the small audience single dramas. This kind of genre hierarchy and way of recognizing the prestige of television programmes follows the logic of traditional public service ideals, and it is not hard to see why these are also so apparent in the material of this study. Tunstall in his study takes this system of prestige as given and unchangeable, as if it were a natural state of affairs. Based on my material, however, I would claim that in Japan there are contradicting ideals now at stake, and that with the fierce competition between public service and private television channels the public service ideals (which are also referred to in the example of the actress's interview above) are no longer the only norm for defining what is good television. The old ideals, nevertheless, are present in the daily production work, and the contradiction between the commercial and public service ideals probably appears unusually clear in a representational space like *Wataoni*, which, as noted, is a serial produced with public service ideals for a commercial television station.

When trying to find explanations for the controversial situation of *Watao-ni* in the genre hierarchy a question of gender comes into play. As Hashida herself openly states, she is writing for women about "women's things". She does this because it is what she knows about. "Men write about men's things, but for them there is no way of knowing how to write about the things I can write about", she puts it.

Hashida and her team are then appreciated within the *hōmu dorama* kind of television, but there are genres 'better' than this one. This appears in many of the maker interviews, where the interviewees express anxiety over the possibility of being 'marked' by the company and colleagues as somebody who is doing *hōmu dorama* and belongs to the 'Hashida family'. Most of the men in the production team felt that they wanted to do something else once this project was over. The most valuable and esteemed serials then appear to be written by men on men's issues, usually meaning 'general' issues of humankind, such as honour or war, love and hate or filial piety and loyalty. Script writers like Yamada Taichi, then, are highly esteemed because of this. His work is mentioned by some of the directors as an example of good television, while *The history of Japanese television drama* (Gotō et al. 1991), although giving space and room for *hōmu dorama* and emphasizing also Hashida's significance there, does not in the final conclusion see her or the kind of television she represents among the most important and precious ones. Despite Hashida's importance within the *hōmu dorama* genre, her domain appears to be on the side of the female genres, with the 'specific' female, not 'general' human focus.

Since genre hierarchy is something that cannot be pinned down and defined permanently — due to the fact that genres and their relationships to each other are constantly moving — it is not only impossible but also pointless to attempt to define an actual location for *hōmu dorama* among other types of television programmes. Nevertheless the valuation of *hōmu dorama* is characterized by several things, one of the important ones being the anticipated audience, and the *narrative image* (cf. Chapter 5) of the genre. *Hōmu dorama* is aimed at women and also mainly watched by women, and is also often in English language literature referred to as soap opera, 'The Feminine Genre'. This happens despite the fact that the makers of *Wataoni* refuse the connection between their programme and the soap opera genre: for them *hōmu dorama* is after all something better than mere soap.

In what follows I will discuss the relationship of *Wataoni* with these two above-mentioned genre typologies: *hōmu dorama* and soap opera. Ruoho (1993a, 82) writes on *Ruusun aika* (The time of roses), a popular Finnish family drama: "because of its narrative structure the serial may be defined as a soap opera but its structures of meaning also refer to melodrama and situation comedy". Currently traditional genre definitions are no longer descrip-

tive of the forms of television, as there is an international tendency to blend the boundaries of both 'fictional' and 'factual' television[3].

As noted in Chapter 3, a genre can never be defined merely through its conventionalized textual features. However, comparing a particular television serial with earlier constructions of television types can help indicate how gender and genre are intertwined in the definitions. The discussion in this chapter then starts with working through definitions of *hōmu dorama* and soap opera, and comparing *Wataoni* with them. These definitions and comparisons are mostly derived from textual features of soap opera and *hōmu dorama*, as defined in literature. In this sense these descriptions in themselves exemplify the difficulties that have been listed concerning the taxonomic definition of genres as discussed in Chapter 3. Despite these problems, I find it illustrative to discuss the serial in relation to these particular genre typologies.

6.2.1. *Wataoni* as *hōmu dorama*

Q: Does the word '*hōmu dorama*' then imply, that it is not good drama?

D2: Well, these days I have somewhat changed my mind and think that as it is Japanese drama that is located in household, there is no other alternative but to call it *hōmu dorama*. But I myself am making 'drama'. There are '*hōmu dorama*' or 'detective stories', but the question is of theme. Police drama is something that portrays the lifestyle of people working in the police. The labels of genres like 'detective stories' are there to attract the audience to enjoy these types, that's why genres are divided. For instance inside detective stories there is a possibility to really look into the awful side of the police work and to see the difficulties of human life through that. I think it would be really great drama, also measured by artistic standards. It is not just shooting

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[3] The idea that genres these days are no longer 'pure', but 'hybrid' forms, is highly problematic. As genres are constructions, it is naturally possible to call something as 'pure' or something else 'hybrid'. However, most often the 'original' and pure forms seem to be considered to be found in the genre system of Hollywood studios. This kind of straightforward way of detection is only fair in the case of US, but on other locations and cultures the development has been more complicated than this. To reduce Japanese – or Finnish – genres into forms that have been derived from Hollywood genres would be quite a violent attempt. All programme types have particular histories which have been developed in close contact with the particular society and culture, despite the fact that impulses, formats and ways of production have been shifting around between cultures, and often do have their starting impulses in the US.

around and making noise. Drama is drama, and calling noise a police drama is not good enough. In an attempt to try to make drama more attractive, there is shooting and car speed, this is a genre. But in these terms, there is no such thing as *hōmu dorama*.

This director first appears to say that *hōmu dorama* is such a wide category that it cannot be defined, and yet he comes to define it as "Japanese drama that is located in household". This definition has two essential concepts: 'Japanese' and 'household'. As already noted, the place of *hōmu dorama,* and *Wataoni* as a part of it, in the genre hierarchy, depends on how the hierarchy is perceived, based on the public service ideals or the commercial logic of privately owned television. At this point I have to emphasize that these ideals do not necessarily locate themselves only in these 'places'. As can be seen in my material, the public service ideals are very much alive in the production of *Wataoni*, produced by a commercial television station. It can also be seen how competition in television has also brought pressures for taking up the commercial logic in public service companies in different countries.

What then are the reasons for calling *Wataoni* a good drama? Among these is the fact that it is perceived as a "typical *hōmu dorama*". It thus fulfils the demands for generic verisimilitude well. *Hōmu dorama,* for its part, is supposed to be close to 'everyday life', and as *Wataoni* is considered to be a typical *hōmu dorama,* it is also seen to answer the demands of cultural verisimilitude. Its way of doing so is perceived as being typical of traditional 'Japanese culture' in particular. In this way the serial (as the whole *hōmu dorama* type of television) strongly takes part in the negotiation over national identity, and as noted, programming having a role in national identity is defined as culturally valuable.

It is important to note that genre-specific features of any programme are produced (and viewed) within a 'cultural context'. Thus the tricky question arises as to which features of the programme follow the genre-related rules and to what extent they actually concern cultural verisimilitude. In the case of *Wataoni* this can be illustrated with an example of the relation between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. On the one hand (on a cultural level) this relationship has traditionally been considered a problematic one among family relationships[4].

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[4] From the 1860's until after the second World War family life in Japan was strictly structured by the *ie seido* family system, or family law, which positioned women (especially the daughter-in-law) at the very bottom of the family hierarchy, and always under the power of a male member of the family, be it father, husband or son.

On the other hand (on the level of genre), as can be seen in Table 1 below, the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law has been a feature of *hōmu dorama* for a long time. As for *hōmu dorama* there is a tendency towards cultural verisimilitude; *Wataoni* also focuses on issues that are considered topical in society. This also appears in the changing focus of the themes: if Part 2 was still mainly about the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law then in Part 3 the focus shifted towards relations between wives and husbands, and the mother-in-law began to be a distracting element that caused trouble for the important relationship between spouses, instead of just causing trouble for the wife. Part 4 seems to have continued the trend Part 3 started, but issues of parent-child relationships have also risen to occupy a more central place; the external impulses coming from the surrounding society in recession appear stronger than in Part 3. Rather than distinguishing between cultural and generic levels in a programme, it is more useful to consider a particular genre as a particular way of representing and reproducing certain cultural and/or social features.

An attempt to create cultural verisimilitude is often represented as the measure of a 'good' programme, and genres are also appreciated depending on their degree of 'realism'. The Japanese viewers of television are said to be especially keen on seeing 'realistic' television serials[5] (Ōyama 1993, 179). In other words the more 'realistic' a programme is (that is, the more accurately it manages to represent the prevailing idea of what is ordinary and normal), the 'better' it is. This way of thinking is based on comparing the realities 'in' and 'outside' a text. As was discussed in Chapter 5, Ang (1985, 36–37) calls this empiricist realism, which is

> wrongly based on the assumption — and this is inherent in empiricism — that a text *can* be a direct, immediate reproduction or reflection of an 'outside world'. This is to ignore the fact that everything that is processed in a text is the result of selection and adaptation: elements of 'real world' function on only as raw material for the production process of texts.

There are, thus, certain (re)presentational features in *Wataoni* that appear to be reasons for its 'goodness': it aims at (both cultural and generic) verisimilitude and hides the constructedness of the text. The makers refuse to call the serial a soap opera, "because all the people in the programme are basically good"[6]. This could mean that *Wataoni* is considered non-melodramatic, not

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[5] The same claim is made of Finnish television viewers (Alasuutari 1991, cf. Valaskivi & Ruoho 1997).

[6] Just as Onoda described (see Chapter 2).

built on self-evident stereotypes or the simple juxtaposition of good and evil (which in a self-evident manner makes it seem 'realistic').

The 'goodness' of the drama is also connected with its 'traditionality'. Therefore, one of the explanations for the 'goodness' of *Wataoni* might be the way it foregrounds traditional ideas, such as family values. It can be considered as pure in the sense that Onoda implied above: it makes hardly any references to sex, and in spite of a divorce or two (and lots of talk about breaking up) it emphasizes the importance of family and family values. *Wataoni* is considered to represent well a cultural verisimilitude of Japanese everyday life, within the limits of generic verisimilitude of *hōmu dorama.* As a result, it is defined as possessing an exceptional status of being about 'the Japanese', and this way is connected with some other forms of popular culture, such as the *enka* songs (cf. Yano 1997, 1998). *Wataoni* is also considered to have a fairly conservative set of values built into it. The serial is constructed on a tautology of realism that "depends on conventions which have successfully achieved the status of being realistic" (Geraghty 1991, 31). Furthermore, there are also features of the 'classic realist text'[7] in *Wataoni*: it clearly aims to conceal its constructed nature, despite the narrator at the beginning and at the end of every episode expressing the 'true' feelings of the characters, saying something like: "Seeing Yayoi with her mother-in-law, Setsuko felt a little bit relieved. Maybe everything would work out after all" (Part 2, #30). The narrator also has the task of leading the story, telling at the beginning and end of each episode what has happened/is about to happen, and also explicating the feelings and motivations of the characters.

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[7]The Screen theorists understood the concept of 'hierarchy of discourses' as referring to concrete elements in the 'classic realist text'. In their definition, this kind of text had a hierarchical structure and produced an illusion of realism (Ang 1985, 38). It was hiding the fact that the text is constructed by a technique of representation – a meta-language that was not regarded as material (MacCabe 1974, 8–9). This way the "constructedness of the text is suppressed" (Ang ib.) to create the illusion of realism. According to the *Screen* theorists the illusion was created through the structure of the text. MacCabe (1974, 8) calls this structure a 'hierarchy of discourses': A classic realist text may be defined as one in which there is a *hierarchy amongst the discourses* which compose the text and this hierarchy is defined in terms of an empirical notion of truth. (My italics.) MacCabe means that the narrative of a classic realist text acts as a meta-language in contrast to the object language, which is the dialogue of the characters in the text. In his view, this can be applied equally well to novels as to films. MacCabe writes: "Through the knowledge we gain from the narrative we can split the discourses of the various characters from their situation and compare what is said in these discourses with what has been revealed to us through narration". (Ib., 10.)

Consequently, in the classic realist text the narrative is what "explains" the text and its meaning to the reader. In a novel the narrative obviously comes from the narrator. In the case of film/television the question is not as simple. MacCabe considers the camera to be the narrator, but this is not a sufficient explanation. In the case of film and television the narrator is produced by editing as well, or in the case of a fictional television programme, by the script and the editing together. These form the effect of "realism" in a text.

Wataoni is in some ways a return to the "heart-warming" *hōmu dorama*. However, it is different from the family dramas of the 1960's and 1970's. It appears to have taken characteristics from both *hōmu dorama* and "anti-*hōmu dorama*" by blending them into a combination that has appeared to be popular. It also has a taste of "bitterness" as noted in Chapter 2. As discussed earlier, there was a change in the style of *hōmu dorama* in the 1980's. The difference between the 'old' and the 'new' type is illustrated in Table 1, borrowed from by Matsuo (1987, 64. My translation), with the addition of an extra column indicating the features of *Wataoni*. Both Matsuo (ibid.) and Toriyama (1993) consider the change of *hōmu dorama* as a transformation of the genre. They seem to be thinking that there is no return to the 'old' *hōmu dorama*. In this sense *Wataoni* comes as a 'surprise', because it is more like the 'old' type than the 'new' one. The appearance of *Wataoni* has not, however, led to the abolishment of the 'new' type of *hōmu dorama*, but quite the contrary, *Wataoni* is on the marginal side. It is, however, interesting that although the makers and also the viewers emphasize that *Wataoni* is particu-

larly traditional in its style, it can be noticed in this table that it has taken up features of the new *hōmu dorama* as well.

Wataoni in between old and new *hômu dorama*.

	1960's and 1970's: hōmu dorama	1980's: new *hōmu dorama*	1990 - 1999 Wataru seken wa oni bakari
Family structure	three generations (*tate* or vertical type)	nuclear family + nuclear family... (*yoko* or horizontal type)	three generations nuclear families single family members
Age of the couple	husband in his 50s wife in her 40s	both spouses in their 30s	couples of all ages (20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s)
Occupation/profession	husband: large company management wife: housewife	both employed: medium size firms, service sector, self-employed	working wives, housewives, self-employed, company employed in both
Phase of the family	'adolescence' (children in high school/university)	period of family formation children not central	families in different phases (children btw ages one to twentysomething)
Relations outside the family	relatives, neighbours (ties through blood and location)	same age acquaintances and friends	mainly relatives, some work-related friends and acquaintances
Place of conversations	discussion over green tea	discussion in living-room (high table)	different places: living-room (low table) kitchen (high table), bedroom
Environment	Tokyo neighbourhood *shitamachi* or old *yamanote*	suburbs, urban 'new town'	Tokyo *shitamachi*-like neighbourhood 'modernized'
Residence	one-storey wooden house	apartment (with balcony)	houses with two storeys, apartments
Source of trouble	inhuman environment (setbacks as events in the storyline)	inhuman people (psychological setbacks)	human environment and people, but setbacks as events
Relation to audience	strong persuasion towards moral precept	sympathetic to experiences	sympathetic educational tone, "making people to think"
Theme of plotline ('realistic theme')	misunderstanding causes trouble — solution	immoral, illicit love affair	difference in opinion and lifestyle — temporary solution
Internal theme ('theme of essence')	loss of paternal rights — mother's rule	intertwined confrontation between spouses	maternal rule confrontation btw spouses
Relationships	confrontation between generations (parent — child, mother-in-law — daughter-in-law)	confrontation btw people of same age: spouses, friends, lovers	confrontation between generations, confrontation between peers
Starting point of the story	gossip	information error	difference in opinion, information error, gossip
Setting	neighbourhood (mainly studio)	workplace (scenes on location)	home, workplace (studio)
The End	"Everything is in peace, and everybody is SO happy!"	At this point there seems to be a solution, but there are doubts...	In this family a problem is solved, but in another there is a new one. Life goes on, and in life there is always trouble.

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Table 1

As the table indicates, *Wataoni* is a compound of the two types of *hōmu dorama*. It has a three-generation **family structure**, but it also has couples that are in their 30s and even older. There are also single people. There are working wives and housewives as well as men **employed** by big companies and self-employed ones. Some of the **families** are in their "adolescence", but then the Okakura parents are an old couple whose children are adults. Some of the daughters are not married, but others are. The families of the married daughters are in different phases.

Relations outside the family are centred around close relatives and friends from work. **Conversations** in *Wataoni* are conducted in different places: often in the kitchen, sitting around a high table and drinking green tea, sometimes in the living-room (low table) over beer or sake, sometimes at breakfast, lunch or dinner (high or low) table and also quite often in the kitchens of the family restaurants. **The environment** is more old Tokyo than suburban, rather Shitamachi than Yamanote. The families mainly reside in their own houses, but the houses are not necessarily wooden. However, one of the Okakura sisters (Satsuki) lives in an apartment-like complex where she and her husband and two children share an apartment with the mother-in-law, while the husband's sister and her children live in the apartment next door. Downstairs they have a Chinese restaurant run by the mother-in-law. The whole complex is owned by the family and they all work in the restaurant.

In *Wataoni* the **sources of trouble** are both external and internal, but more of the former. Problematic situations are caused by both events and mixed feelings. Nevertheless, there is something of the latter as well, as when the eldest daughter of Okakura, Noda Yayoi, is worried about what to do with her life. This psychological trouble is, however, originally caused by her daughter who leaves home in anger and against Yayoi's and her husband's will, or later wants to get married, which is also opposed by Yayoi (Part 2, #29; Part 3, #36 onwards). In Fumiko's case the trouble is caused by her husband's decision to quit his job in a company and start a shop in Part 2, in Part 3 by her mother-in-law's illness, and in Part 4 by her divorce and her son's reactions towards it.

Relation to the audience seems to be mixed as well. There seems to be a tendency towards teaching the viewers to value the family. Nevertheless, the text also provides possibilities of reading it 'against the hegemonic meaning' (cf. Hall 1981, Angus et al. 1994). The **plot** never includes illicit love affairs and there is no explicit sex in the programme. Hugging and kissing (on the cheek) becomes more common in Part 4.

The **internal theme** is a mixture of maternal rule and confrontations between spouses. The spouses appear more or less equal, thus their relation is

not considered a *tate*-type or vertical relationship. However, the basic theme, more important than the relationship between (equal) spouses, is the **relationships** between generations: mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law and mothers (parents) and children.

The question of gossip or information errors as **starting points of the story** seems irrelevant in the case of *Wataoni*. There is no major gossiping, nor does mixed information seem to have a significant role in creating troubles. Troubles seem to start from the differences in opinions and the different standpoints of the characters.

The setting is mainly in the studio.

The end of a one year set is always happy. However, the ends seem forced because the structure of the serial does not call for an ending in the first place. With regard to the end of each episode, there are no completely happy endings, but a doubt always remains. Even when a certain plot ends in a temporarily happy solution, another always comes up to lure the viewers to continue watching the new problem which has just emerged. Technically this is done with the help of the narrator (the soft, reliable voice of a middle-aged man) who says something that fits into the title of the programme: "When there are five grandchildren in the family, there is always something going on" (Part 2, #25).

Matsuo's list is not exhaustive, of course. For one thing, he does not consider representations of men and women and their power relationship. He hints at it by saying that in the 'old' drama there was mother's rule, but that's where he leaves the issue. Neither does he elaborate on the nature of the confrontations between generations or spouses. The nostalgic focus on the family as a basic unit of society obviously brings consequences for the way gender is represented in *Wataoni*. Typical of Hashida Sugako's scripts, the serial places gender at the core of a dispute that focus around two contradicting sets of values. The drama especially discusses the place of women in society by opposing the values seen as traditional with a set of ideas considered new, modern and international. However, as the family in a nostalgic sense is never seriously questioned, the place of Woman tends to be conceived of as the nurturer in the family. In the family of *Wataoni*, there appear to be more open conflicts and confrontations than in the 'old' *hōmu dorama* of the 1970's.

Judged by the criteria of Matsuo's table, *Wataoni* can be considered as a blend of the old and new forms of *hōmu dorama*. Both these forms have some characteristics of soap opera, but it is closer to the 'old' type than the 'new' one. *Wataoni* represents a newer kind of programming, transcending the two earlier types which have served as points of comparison.

Textually the equilibrium in *hōmu dorama* is the everyday life, and the disequilibrium is inaugurated by problems in relationships and often by external (or internal) practical questions and happenings of everyday life. Ba-

sically, however, the equilibrium and disequilibrium are signified within the framework of the family, and the discourses mobilized in the genre are about power in the gender system, the division of labour in the family (and society), education and fostering, reproduction, nursing/care and (hetero)sexuality. (cf. Neale 1980, 20-21; Attallah 1984, 236-237.)

6.2.2. *Wataoni* and 'soap opera'

The feminist approach to soap opera in the Anglo-American world can be seen as divided in two: the psychoanalytical and the cultural studies approaches[8]. As already discussed, studies of television, including research considering 'soap opera', have mainly focused on the audience. The difference in the two approaches has been that the psychoanalytical thread focuses on the text, but is interested in the possible influences this text might have on the audience, while the cultural studies side focuses on 'ethnographic' audience studies.[9]

Soap opera has been considered a feminine form of television and the most 'televisual' form of television programming because it combines the two most important elements of the television aesthetic: 'intimacy' and 'continuity'. Television has also been seen as uniquely suited to deal with characters and interpersonal relations rather than with action and setting. (Modleski 1990[1982], 87.) Andrea L. Press (1991, 18) notes that television (soap opera) narrative works differently from Hollywood film narrative. In a television serial problems are never solved, because the serial must continue. Thus, narrative resolution takes place on the level of individual incidents, never providing the utmost answer to the basic dilemma.

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[8] The former has been influenced by film theories, most strongly by Laura Mulvey and her influential article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975). The psychoanalytical approach to soap opera has been used by Tania Modleski (1990[1982]). The cultural studies approach into a textual study of soap opera has been employed by Charlotte Brunsdon (1981), Dorothy Hobson (1982) and Christine Geraghty (1991). Ang (1985) and Press (1991) among others have studied audiences from a cultural studies perspective.

[9] In Finland textual analysis of television drama has been rare, and there have also been only few audience studies. The only close textual analysis seems to be the work of Ahonen and Rajalahti (1988, 1990), who have studied two American situation comedies. Iiris Ruoho (1992, 1993a, 1993b) has written on Finnish family drama and studied the concept of 'female viewer' through family drama viewing, and Veijo Hietala (e.g. 1992) has some articles touching on the area. Teija Virta (1994), has studied Finnish women as viewers of *Peyton Place* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*, and Lempiäinen & Virtanen (1991) have written about the audience of *Dallas* in Finland. Alasuutari (1991) discusses the hierarchy of genres among Finnish viewers through an empirical study.

According to Modleski (1990[1982], 107), in the classic (male) narrative film the climax functions to resolve difficulties. In contrast to this, soap opera has 'mini-climaxes' that function to introduce difficulties and to complicate rather than to simplify the lives of the characters. This is seen as one of the 'feminine' features of soap opera in contrast to 'masculine' action and news. Soap opera, then, has been considered to be ontologically a 'women's genre', made for women and also watched mainly by women — although ratings show that oftentimes at least a third of the viewership is male. Especially the emphasis of those theorists that rely on the psychoanalytical point of view claims an essential connection between women's life, way of watching television and soap operas. Although I do realize the political importance of the feminist emphasis on women, I find this troublesome because it gives the impression that television viewing would be more problematic for females than males and thus in need of closer attention.

Feminist studies of (soap opera) audiences have had the tendency to glorify the female audience and its ability to read television texts 'against the grain'. This has been an attempt of 'redemptive reading' in order to emphasize 'good' audience instead of the 'bad' text (Brunsdon 1989). As noted, the problem with this approach has turned out to be that it does not question the genre hierarchy itself, but just attempts to reverse it, thereby ending up reinforcing the hierarchy.

Emphasis on 'active audience' and its ability to resist meanings (e.g. Fiske 1987, 1989) leads to a situation where any resistance is interpreted as a sign of active reading of text. Resistance, however, is always directed at something, and unless there is a political aspect included, resistance remains socially futile (Kellner 1995c, 13). Being active does not increase the power of the viewers as such. Actually, the viewers are 'doomed' to being active by the mode of media culture (Ang 1996, 9; cf. also Fetveit 1998). They are active in choosing between programmes and active in making meanings from the programmes; in most cases this does not mean they would be able to choose a programme that is not there or to actually influence the contents of a programme. However, the fabric of pleasure and empowerment that television entertainment can be part of should not be underestimated. If compared with the hopeless powerlessness that, for instance, television news generates in their audience (Ridell 1998b, 20) one can see a difference.

Studies of television have gradually widened the usage of the term 'soap opera' so as to cover a wide variety of television drama. Originally soap opera (in the context of television) was considered to be only day-time, low-budget, continuous drama sponsored by soap firms (cf. e.g. Spiegel 1992, 77). Since then the definition of the genre expanded to also include prime-time serials, which are supposed to use conventions of soap opera as well. Hietala (1992, 32) finds three main groups of soap opera:

1) "Genuine" American daytime soaps with middle class surroundings and small budget. These dramas go on for years and are shot almost exclusively in a studio (e.g. *The Bold and the Beautiful*, although it has partly an upper class milieu).

2) American prime-time melodramas with big budget, impressive glamour and some suspense and action (e.g. *Dallas, Dynasty, Falcon Crest*).

3) British "realistic" serials, which are considered by their makers as producing "TV realism" instead of being soap operas.

Along the lines of these categories Hietala notes that common features of all these soap opera categories seem to be their continuous nature, emphasis on emotional conflicts and a large number of characters.

Wataoni fulfils these criteria, except that its continuity is limited. Nevertheless, *Wataoni* does not fall into any of the three categories, although it might be close to the third one. It is not British, for sure, but the makers refuse to call the programme a soap opera and state 'realism' as their goal, as was discussed above.

Geraghty (1991) focuses on prime-time soap operas and divides them into the US and British varieties. According to her, the most significant difference between them is that British soaps aim at cultural verisimilitude, whereas the US ones do not. In addition, for the latter generic verisimilitude is more important than cultural, as for example in the case of *Dallas*. Ang (1985, 41) interprets this differently. For her, US soap, especially *Dallas*, aims at emotional realism, which can be considered a part of cultural, or rather social, verisimilitude: it correlates with the emotional experiences of the viewers, although the narrative level is mostly 'unrealistic'.

Modleski (1990[1982]) among others, has also compared soap opera to traditional realist narrative, which is constructed so as to have a beginning, a middle and an end. In this comparison soap opera realism has proven different, for it has neither a beginning nor an end, only a never-ending middle. Individual plotlines can end, even the broadcasting of the serial can end, but that is beside the point. Soap opera narrative is not directed towards an end. The viewer knows most of the time what is going to happen, and thus the events as such are not important. Instead what is important are the reactions of the characters when the action actually takes place.

When considered within the narrative framework Modleski offers, *Wataoni* is not a soap opera. Firstly, it is scheduled for a certain period: it was first broadcast for a year and later scheduled for another year three times. This means that the programme has a beginning and an end. Nevertheless, the narrative between the beginning and the end is more or less a "never-ending middle" in a narrative sense. "Life goes on, and there is always some kind of trouble" could be the motto of the programme. Secondly, the serial structure

of *Wataoni* is very clear: nothing happens between episodes, the narrative always continues from the point where it ended the previous week.

Mary-Ellen Brown (1989, 167) lists eleven generic characteristics of soap opera:

1) The centrality of female characters
2) Serial form which resists narrative closure
3) Multiple characters and plots as well as multiple points of view
4) Use of time which parallels actual time and implies that the action continues to take place whether we watch it or not
5) Abrupt segmentation between parts
6) Emphasis on problem solving, and intimate conversation in which dialogue carries the weight of the plot
7) The portrayal of many of the male characters as 'sensitive men'
8) The characterization of female characters as powerful, often in the world outside home
9) The home, or some other place which functions as home (often a hospital), as the setting for the show
10) Plots which hinge on relationships between people, particularly family and romantic relationships
11) Concerns of non-dominant groups being taken seriously

If soap opera is defined in these terms, *Wataoni* appears to be one. If considered paragraph by paragraph, the list can be evaluated as follows:

1) Female characters in *Wataoni* are central.
2) *Wataoni* follows serial form in the limits of a certain time period.
3) *Wataoni* has multiple characters and plots. Multiple points of view are expressed by listening at times to mothers-in-law, at times to daughters-in-law, at times to children, to the husband, etc.
4) *Wataoni* does not use time which parallels to actual time since it is not broadcast every day and has leaps in time inside episodes. Nevertheless *Wataoni* implies that action continues whether we watch it or not, since the serial always continues from the point where it ended the previous week, and each episode ends with a 'cliff-hanger'.
5) Segmentation between parts is not very abrupt in *Wataoni*. Each episode tends to focus on two, or maximum three plots, and cuts be-

tween these are fairly rare. Nevertheless, segmentation exists in the programme.

6) The emphasis on intimate conversation and problem-solving through dialogue is very strong in *Wataoni*.

7) Male characters in *Wataoni* are mainly portrayed as 'sensitive' men. In fact most of them are portrayed as suffering from *mazā-kon*[10], or mother complex.

8) Female characters in *Wataoni* are strong and powerful, mainly inside the home. However, most of them (by Part 4) do have their professions and get satisfaction from working outside the home or in the family business.

9) The home is a very central setting for *Wataoni*. Besides the home, the family businesses are important settings. In Part 2 one of the Okakura sisters worked in a hospital.

10) *Wataoni* is about family relationships. Romantic relationships are rare and suggestive, though more frequent towards Part 4.

11) *Wataoni* takes the concerns of women seriously. Thus, if women are considered a non-dominant group, the programme takes seriously at least one such group. The main concerns, however, are family concerns. The view is not only a better life for women in the family, but a better life for the family itself and through that "all Japanese".

In spite of using these conventions of soap opera, *Wataoni* shows differences as well; for instance close-ups are rare. Soap opera is said to emphasize a process rather than a project and a pleasure that is cyclical rather than climactic and final. The concrete manifestations of process and deferment in soap opera are talk and facial expressions. In soap operas spoken words are important and so are facial close-ups. This is to make the viewers experience the emotions of the characters and also to give them time to think of the motivations behind the emotions. (Fiske 1987, 183.)

Especially US soap opera is said to be characterized by intensive close-ups: every scene ends with a close-up that mediates the feelings of the character to the viewers. Hietala (1992, 32) compares this practice with the Swedish

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[10] *Mazā-kon* or 'mother-complex', is a term introduced by Ueno Chizuko in the 1980s. It spread throughout public discussions and is now used as a term to refer to (adult) sons under the power of their mothers. For Ueno (cf. 1997, 285-288) the term is a description of the gender-segregated system of Japan, where women and society define woman's primary role as that of wife and mother. This combined with the absent father and the fact that girl children are still considered to be part of another family after marriage, leaves the son as the primary focus of the mother's attention. This role is twofold: (in an ideal case) the mother drives the son through education into good positions in the society and the son takes care of the mother in her old age. This is said to be necessary in a society where welfare systems are lagging behind. (Ueno, ibid.)

Rederiet, which is also called a soap opera. Hietala notes that close-ups of this kind are not systematically used in it, which supposedly diminishes emotional identification and estranges the viewer to a position where s/he is an observer of the unfolding plot. This is the case with *Wataoni* as well: it uses no extreme close-ups[11]. As a result, the plot and the lines seem to be more important than the feelings of the characters.

Instead it seems that the feelings – or more generally moods – the viewers of *Wataoni* are 'supposed' to feel in a certain situation are mediated to them through music. When a mother suddenly announces that the girl on her right has promised to get married to her son, sitting on her left, and the son is as surprised of the announcement as the rest of the party (Part 2, #24) there is humorous music in the background showing the comical aspect in the otherwise awkward situation, with a mother-in-law to-be arranging the lives of the young, the son suffering from *mazā-kon* and being unable to resist. Thus a dominant mother and a mouse-like son are signified as amusing.

6.3. Perceptions of gender

6.3.1. Perceptions of gender in production and reception

'Masculine' production and 'feminine' reception.

> Q: Are there a lot of female script writers?
> AP: Until now women have been only few. Previously most of the writers have been male. But now it seems that among young writers there are more women. I don't know if that has been studied inside the profession, but it seems that more women come up. I think this is a good thing. But I wish them not to stop watching.

This excerpt of the AP's interview shows the gendered division of labour in production and reception, and in a wider scale, production and consumption: even though more women will eventually come into the field of tv work, their main task is still watching, or consuming the products. Not only are there only a minority of female makers in television productions, also on a more conceptual level production is considered as being an active, mascu-

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[11] There are exceptions since Part 3, when one of the ADs was promoted to director. He took two new camera movements into the repertoire of visual expression means of *Wataoni* when in episode 36 he zoomed in on a character's face and ended in an extreme close-up. These movements are nevertheless used only exceptionally.

line enterprise as opposed to the passive, feminine 'reception' of television (cf. Huyssen 1986).

Some theorists have been eager to prove that it is actually the consuming women who are the active ones, not through taking part in production, but through their role as consumers. For instance John Clammer (1997, 56) writes: "women lead social change not through production but through consumption, and major shifts in the market are attributable to this factor, and not to the tastes of creativity of their generally more conservative male partners and colleagues."

Clammer (1997) thus perceives the dynamics of a society (Japanese society) in terms of consumption. He sees consumption as a source of self-definition and even resistance, and social change taking place through market shifts. He notes that consuming the world becomes equal to experiencing the world, if only in the forms of tourism, media use and ethnic food. Quite contradictorily, he, however, also notes that consumption keeps people in their places, as it allows resistance only on a small scale.

Central in consuming media products, as well as in the consumption of goods in general, are the affective aspects; consuming appears to connect to desires, feelings and emotions, rather than rationality. It is not so much a question of obtaining information — this should be self-evident, but often is not when talking about the media consumption — as a question of experiences and feelings.

As in theories of cultural studies audience research focusing on the power and active possibilities of the audience, celebration of the consumer's power can lead into overt optimism. Consumers can make "market shifts" happen, but they can never consume something that does not exist. Consumers' power is always defined by the production and the industry, even if the production would not exist without consumption.[12] For research then, more important than the study of consumption patterns — which often comes to benefit industries' aims to sell more — would be seeing the interrelated connections between production, products and consumption, and the possible breaks there might be in this system for the favour of 'consumers' power'.

In relation to television a few things should thus be stressed: The structure of the television industry positions the viewers in the place of consumers, rather than that of participants. Members of the audience in general only get to vote with their remote controls. They have no access into decisions of scheduling and programming, mainly having no say on the agenda either.

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[12] This, obviously, was already Marx's (1973[1857]) idea. (See also Hall 1974.)

[13] If the viewers are to take part, the "part" is set out in advance: they can order products through tv-shopping, vote for a favourite music video or "give their opinion" about this or that, usually with the option of voting "yes" or "no".

Thus, their role and duty is to consume, not to take part[13]. The audience can also be active in making meanings from particular television programmes, but it is — as is the production — tied to common sense perceptions of plausibility and verisimilitude, both cultural and generic. They do have the possibility for "resistance" (Fiske 1987), if this means shouting back at the set and disagreeing one-sidedly with what is going on. If, however, the definition of resistance includes the aspect that it should also lead into something (Kellner 1995b), only few, if any genres of television can or will offer opportunities to this. This, of course, is also related to the nature of television as a medium.

Typical of the Japanese way of perceiving gender is to contextualize the issue through age and the phase of life one is in. There is a clear difference in whether one is a student (*gakusei*) or a grown-up member of society (*shaka-ijin*). Especially young, single women are considered as those who consume the most. Their consumption pattern is supposed to change when they marry, as they often retire from work to have children. They consume all the way but the range of consumed goods supposedly changes from expensive fashion brands and trips abroad, from *torendii dorama* and fashion magazines to baby goods, mother-magazines, children's programs and family dramas. (cf. Clammer 1997, Skov & Moeran 1995, also Bardsley 1997.) The role of consumer is mostly reserved for women, as when young men become grown up members of the society their task is mainly to provide money for the consumption needs of the family, and to take part in the production.

People of a certain age and gender are then supposed to have certain consumer behaviour concerning media products. Magazines and television dramas are designed to appeal to certain audiences, who at the same time are also consumers of the products being advertised in these contexts. (Clammer 1997.) The production companies make use of particular consuming competencies of certain audience segments, and also presume that these competencies change when the phase of life and lifestyle change. For Kellner (1995b), in contrast, audiences for television (or any media) are produced through social relations. In his view culture takes part in producing the audiences and their 'reception' of texts: patterns for acting as an audience are produced by social institutions, practices, ideologies and usages of different media.

Family values. Being a family serial, it is obvious that 'family' is a word that surfaces often in the interviews of *Wataoni* makers. The genre then seems to invite a 'family approach', which certainly frames the making of the serial.

As noted, a big part of the narrative image of the serial is condensed in the talk about 'the Hashida family'. The production often uses this as a joke when referring to themselves. However, there are also those members who

comply with the idea of the team as a family, and note that the working community does make a group which is like a family, 'for better or worse'.

> D1: [..] I have wife and a child, but if I compare the time I spend with my wife and the time I spend with everybody here at work, after starting this one-year project, I've been here much more than at home. Some time ago we had a barbecue party with staff and also our families came. [..]

The production staff members, however, distinguish themselves from the Hashida family 'proper', which includes people familiar to the audience: Hashida herself and the actors and actresses. They have appeared on the Japanese television screen for years, some for tens of years as different characters but with familiar faces. This is probably the reason why the label 'Hashida family' is considered first and foremost to be a part of the PR and not a description of the daily production work.

Mothers and wives. Although most of the staff members are only remotely related to the Hashida family on the screen, the relations among the staff are also described in kinship terms: on the one hand, the producer Ishii Fukuko is characterized by two of the directors as being 'like a mother'. She herself, on the other hand, refers to herself as *kanai* or the wife, literally 'the person inside the house'.

> IF: Producer's work is wife's work. The director is the husband. So my job as the producer is to support the husband. It is possible – well, these days producers are appearing more and more in the foreground, but [in my opinion] the producer's job is *kanai*'s work. That is why a producer who makes a fuss of [himself/herself] in good times is no good [..] If there are problems, then the producer should step forward to solve them in order to keep the [..] work running smoothly.

At the same time as Ishii describes her relationship as a producer to the directors of the serial she draws a picture of a fairly conservative understanding of a wife's role as somebody who stays behind the scenes. Likewise her view is that the producer — as a wife — should step into the front line *in time of trouble*. This sense of responsibility and power would seem to belong to the position of a mother (whose sons are allowed to play outside by themselves, but when there is trouble, she comes running to solve the problem), rather than a wife in the sense that it is understood at least in the romantic ideal of a love marriage. The linguist Ide Sachiko (1997, 38; 42) would probably explain Ishii's account by referring to 'motherly love' or *boseiai* that the

former sees as being specific in its significance within Japanese society and gender relations:

> The function of *boseiai* is not confined to the relationship between mother and child. The bonding of couples is often founded on *boseiai*. It is a fundamental social relationship, which is central to the female identity in Japanese society. Women don't consider *boseiai* as oppressive or something to be overcome. [..] Within this system men are always little boys. They are dependent on their mothers until they marry, and then the wife takes up the *boseiai* role in relation to the husband, and later towards her children.

Ide (ibid.) considers *boseiai* as fundamental to all social interaction in Japan (cf. Nakane, 1970, 127-128; Allison 1994, 107-113). In my work, however, I rather look at it as a discursive way of defining gender relations — which naturally also has an effect on social interaction. When referring to her own work experience in positions of leadership, Ide (1997, 42) emphasizes her aspiration to put *boseiai* into play in her relations with her subordinates.

Ide's views have been criticized for taking a common sense notion of motherhood which keeps women in their place by subordinating them with praise (cf. Aoki, 1997). These common sense views are those used also by the staff of *Wataoni* and the producer Ishii to make sense of their professional relationships. The presence of a strong woman seems to be easiest to explain with kinship terms, which by implication returns womanhood to its 'natural' domain: the family.[14]

Wataoni, as it appears on the screen, certainly reinforces the mythical *boseiai*. Following the conventions of *hōmu dorama* in late 1960's and early 1970's, it focuses on strong women, who bear most of the responsibility for the family and often also for the family business. At the same time there is a tendency to emphasize the perseverance of women, which Aoki (1997, 26) considers a discursive structure used as a "Japanese style of discrimination" in which the "compassion of the powerful is prerequisite to the self-sacrifice of the powerless".

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[14] There is the often-heard discourse of the Japanese company being like a family in taking care of its employees (cf. Nakane, 1970), and also in the world of television production the producer is frequently seen to have a 'parenting' position, no matter the biological sex. Despite this kind of common rhetoric, men never call their workmates 'brothers'. One can speculate on a reversed situation: the distinguished boss might occasionally be called a father, as in the case of Takarazuka theatre (cf. Robertson 1998). He would probably also describe himself as being like a father to his employees, but never a husband.

Here we begin to see how the genre-specific features in *Wataoni* intersect with the cultural expectations of gender. Hashida and Ishii produce an ideal world of family where strong women act as agents of their lives, while representing themselves accordingly in talking about their professional careers. As Ide (1997) also emphasizes, being a boss and a woman can be difficult for all those involved. Consequently, 'soft', motherly means of using power come in handy — this is how women in power can *seem* 'less dangerous'[15] — or at least naming the use of power in these terms renders it more acceptable. Ishii, in fact, does not differ from any other producer in the sense that she does have the financial responsibility for the show and is also keen on achieving good ratings with her programmes. Thus there is no reason to believe that she would be any less willing, for example, to change the composition of her crew, than any male producer, should this seem desirable or necessary. She also does have the power within the production and as well as the means to use it. The way of talking about this power is, however, framed by gendered kinship terms.

The way the production is characterized in family terms reinforces an interpretation of gender as a self-evident ideological construction which invites subjects to 'self-represent' themselves into acting along (de Lauretis 1987, 12). Resisting the invitation is possible and even probable, but yet more or less all people hear the invitation. In this way a common sense notion of gender helps to define the relationships in the production. The narrative image of the drama as the *Hashida famiri* further takes part in generating talk of kinship-like relations inside the production.

In this way meanings of gender — cultural womanhood and manhood — 'play' the production team members. The *hōmu dorama* genre invites the producers to keep the family as the ultimately unquestioned base. The majority of the staff only takes up the invitation as a professional challenge, not as a personal invitation to enter the Hashida world. They are nevertheless closely affiliated with this world and the Hashida family because most of the staff members, similar to the actors and actresses, have been making 'Hashida dramas' for years and tens of years. Furthermore, in their professional and personal lives they live within the institutional and cultural constraints upon and perceptions of manhood and womanhood, which are also (re)presented, circulated, and reproduced in the 'Hashida world' of the serial.

The conception of what is a good wife and a good mother also implicitly surfaces in many of the viewer interviews. This happens especially when

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[15] *Boseiai* ideology is also reinforced in the fact that most women who choose to pursue a career either never marry or at least never have children. In the *Wataoni* production all the men except for the two youngest assistant directors were married with children, and none of the three women, including the secretary, had any children, whether or not they were or had been married. Most of the actresses do not have children either.

talking about Nagako, the youngest Okakura daughter. She is often referred to as being too selfish, and too focused on her work.

> Sueko: She always talks about work, work, work, although her work isn't such a big deal in the first place. [...]
> Mika: You mean the one, who swaggers? Saying to her husband "we can't survive with your salary only"? And her husband is a doctor! There is no way that his salary wouldn't be enough. We just talked about that. She is working just for her own fun. (Group 4)

This piece of conversation shows a perception of the wife's income being only supplementary, and if extra money is not absolutely necessary the wife should focus on her children and home. Nagako is altogether among the most disliked characters in the questionnaire answers of both men and women. Another disliked character is Kuniko, divorced sister of Isamu at Kōraku, as she is seen as "selfish, doesn't care for other people, self-centred, irresponsible". (See Appendix 5, Table 7.) Both Nagako and Kuniko are young, both have children and yet also have interests outside the home. Yōko, Nagako's career-minded and single sister, does not cause strong reactions among the viewers. She is probably considered to be on a different track in life. She is career-oriented, and has no children, and is thus allowed to come and go as she pleases. In a way she is in between stages in her life. Becoming a *shakaijin*, or adult member of society means not only finishing one's studies, but also founding a family, and in the case of women, becoming a mother.

In the serial Kuniko's credibility as one able to bear the responsibility of a proper mother appears to increase temporarily when she finds a man to support her and her children. In Part 3 this was made to show in her appearance, after she had quit her job as a hostess in a night-club. Her lavish and colourful dresses changed suddenly into calm knitwear. "Now she is staying at home and the dress is to make the feel of a mother", commented WD at the production.

It is not surprising that the most liked character is the motherly figure of Setsuko, most often together as a couple with her husband Daikichi. Setsuko is described by the viewers as being the ideal mother, friendly, having five daughters, but yet being independent. Some women note that they feel close to her because of their own situation in life, or that they feel sympathy to-

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[16] Many of the makers also mention Setsuko, or the Okakura couple, as their favourite character(s) in the serial. This, however, is also an act of being impartial. The actress who played the part of Setsuko had the role of a self-evident leader among the other players. In that sense she was the 'mother' also outside the set. It would then have been taking sides if the makers would have named somebody else as their favourite, especially if that had been one of the 'Okakura sisters', as these five actresses are said to be competing with each other for popularity, and prestige inside the production.

wards her as a wife and a mother. She is also referred to as a character who teaches.[16] (See Appendix 5, Table 6.)

The viewer responses indicate that a good wife and mother is still primarily responsible for taking care of the home and family. Only if time and resources allow can she work outside the home after the family and its needs have been taken care of. Setsuko appears as an ideal mother, because she has started working only after her daughters have grown up and left the home. Besides, she works in the family enterprise together with her husband.

These kinds of ideals of womanhood date back to the Meiji Civil Code, which was operative from 1898 to 1947. This was an important part of the Meiji Restoration, a project of state formation and nationalism. For women *ryōsai kenbo* or the Good Wife and Wise Mother was "codified as the model of 'female' gender". Discourses of gender, femininity and sexualities were closely linked to nationalism and state formation. (Robertson 1998, 14-15; 61-62.) It is therefore worth noting, that one of the men in the questionnaires says that she likes the mother[17] the most, because "she is wise and gentle mother, typical *ryōsai kenbo* or good wife and wise mother".

6.3.2. Perceptions of gender inside and outside the text

Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. As described in Chapter 6.2.1, the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is a classic theme of *hōmu dorama*. Originally in *Wataoni* the relationship was used as a whirl that brings into discussion questions about power and the division of work in the family. The power of the mother-in-law over other family members is the one discussed and negotiated in plotlines involving this relationship. Certain cultural perceptions of the relationship function as the basis for the negotiation.

One of the actresses notes, concerning the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship:

> A1: That's something so deeply rooted. Deeply rooted in the national character and identity. Something that is traditional, something that everybody is saying. The system is changing, but basically the eldest son is responsible for the parents[..] and the *yome* has to listen to what

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[17] Here he refers to Yamaoka, the actress, rather than the character of Setsuko. As discussed in Chapter 5, the *Wataoni* players are better known than their characters in any particular serial. They are also known for always playing particular types, Yamaoka being the eternal mother.

the *shūtome* says. If one tries to ignore these, then one is considered weird or something, that's unavoidable.

'To go as a bride', *yome ni iku*, is an expression for a woman getting married. Until 1947 this meant that the bride became a member of her married family, her name being erased from the register of her father's family and added to her husband's family register: a matrimony was thus an alliance of two families. For the bride, the daughter-in-law, this meant that she was "to go irrevocably into her husband's home, never to return except for formal visits". (Cherry 1987, 73.) *Yome ni iku* is still an expression which is often used when discussing women getting married. The groom 'receives the bride' (*yome o morau*) and the groom's family 'takes a bride' (*yome o toru*), while the bride's family 'disposes of' (*kazukeru*) a daughter. Since 1947 every married couple has started a family register of their own and marriage is officially an alliance of two equal persons, which is why these words seem somewhat old-fashioned. Nevertheless, these expressions are still used in ordinary conversations. (Ibid., 73–74.) An actress also brought them up in the interview:

> A1: In Japan, there is the saying *oyome ni iku*, this means getting into that family's home, into *koseki*[18]. That's why it is natural [for the *yome*] to follow the rules of that family, that's how I think, although that's a bit old-fashioned way of thinking. [..]

The word for bride, *yome*, is usually translated as daughter-in-law, since the word implies more of a relationship with the groom's family than with the groom: the character meaning *yome* combines the characters for 'woman' and *ie*, which means both house and home. It is still a common practice that the *yome* should take care of the husband's elderly parents. This practice, however, is changing and many parents prefer having their own daughter to care for them.

The word for mother-in-law, *shūtome*, is written by combining the characters of 'woman' and 'old'. The word is applied to the husband's mother. The word "creates a powerful position that loomed larger than life in the traditional Japanese family structure". The mother-in-law was the one who trained the young daughter-in-law into *kafū*, the family ways. The eldest son inherited the homestead and was responsible for taking care of his old parents, which in practice meant that his wife was responsible for them. (Ibid., 133.)

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[18] The family register.

Even currently a majority of three-generation households consist of parents and their son's family, though sharing a home with a daughter is becoming more popular. Most of the Japanese elderly live with their children and grandchildren, so mother-in-law conflicts are notorious. A classic Japanese scenario pits the husband's mother against the wife. (Ibid.) Proverbs like 'daughter-in-law and mother-in-law are like dogs and monkeys' (*Yome to shūtome, inu to saru*), demonstrate the problems of the relationship. In feudal times the daughter-in-law was often treated like a slave who had to obey her mother-in-law without questioning. Those days are long gone, and many older women prefer to live separately from their daughters-in-law since nowadays the young wives are said to dominate their *shūtome*. Nevertheless, the word *shūtome* still has its tyrannical implications, which is why many prefer to call their mother-in-law 'husband's mother'. (Ibid., 134.) *Shūtome* is not a term used to address the mother-in-law. The daughter-in-law usually calls her *okāsan* or 'mother', while the mother-in-law refers to the daughter-in-law by her given name or by the name added with *san*.

Themes for handling the mother-in-law — daughter-in-law relationship in *Wataoni* are, among others: mother-in-law as the dominant figure, husband in between his wife and mother, daughter-in-law as the outside threat and the match-making mother-in-law. In this kind of plotlines the mother-in-law is often the representative of old and sometimes old-fashioned views on gender and womanhood, which are then challenged by the daughter-in-law. There are also themes that challenge the 'normal' setting where the mother-in-law is the one with power. In these kinds of plotlines the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law team up behind the back of the husband/son, or the mother-in-law mediates between the husband and wife in a situation of difference in opinions. (cf. Valaskivi 1995, 62-93.) In these plotlines the question is also often about older and newer ideas about the division of labour between the sexes, but the mother-in-law does not necessarily represent the old-fashioned ideas, or the old ideas can be represented in a positive light in these cases.

After seven years and three one-year sets of the serial, the textual focus in the serial has shifted from the mother-in-law — daughter-in-law relationships to the relation between husbands and wives. As the viewers note, the traditional juxtaposition appears somewhat old-fashioned, and thus a different emphasis in relationships is part of the interplay of similarity and difference that is necessary for any genre and programme to survive. The relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is nevertheless classic for *hōmu dorama*, and thus necessary as well.

There has also appeared a clearer juxtaposition between 'traditionally' Japanese ways of perceiving gender and 'newer' ideas. This distinction is no longer necessarily tied to any specific characters or generational features. As described, a 'modern' city mother can turn out to be possessive and can

demand that her daughter devote her life to her parents, while the daughter has a desire to move to the countryside to live a simple and hardworking life. At the same time an old aunt living permanently in the Hawaii possesses knowledge for solving family problems just because she has been living in the "rational America". (Part 3, #36 onwards.)

Nevertheless, the traditional setting still appears to be — at least in the eyes of the viewers — that the mother-in-law is the figure of power in the serial. According to some viewers these kinds of representations of the mother-in-law — daughter-in-law relationship in the serial have become more or less old-fashioned by now. Especially old-fashioned appears Satsuki's and her mother-in-law's relationship. In Group 3 the Higashi family women note that not only do young women refuse to be treated badly by their mothers-in-law, also mother-in-laws these days attempt to understand the younger generations' ways of perceiving the world. "In the old days the mother-in-law was always and unquestionably the strongest", says Reiko. "Yes, that's how we were raised and that's how we lived", says her mother, Kiku. Despite the supposed outdatedness of the relationship, it nevertheless is recognizable and causes passionate comments and obviously also strong feelings among some viewers.

> Reiko (talking about the situation at Kōraku in *Wataoni*): It is really impossible how mean those people are in that family. The mother-in-law always takes the side of her daughter. It might be so that one's own children are always more important, but the mother-in-law does not realize that in the long run the daughter-in-law is the one who will be there, when her own daughter is long gone. (Group 3)

Reiko seems to put into words the feeling of many female viewers of *Wataoni*. Although in the questionnaires (see Appendix 5, Table 7) there are both men (although few) and women who mention as the most disliked character either Nagako or Kuniko, only women mention disliking Kimi, Satsuki's mother-in-law. This character and her relationship with her family and daughter-in-law are obviously something that speaks to the female audience in particular, as none of the men (in interviews or questionnaires) has mentioned Kimi as the one they would dislike (or like) the most. In the script Kimi is obviously written as 'bad'. Her nastiness, however, does not seem to address the male audience, and the feelings of hate, dislike and injustice that Kimi's figure seems to raise in some female viewers do not appear as relevant for the male respondents. They are more agitated by the young mothers who appear to behave in an "irresponsible" way, as described above. Nevertheless, the makers tell stories of hate-letters that the actress playing Kimi receives because her character is so bad, and the maker team feels sorry for

the well-natured and friendly actress who has to carry the load of the nasty character.

The daughter-in-law Satsuki, is also mentioned as a disliked character both in the questionnaires and in the interviews, where she is considered "too good" of a daughter-in-law by some of the female viewers. This further emphasizes the fact that the relationship is seen as old-fashioned among the viewers.

There are, however, those women who see the matter the other way around, and for instance dislike Yayoi because she appeared to be a good daughter-in-law but turned out not to be. There are also those, who like Satsuki just because of her extreme goodness. These kinds of very opposite opinions demonstrate that the viewers do read television programmes according to the 'preferred meaning'. As discussed earlier, Hashida is famous for building her serials on cultural juxtapositions, including especially the mother-in-law — daughter-in-law relationship. In 1970 her *Tonari no shibafu* was said to force daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law to watch television in altogether different rooms, in order to avoid arguments.

It is worth noting here that the issue in the above-mentioned viewer opinions is nevertheless the 'goodness' of the daughter-in-law: whether she is too good or good enough. Moreover, 'goodness' of the mother-in-law is not the issue, although demands for her being 'kind' are made. Consequently, some asymmetry still prevails in the relationship and the traditional power setting still appears as recognizable for the viewers.

Husbands and wives. In the Higashi family (Group 3), a clear-cut division of roles can be detected when it comes to watching of *Wataoni*. The mother, Kiku, watches the serial every time, and obviously has a strong attachment to it. She also thinks the serial is something typically Japanese. Her husband, Michio, is very strongly of the opposite opinion. He considers the serial as something that "idle middle-aged women watch when they have nothing else to do". He also states that men do not watch the serial. When told that according to statistics about one third of the viewership is male, he comes up with an explanation:

> Michio: At home the tv-set [is located] for instance in the *chanoma*[19]. Because it's cold, everybody gathers there. Then [what about] the tv-programme, who really decides what is watched? That's usually *okāsan*, the mother. [..] Well, there are exceptions, like in the baseball-

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[19] The Japanese style living room.

season, father might insist on watching baseball. But recently, women are getting so strong. Father cannot watch what he wants, and then he watches whatever is on. So, young men, they really don't watch [*Wataoni*], that's what I think.

In this family the problem has been solved by having several television sets.

When I was working in another town[20] and returned home only occasionally, we watched television together and it was always these trivial Hashida dramas. I got so fed up, that I decided it would end. Now we have five tv-sets at the house.[21]

He emphasizes that his hate for the Hashida family and Hashida dramas is justified just because of these experiences when they only had one set and he had to watch the dramas with his wife.

Michio: So of course I don't watch them myself. I don't even think of watching them. But this time I was asked for this interview, and I watched this Izumi-character after an age.

When he has let out his hostility towards the programme he starts explaining the plotline, and it appears that he has also found things that have been interesting and positive for him. There are even points where he and Kiku agree on the nature of a character. "He is a decent child", they both note on Shin, Satsuki's son. Michio, however, emphasizes how all the men in the serial are spineless. He says that he feels anxious when watching these men who do not clearly order their families to do things, but only follow the much stronger women. This is something that he finds un-Japanese and unrealistic, despite the fact that he had just noted that "recently women are getting so strong" that men cannot decide what to watch on television.

This interviewee's view on the Japanese gender system then contradicts the one represented in *Wataoni*. In his perception men should be portrayed stronger and as heads of families, not as weak and led by stronger women.

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[20] Uses the expression *tanshin funin.*

[21] As the wife and daughter are present, it is obvious that the way the husband is talking about the matter also involves internal family relationships. From here the interviewees move on to describing where the tv sets are. The set in the room where the interview takes place turns out not to be a tv, but a *karaoke*-set. This gives the wife a reason to scold her husband for his media consumption habits. She says that he always used to say that there is nothing more stupid than *karaoke*, and then he went and bought that thing anyway. It seems that she is attempting to get back at him for his having criticized a serial that is important for her.

He emphasizes the artificiality of the drama, and says that it feels forced. This brings attention to the mode of address of the serial: it alienates a middle-aged man, whereas a middle-aged woman, his spouse, finds it relevant, important and pleasurable. "I can't feel a naturalness in the serial", he says, "I feel the artificiality right away", while Kiku — as other women in other interviews (e.g. Sueko in Group 4) and questionnaires — focus on how much the serial is like everyday life, and how Japanese the serial is. Despite emphasizing the everyday-likeness of the serial and despite also liking the Okakura couple as their favourite in the serial, some viewers also note that the couple is too good to be true. "Their life is too beautiful to be real, especially considering that they are already an elderly couple", notes Sueko.

'Change' and 'loss'. The shift of the main theme away from the mother-in-law — daughter-in-law focus towards the husband–wife relationship demonstrates the importance of 'realism' in the *hōmu dorama* genre. The drama has to adapt to the 'spirit of the times' or 'mood of the times', in order to attract the viewers. This includes taking into account changes in society, in other words, representing current cultural verisimilitude. The serial then represents the conflicting interests of husbands and wives. These conflicting interests have been verified in statistics. During the twenty years between 1973 and 1993 the percentage of Japanese women thinking that women should give priority in their life to child-rearing has decreased, while the number of men thinking this has increased. As a result, a majority of women now consider it important to continue working even after having children, while a majority of men believe women should stay home and concentrate on the children. At the same time the percentage of both men and women who think men should 'help' in the kitchen has been rising. (Hashimoto & Takahashi 1995, 204-206.) But, as the statistics indicate, there is an underlying consensus about the proper place of men and women. This appears already in the way the questions are formulated: it is not proposed that men should give priority to child-rearing, or that women should 'help' in the kitchen.

In the questionnaires, when asked "What would you like to change about your life as a couple?", many women wrote that they would like their husbands to be around more and to have time and interest to listen to their wives opinions. They also wished to have their husbands share the responsibility for rearing and educating the children. Yet in the group interviews the women talk about their housemotherhood as self-evident and focus on the survival strategies they have developed instead of dwelling on what they would rather have. Most of the men either left this question unanswered or wrote down something like "nothing in particular". There were, however, a couple of men who noted that they would like to have more free time together with their spouses or families.

The questionnaires show interesting differences between men and women in their way of talking about the place of each in Japanese society and about social issues concerning gender. Men and women more or less agree that men in Japan work too much and do too little housework, while women do most of the homekeeping. Both men and women list similar issues such as the difficulties of women in the Japanese society, which usually somehow include combining work and family: work and children or work and the elderly — or both. Some mention questions of inequality. Women in general seem to have a positive tone even in listing the problems: the question is of *gaining* something, although the combination has proven to be a difficult one. Solutions to difficulties are seen in change by both men and women: change of attitudes, change of society, change of social security systems, change of individual lifestyles.

In the case of men's issues there is a clear-cut difference. Women see the most difficult problems as related to work: men work too much, they do not have time to rest or to be with their families, there is too much overwork. Both men and women talk about problems of "happy retirement". Men for their part do mention work, working conditions and working hours, but they talk more about *loss*: loss of self-esteem in both family and work, loss of goal and values, loss of respect in the family. Some of the men see the problems of society (e.g. increasing youth violence) as caused by the falling status of the father. As with women's questions, changes in values and systems of family and society are also proposed here, as are changes in working conditions. The emphasis, however, both in the problems and in the solutions for men, appeared as individual. And, for instance, in the cases of suggestions in changing the working conditions, these demands are often directed towards companies. In the men's answers in general there appears to be a certain degree of crisis and fatigue in the possibilities for change.

The gender relationship, then, appears as strained. The expectations and conceptions on what a good life would be like differ between women and men. Their ways of making sense of changes in the gender system also appear to be fairly different. Based on these findings it seems plausible that forms of television are segregated into 'women's' forms and 'men's' forms. However, it would be very interesting to see a serious attempt to address these contradictions from a relational point of view, instead of taking the side of one or the other.

7. Conclusions

In this study I have explored the hit *hōmu dorama* of 1990's Japanese television. When it was first broadcast in 1990 on TBS, *Wataoni* was said to be bringing back to prime time television the traditional family drama genre which had vanished in the 1980's. The success of the serial can be seen to indicate that it touched upon issues many viewers in different demographic groups found topical and relevant.

With material consisting of the serial itself, the interviews of the programme makers, the interviews with viewers, as well as answers to questions asked in a questionnaire, I have studied the intertwined relationship of genre and gender. The theoretical frame of the genre triangle presented in Chapter 3 has proven to be a useful tool for empirical analysis of such material which includes the three aspects of the mass-communication process — production, reception and text.

The analysis has indicated that makers and viewers do have a more or less coherent understanding of what a television text considered *hōmu dorama* should be like in terms of visual and aural appearance, and represented meanings on family and gender. In the case of *Wataoni*, this understanding is strongly framed by the fame of the script writer, Hashida Sugako, and the conceptions of *Hashida famiri* or the Hashida family and *Hashida wārudo*, or the Hashida world.

7.1. Genre, gender and national identity

The idea of news as a crucial genre for national identity and the actualization of democracy is strong — even self-evident — within media studies in general and especially in studies that concern public service broadcasting (Ishikawa 1996, Hellman 1999). This study indicates, however, that fictional genres also prominently take part in the public definition of national identity. Citizenship and a sense of community are not established through referential or factual cultural forms only, but rather through the identifiable representation of a shared past and a mutual future, which fictional kinds typically offer.

Public service broadcasting is often justified with a strong news service, because an assumedly unbiased and reliable news service is considered to be the most essential form of television for the citizens. A sense of national identity, however, is created and discussed in various places in television and also in fictional genres, domestic drama being one of the most important ones. In Japan this has been obvious in the case of many NHK serials, espe-

cially some of the most famous morning serials or *asadora*, such as *Oshin* and *Nonchan no Yume* (cf. Harvey 1998), but these issues can also be related with programmes of commercial channels, as the example of *Wataoni* shows.

The material of this study also indicates that issues — such as family and gender relations — brought up in *Wataoni* are discussed among viewers, if perhaps mainly on a small-talk level. This is different from television news, which — with its 'window-like' mode of address — has been found not to raise topics for discussion but rather to suppress the discussion (cf. Ridell 1998b). In the case of television drama, however, the explicit constructedness of the programmes invites audience members to discuss the relationship between the serial and 'real life', as well as to throw themselves into the world of the serial and to discuss the plotline and characters with friends and relatives. These discussions naturally happen within a certain frame of sense-making, which is set by the rules of cultural and generic verisimilitude.

Although *Wataoni* is often talked about as 'The Japanese' television serial, and the intentionally created narrative image by the production company also aims at reinforcing this status, the viewers' experience of the serial depends also on their background and preferences. Nevertheless, even those viewers who resist the idea of the serial as being particularly 'Japanese' or consider the serial as representing a wrong kind of Japaneseness, recognize the narrative image and react to it in the interviews or questionnaires — at least in a case when the researcher is a foreigner. It appears that those interviewees who strongly dislike the serial, or those who find it irrelevant for their lives, also consider it un-Japanese. Those viewers, for their part, who like the serial and are drawn into the lives of the characters while watching, find the serial very descriptive of everyday Japanese family life. For some (male interviewees) disliking the serial is connected with the feeling that the representation of men in the serial is unpleasant, and thus 'unrealistic', meaning also un-Japanese.

Consequently, the interviewees recognized that *Wataoni* is often talked about as a 'typically Japanese' *hōmu dorama*; also in those cases they themselves disliked or discarded the serial. *Hōmu dorama* as genre then appears to represent the everyday family life in the Japanese society in a way that some find relevant and appropriate, while others are provoked by since they see it as challenging their views or as too deviant from their perceptions on Japaneseness.

Painter (1991, 212-213) emphasizes that *hōmu dorama*

> is a good example how common sensical cultural representations of family and social relations, such as filial piety (*oya kōkō*) and obligation (*on*), are combined on television into ideological formations that work to legitimate and naturalize the inferior and subservient status of

women in Japan. Women are portrayed as obsessed with harmonizing human relations, not with rocking the boat in the name of social change.

Based on my observations on *Wataoni*, I have to disagree with Painter to some degree. Either *hōmu dorama* genre has changed since Painter's study, the programme Painter has studied has been considerably different from *Wataoni*, or Painter's view is overly pessimistic. Based on my study it would be too simplistic to claim that these serials just plainly represent women in subservient and inferior positions. In *Wataoni* it is particularly the women who "rock the boat", usually not for social change, I admit, but for a better life for themselves. There are also moments, however, when they do this for social change, insisting that "people make things happen. If we don't dare to do things differently, who is going to make a change?" (Part 4, Taki-san on Shin's desire to quit school and start learning a profession.)

Hōmu dorama then, although following the commonsensical cultural representations of family and gender, also has its fissures where the very common sense is discussed. Or perhaps since the turn of the 1990's it has actually become part of common sense in Japan to challenge the old self-evident ideas of women inside the house and men earning the living for the family? In *Wataoni* this at least happens frequently. There are naturally limits for this challenge. The family, as the basic unit for society and social life, is never seriously at stake or problematized in the serial. The question of, what the family should be like for its members may be asked, but asking whether or not there should be a family at all, would be going too far. Even the single women of *Wataoni* at least have their parents and siblings as a source of family support. The family — constructed around a gendered division of work and sustaining a particular view of nationhood — is something that remains unquestioned as a basis, and neither 'international' influences nor 'traditional' solutions should contest that. The genre of *hōmu dorama* then sets certain limits for the representations of gender. The explicit attempts to define 'Japaneseness' in the serial's dialogue are intertwined with the definitions of manhood and womanhood in Japanese society.

7.2. Production, reception and genre

Despite its image as a part of a traditional form of television, *Wataoni* nevertheless is not fully appreciated. By some it is considered simply old-fashioned, but often it is also labelled as being a 'granny programme'. For the makers of *Wataoni* there is another reason for feeling ambivalent about the serial: being a serial and a women's serial for that matter, it is not considered 'artistic' and valuable. The genre invites the production team to do their work

as well as they can, but at the same time they do it in a somewhat half-hearted way. They are making a television programme that is basically created by two elderly women for a middle-aged female audience, and the production team, consisting of professional men, is there to fulfil the vision.

The material that I have looked through for this study then indicates clearly that genre invites the makers of television into a certain making position and addresses the audience in a particular way, thus evoking particular patterns of watching. The producer and script writer often emphasize the importance of bringing social issues up for discussion, and making people think about these. The impact and discussions that these themes tend to bring up among the audience, however, are mostly on personal and family level rather than on a social and cultural level, not to mention the level of social action.

The viewers, for their part, naturally do know that the serial is artificial and constructed. Yet, at the same time they might also enter into the world of the serial with an intense and pleasurable interest in the characters and their lives. The fictional drama genre, in fact, invites the audience to evaluate the degree of 'realism' in the serial, to find the features that seem 'real' and relevant and to 'participate' in them.

There are some features in the relationship of production and reception that appear both in fictional and factual genres. Heikkilä (1999, 5) describes how Finnish journalists have dismissed the idea of public journalism because for them allowing "ordinary people" to have their — often supposedly whimsical — say in the contents of journalism would diminish the credibility of a news medium. Moreover, according to journalists, pleasing everybody would never be possible, and that is why it is not worth even trying.

This corresponds with some of the views expressed by the maker team of *Wataoni*. Although the genre frames the contents of the drama as being about 'everyday life', thus making the careful consideration of experiences of the audience relevant, the audience is taken into account only in an indirect way. If a viewer calls up the production room wanting to give an opinion on how a role should be cast or a character developed, the opinion is discarded. The professional decision making is kept strictly in the hands of the maker team. It is the script that is supposed to contain themes relevant for the viewers, and thus the job of Hashida is to act as a sensor for the "mood of times", writing about things that do connect with the everyday of the viewers.

From the viewpoint of the makers the viewers do not seem competent to take part in the actual production, not even within those fairly marginal limits of contacting the production. In genre, the roles for the makers and viewers are defined in advance. The makers produce and the viewers are the consuming audience, people who watch the programme (and its commercials) but do not have a voice themselves. The generic framework does not provide a possibility for them to take part in the actual production process. The makers of *Wataoni* respect the audience as long as it stays far enough

away, preferably as figures on the weekly rating chart. Yet there is a curiosity among the makers to find out what the viewers "really think". These thoughts, however, should not be in the form of individual commentary, but rather in the form of an abstract and generalized audience opinion. In any case the opinions should stay in the territory allowed for viewers. Commenting on the production process does not belong there.

The makers of *Wataoni,* especially the script writer and the producer, emphasize the importance of education through drama. In their conception, however, education has to be in the form of entertainment, otherwise it will be discarded by the viewers. The idea then is that healthy has to be made delicious in order to get people to enjoy it. Despite the strong emphasis on educational aspects in the talk of the producer and the script writer, the industrial frame and genre nevertheless provide the viewers with the strictly and narrowly defined position of a consumer. Both ways of perceiving viewers — in need of education or as consumers of media products — have the one-way top-down relationship with the audience. Viewers' individual opinions become valuable only if they are collected into a study by another professional — a researcher — who formulates from them a 'coherent' and 'representative' picture.

7.3. Summary of results in analysis

To sum up the findings in this study, I present the results for the three issues I set out to explore in the introduction.

Firstly, with regard to the relationship between production, reception and text, it appears that Figure 1 in Chapter 3 needs some adjusting. The analysis of the empirical material shows that the relationship between production and reception either works through the text (when asked who watches the serial the makers start talking about what happens in the programme) or secondary texts, such as other television programmes or articles in the press (viewers talk about the background of the script writer and players in terms of what they have seen on television or read in papers). Otherwise this relationship appears as fairly weak, occurring through view of an 'imagined audience' and a perception of the 'narrative image'. The weakness of the relationship is reinforced by the fact that viewers' individual and direct opinions on production are discarded. Figure 1 could therefore be reformulated in a way that would show that the relationship between production and reception is less than direct:

social formation

viewership   text

GENRE

makership

industrial conditions
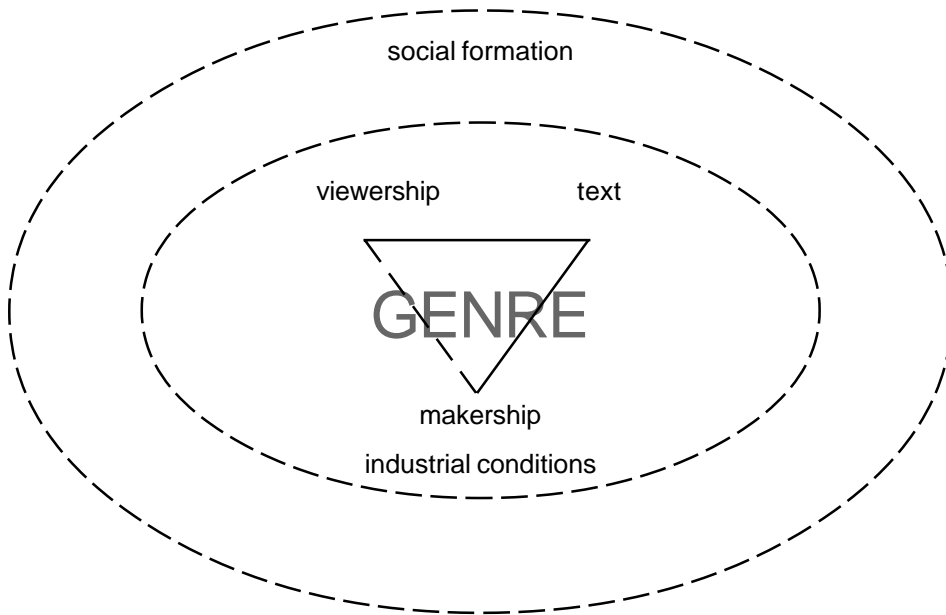
Secondly, concerning the gendered nature of genre, it appeared that studies on genre have often tended to reproduce the gendered genre hierarchies by focusing on certain types of television (or film) as inherently and self-evidently feminine or masculine. Analysis of gender-talk in the interviews and questionnaires made it apparent that gender cuts through all levels of genre: presentational, practical, and especially representational, where the struggle over meaning on possible and impossible masculinities and femininities in Japanese society takes place. The *hōmu dorama* genre invites both the producers and the audiences to keep the family as the ultimately unquestioned base. Furthermore, in their professional and personal lives they live within the institutional and cultural constraints and perceptions of manhood and womanhood, which are also (re)presented, circulated, and reproduced in the 'Hashida world' of the serial.

Thirdly and finally, in the material of this study it appeared that meanings of Japaneseness, national identity, 'everydayness' and 'realism' were connected with the serial. The production staff members especially emphasized that the serial is about ordinary daily life, about families that without a doubt exist somewhere in Japan. The serial itself also contained scenes in which 'Japaneseness' was explicitly addressed. These constructions of the everyday-likeness of Japanese life were also recognized by those viewers who resisted them. Those who refused to consider the serial as being particularly 'Japanese' often also found the serial as representative of everyday family life, lifestyles or gender in an 'unrealistic' way. They also considered the

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serial irrelevant for them, while those who found the serial relevant and realistic often also described it as being 'typically Japanese'.

Television genres that are considered important for national identity are given certain esteem and priority in television institutions and also in the 'public opinion'. In other words, those forms of television that gain the status of having something to do with the national identity — such as news and international sports events — are usually seen as being high in the genre hierarchy and are appreciated and considered 'good'. It is therefore no wonder that those viewers who found *Wataoni* unrealistic and thus un-Japanese also considered it 'bad' as a television programme. Those viewers who considered the serial's representations as something dislikeable seemed to be worried about a foreigner possibly thinking that the serial represented 'real' Japan. *Wataoni* as a representative of the *hōmu dorama* genre then seemed to invite the viewers to discuss meanings of Japaneseness and to take part in the struggle over meanings of national identity.

Figure 4 sums up the findings of this study. There I reformulate the genre model of Chapter 3 (Figure 2) by replacing the theoretical terms with those empirical details I have found through the analysis of the production interviews, viewer interviews and questionnaires, and the programme text of *Wataru seken wa oni bakari.*

aspect of genre	production	text	reception
presentational	'not too difficult pictures'; centrality of the script for realizing the 'Hashida world'; no close-ups	I slow cuts; long dialogues; no sex N scenes; juxtaposition of 'old' and 'new' ways V making sense of gender (among other things) I in family relationships; family-orientedness	A recognition of juxtapositions in family D relationships (especially mother-in-law and daughter-in-law); familiarity with the R characters
representational	'good' drama, but nevertheless part of serial tv; viewers are 'all kinds of people'; especially middle-aged women, professional attitude without passion; 'traditionally Japanese'; 'real, everyday family life'	T dialogue between 'good' A wife and wise mother' - T woman' ideology and 'new woman' ideology; I 'real Japanese family'; O women, weaker men	E 'old women's serial' S recognizing ideas of I 'real family life'; V differences in opinion on 'Japaneseness'
practical	starting from the script; hierarchical structure of production; the one-year span of the programme; weekly rhythm of production	A prime time Thursdays 9 p.m. N	T liking/disliking; watching together with family/alone; Y videotaping for viewing at a more suitable time; getting used to watching every week

Figure 4.

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7.4. Some questions on research ethics

When starting out this study I had been wondering why is it that the text and the audience of popular television have gained such an amount of attention in cultural media studies, while the production side has mostly been left intact. Gradually some of the reasons started to unfold for me, especially after having asked one member of the production team to comment on my work. It became apparent that when attempting to empirically approach the production side, academic research is often seen as trespassing into the territory of another profession and other professional capabilities — especially from the side of the production. Questions of loyalties and preferences arise, and sometimes the demands which the 'object' of study starts to make for the research contradict the aims of the researcher. There are three things one can do when this happens. Firstly, one could just ignore the demands. Usually this is impossible, because by this time one has already said or done something that has given an indication that one is willing to take the other's opinion into account. Secondly, one could try to negotiate, by taking some of the views into account within the frame one has chosen. Finally, one can try to work out the difference in the actual research and write it out for others to see.

The situation makes visible a research ethical problem. This is a relation of power, which crosses not only the power of an academic towards another group of professionals, but also an 'outsider's' power towards 'an other' culture. The irony is that the problem appears so clearly, because the group under the magnifying glass also has its own specific power that its profession provides it with. The 'ordinary viewers' seem to cause close to none of these problems for the researcher. They would, probably, if they were allowed to read versions of work written about them, if it, in the first place, was made in a language they could read, or if researchers would find it as important to ask the viewers' opinion on their work.

Practices of research reporting can also reproduce the powerless position of the viewers. When deciding how to mark and code the interviewees I, on the one hand, pondered upon the practice of 'protecting' the viewers by changing their names or using only their first names. As I had promised to do this, I had no other way but to act it out, but I am left wondering whether or not precisely these kinds of practices reduce the voice of the viewers as private, individual opinions that only matter after they have gone through the professional process of writing a research report. On the other hand, the practice of marking the production members by their professional status, instead of their names or changed names, reproduces them as part of a powerful institution. And yet, despite these problems I ended up using these practices for such simple reasons as practicality and clarity. These are usual re-

search practices that are employed in different fields of research. And these practices, it seems, end up reproducing the audience as the "receiver" at the end of one-way communication chain, instead of seeing people as participants in the society — and also in the research itself.

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(Translations from Finnish and Japanese titles into English by the author.)

Appendix 1

The family tree of *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* as in Part 3.
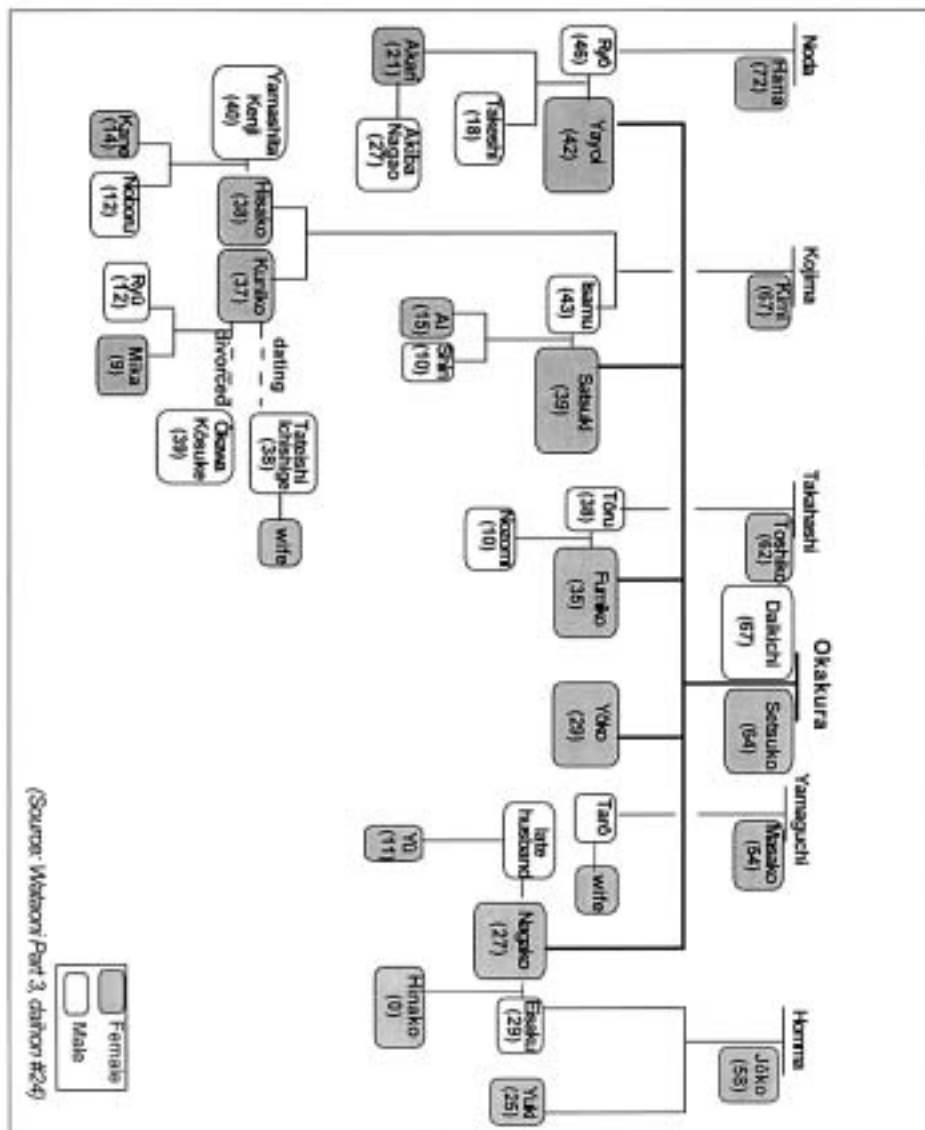
(Source: *Wataon Part 3, daihon #24*)

Appendix 2

Production interviews:

IF Producer (*purodūsā*) Ishii Fukuko
(female, in her seventies)
Dec. 2, 1996
Imperial Theatre, Hibiya, Tokyo

HS Script writer (*sakka*, *shinario raitā*) Hashida Sugako
(female, in her seventies)
Nov. 22, 1997
TBS Akasaka headquarters

AP Assistant producer, (*assistanto purodūsā, eipii*)
(male, late forties, freelance)
Dec. 1, 1996
TBS Midoriyama studios

AP Assistant producer (second interview)
(as above)
Feb. 22, 1997
TBS Akasaka headquarters

D1 Producer/Director
(male, sixties, TBS employee)
Dec. 2, 1996
TBS Midoriyama studios

D2 Director (*kantoku, enshutsu*)
(male, late fifties, freelance)
Nov. 25, 1996
TBS Midoriyama studios

D3 Director
(male, forties, TBS employee)
Dec. 2, 1996
TBS Midoriyama studios

D4 Director
(male, late thirties, a subcontractor company [VSO] employee)
Dec. 1, 1996
TBS Midoriyama studios

AD1 Chief assistant director (*enshutsu-ho, eidii, chiifu, fāsuto*)
(male, early thirties, VSO employee)
Dec. 5, 1996
TBS Akasaka headquarters

AD2 Second assistant director (*sekondo, eidii*)
(male, late twenties, VSO employee)
Feb. 22, 1997
TBS Akasaka headquarters

AD3 Third assistant director (*zādo*, *eidii*)
(male, mid-twenties, VSO employee)
Feb. 22, 1997
TBS Akasaka headquarters

AD4 Fourth assistant director (*fōzu*, *eidii*)
(male, early twenties, VSO employee)
Feb. 22, 1997
TBS Akasaka headquarters

A1 Actress (*joyū*)
(female, early thirties, freelance)
Dec. 2, 1996
TBS Midoriyama studios

WD Wardrobe (*kosuchūmu*)
(male, late forties, TBS employee)
Nov. 28, 1996
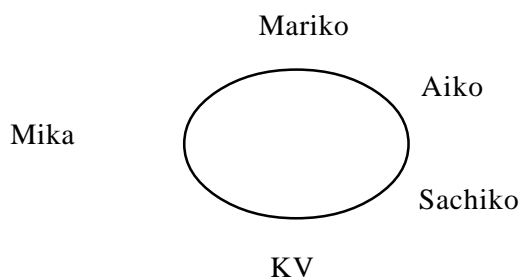TBS Akasaka headquarters

PR Programme PR (*bangumi senden*)
(male, forties, TBS employee)
Nov. 26, 1996
TBS Akasaka headquarters

Viewer group interviews:

1) **Young mothers** at Yokohama

Mariko

Aiko

Mika

Sachiko

KV

Mika (works as freelance translator, under 35, one daughter, approx. 2 years of age, friend of KV)
Mariko (housewife, over 35, one daughter, approx. 1 years of age)
Aiko (housewife, under 35, one son, approx. 2 years of age)
Sachiko (housewife, under 35, one son, approx. 2 years of age)
KV (myself, the interviewer, under 35, one daughter, approx. 1.5 years of age)

Aiko, Sachiko, Miki and Mariko meet each other once a week when they take their children to the pool for a swimming group. Mika invited them over for the interview. This was the first time they met outside their children's hobby.

2) **Housewives** in Chiba

Emiko   Akiko

Hanako

Misako

Toki   KV
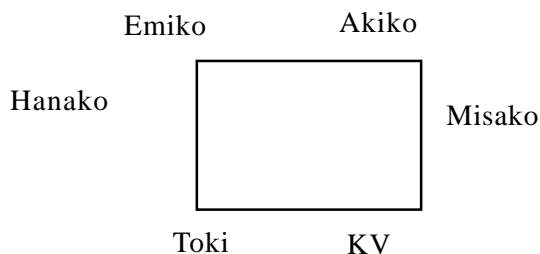
Hanako (housewife, husband retired, Misako's mother, 69 years of age, hobby: travelling around the world with husband)
Emiko (housewife, husband retired, neighbour of Hanako, 70 years of age, two daughters, both married, lives with husband, six grandchildren)
Akiko (housewife, husband retired, 59 years of age, one son, hobby: ping-pong, chorus)

Toki (housewife, husband in leading position, two daughters, model and OL, hobbies: traditional Japanese things, tea-ceremony, *bonkei*, *nō*, Japanese cooking, in her late 50s)

Misako (housewife, husband civil servant, part-time Japanese language instructor, in her late 30s, lives in Tokyo)

KV as above

Hanako, Emiko, Akiko and Toki have a group of five women who have been friends for tens of years. One of the group was unable to attend. They were invited to gather for the interview by Misako, who is Hanako's daughter and my friend.

3) Family Higashi in Tokyo

the father   the daughter
Michio   Reiko

(Kyōko)

KV   the mother
                 Kiku
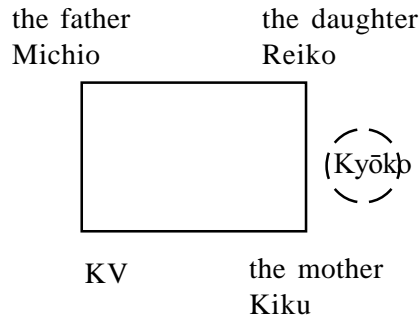
Michio (retired dentist, in his late 60s)
Reiko (architect, in her early 30s)
Kiku (housewife, in her late 50s)
Kyōko (architect, in her early 30s, my friend, who introduced me to the family)
KV as above

4) Family Tanaka in Yokohama

Sueko   Nobu

Mika   KV
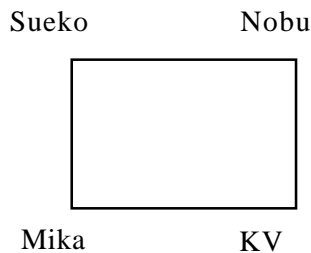
Sueko, housewife, in her late 50s
Nobu, retired, in his early 60s
Mika, under 35, Sueko's niece (see interview 1)
KV as above
Also present in the room Mika's daughter, 2 years.

5) Family Nakamura and friends in Tokyo

the daughter
Kyōko

the mother
Noriko

family friend
Kaneko

the father
Atsushi

family friend
Teruko

KV
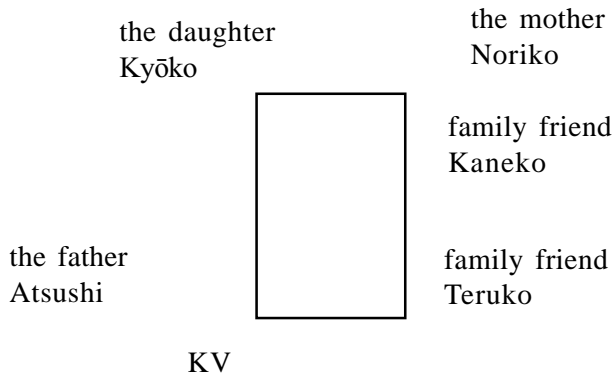
Atsushi, in his late 50s, architect, has his architectural office attached to the family home
Kaneko, in her 80s, retired schoolteacher
Teruko, in her 70s, retired schoolteacher
Noriko, in her late 50s, housewife
Kyōko in her early 30s, architect, my friend who organized the interview
KV as above

Appendix 3

Questionnaire in English

A. Personal information

Sex   1) Female   2) Male

Age   5-10   11-20   21-30   31-4031-50
                       51-60   61-70   71-80   81-90

Marital status   1) Single   2) Married   3) Common-law marriage
                       4) Divorced 5) Widowed

Children   No children

Under 10 years of age   1) one child 2) two children 3) three children or more
Over 10 years of age   1) one child 2) two children 3) three children or more
Over 18 years of age   1) one child 2) two children 3) three children or more

Education   1) primary school incomplete
                       2) primary school (7-12)
                       3) secondary school (13-15)
                       4) high school
                       5) vocational school
                       6) university

Profession (please mark 'career orientation' or 'general orientation')

1) student
2) civil servant
3) self-employed/family business
4) company employee (career orientation or general orientation)
5) housewife
6) part time worker
7) free lancer
8) other, please specify

B Questions about watching television

What kind of television programmes do you watch?
Please mark a number in front of the programme type you watch. You may use the same number more than once.

1= watch the most 2= watch frequently 3= watch sometimes 4= watch seldom 5= do not watch
__ family drama
__ 'trendy' drama
__ news and documentaries
__ suspense stories
__ historical dramas
__ sports
__ 'wide shows', 'laughter' programmes
__ films
__ imported drama
__ other, please specify

Do you keep the television on when you are not watching in a concentrated manner? What is on, when this happens?

1) family drama
2) 'trendy' drama
3) news and documentaries
4) suspense stories
5) historical dramas
6) sports
7) 'wide shows', 'laughter' programmes
8) films
9) imported drama
10) other, please specify
11) the tv-set is not kept on, if not watching

C Questions concerning gender

Do you think in today's Japan men work too hard?

1) Yes   2) No   3) I do not think either

Do you think in today's Japan women work too hard?

1) Yes   2) No   3) I do not think either

Do you think men take enough part in housework?

1) Yes   2) No   3) I do not think either

Do you think women take enough part in housework?

1) Yes   2) No   3) I do not think either

What do you think is the most difficult problem concerning women in to-day's Japan?

Why is that? What could be done to solve the problem?

What do you think is the most difficult problem concerning men in today's Japan?

Why is that? What could be done to solve the problem?

If you are married or live together with someone please answer the following questions:

Do you think that your partner takes enough part in the household chores?

1) Yes   2) No   3) I do not think either

Do you think that your partner works too long hours outside home?

1) Yes   2) No   3) I do not think either

Is there something in your life together that you would like to change?

D Questions concerning the Hashida Sugako drama *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* by TBS.

Do you watch *Wataru seken wa oni bakari*?

1) Always
2) Every time if I can
3) I take it on tape, if I can't watch when it is on
4) Sometimes
5) Occasionally
6) Not often
7) I don't watch

If you do not watch, why is that?

1) I would like to, but the time is wrong.
2) I have watched it, but I do not like it.
3) I have not watched it, but I hate it. (I hate the image.)
4) I do not watch this kind of programmes.
5) This programme does not suit today's Japan.
6) It is a programme for the elderly.
7) It is a programme for women.
8) It is boring.
9) Other, please specify

If you watch, do you like it or not
1) like it   2) do not like

Why do you like/dislike the programme?

Why do you watch the programme?

Who is your favourite character in the programme?

Why is that?

Whom do you dislike the most?

Why is that?

Among the events in the serial so far, what has made a strong impression on you?

Why is that?

Thank you for your answers.
If you have something to add, please use the other side of the paper.

If you are interested in taking part in an interview, please write down your name and address.

Appendix 4

Table 2: What do you watch?

Women (n=62[1])	1 watch the most	2 watch frequently	3 watch sometimes	4 seldom watch	5 do not watch
hômu dorama	5	5	26	12	7
'trendy' drama	2	6	20	17	8
news&documentaries	30	21	8	1	-
suspense stories	-	3	19	19	14
historical dramas	1	4	11	19	17
sports	3	12	23	10	6
'wide shows' and 'laughter'programmes	3	8	26	10	6
films	5	8	28	10	3
imported drama	4	6	17	15	8
other, what?	5[2]	2[3]	5[4]		

Women's answers to question "What kind of programmes do you watch? Please mark a number in front of the programme type you watch. You may use the number more than once."

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[1] Not all respondents have marked all genres, that is why the sum of responses for each genre may be less than n. Especially in age group 51-60 (n=16) there were several respondents who only marked numbers 1-3, leaving other genre-options empty and other numbers unused.

[2] Asadora *Futarikko* (two responses); WOWOW film channel; *Wataru seken wa oni bakari*; cooking programmes

[3] travelling programmes; music programmes

[4] cooking programmes; asadora *Futarikko*; WOWOW film channel, children's programmes

Table 3: What do you watch?

Men (n=22)	1 watch the most	2 watch frequently	3 watch sometimes	4 seldom watch	5 do not watch
hômu dorama	1	1	8	6	3
'trendy' drama	-	5	4	5	4
news&documentaries	8	11	3	-	-
suspense stories	1	-	6	5	6
historical dramas	2	2	5	6	5
sports	3	9	8	2	-
'wide shows' and 'laughter'programmes	2	6	8	2	2
films	2	5	9	3	-
imported drama	1	4	2	9	-
other, what?	-	1[5]	2[6]		

Men's answers to question "What kind of programmes do you watch? Please mark a number in front of the programme type you watch. You may use the number more than once."

Table 4: When television is on and not watched in a concentrated manner, the programme is:

	Women	Men
hômu dorama	-	-
'trendy' drama	3	-
news&documentaries	18	6
suspense stories	1	-
historical dramas	1	-
sports	15	4
'wide shows' and 'laughter'programmes	20	5
films	2	-
imported drama	3	-
other, what?	1[7]	1[8]
TV set is not kept open when not watched in a concentrated manner	20	10

Answers to question "Do you keep the television on when you are not watching in a concentrated manner? What is on, when this happens?"

---

[5] classical music programmes

[6] music, *anime*, cooking; morning television

[7] children's programmes

[8] late night shows

Table 5: The most watched programme[9] is the same as the one that is on, when television is not watched in a concentrated manner

	Women	Men
hômu dorama	-	-
'trendy' drama	2	-
news&documentaries	18	4
suspense stories	-	-
historical dramas	1	-
sports	7	1
'wide shows' and 'laughter'programmes	9	2
films	2	-
imported drama	3	-
other, what?	-	-

[9] Those programmes that are marked with 1 (watch the most) or 2 (watch frequently) in the question "What do you watch on television?"

Appendix 5

Table 6: Favourite characters and reasons for liking them

	Women	Men
The Okakura couple	6	1
- "Fujioka Takuya & Yamaoka Hisano"	They feel so real. Family life and human relations are interesting	
	Act well, seem kind	
- "Okakura Daikichi & Setsuko"	the kindness, gentleness	
- "The Okakuras"	Are a good match and seem like a real and proper married couple	
- "Father and mother"		If they didn't exist, the programme would end. They are essential.
- "Okakura couple"	(no reason, two responses)	
Setsuko	4	1
- "Yamaoka Hisano"	Mother who treats her children both with kindness and strictness. Acts the role of the ideal mother	Typical *ryôsai kenbo*
	Acts well	
- "Okakura Setsuko"	Has raised 5 daughters, works with her husband and does not rely on her children	
- "Okakura mother"	Close to my position	
Daikichi	1	1
- "Father"	Seems like the one who is served, but in fact keeps the family together	
- "Fujioka Takuya"		I watch him acting and compare it with real life
Satsuki	2	
- "Izumi Pinko"	Takes good care of her sister-in-law's family and is obedient to her mother-in-law	
- "Satsuki & Kimi"	The typical and familiar mother-in-law/daughter-in-law -relationship is amusing	
Shin	1	1
- "Izumi Pinko's son"		Helps his mother although she is treated badly by the mother-in-law
- "Shin-chan"	He is the good child that all parents would like to have	

Yôko	1	
Yôko	Self-supporting and has a job, feminine in her dependence on Tarô and her parents	
Akari	1	
Akari	Takes her parents into account while fulfilling her own wishes as well	
Nagako		1
- "Fujita Tomoko"		She is my favourite actress
No-one in particular or can't say	2	2
No response	45	15

Table 7: The most disliked characters and reasons for not liking them

	Women	Men
Nagako	4	1
- "Fujita Tomoko"	I don't like the character she plays	
	I don't like her character	
- "Nagako"	Too self-centred	Puts herself forward (self-centred)
	No sense of self-responsibility, relies on her parents	
Kuniko	3	1
- "Higashi Terumi"	Selfish	
- "Sister of Izumi's husband"	Self-centred, does not care for others	
- "Kuniko"	A person, who does not trust anybody unless there is a reward to be expected	
- "Kuniko, daughter at the Chinese restaurant"		Selfish
Kimi	4	
- "Akagi Harue, mother at Kôraku"	Too self-centred and complains all the time. Mean to her daughter-in-law. I think this kind of way of portraying mother-in-law is old-fashioned	
- "Kojima restaurant mother"	Does not care for others' feelings, self-centred	

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- "Kimi"	Not an understanding person, spoils her daughter and treats her daughter-in-law as a stranger	
	Only thinks of herself and treats Satsuki as if she were a servant	
Satsuki	**3**	
- "Izumi Pinko"	Uncivilized, looks mean	
- "Satsuki (Izumi Pinko)"	There is no such a nice daughter-in-law in reality. She is a bit too good daughter-in-law	
- "Satsuki"	Too nice daughter-in-law	
Yayoi	**1**	
- "The eldest daughter"	She first seemed like a nice daughter-in-law, who obeyed her mother-in-law, but now she has proved to be vain and only to think about other people's opinion	
Fumiko	**1**	
- "Nakada Yoshiko"	Her face always looks as if she would be sweet and kind all the time	
No-one in particular or can't say	**4**	**3**
No response	**45**	**17**

Tiivistelmä

Katja Valaskivi

Televisio suhteissaan
Genre ja sukupuoli japanilaisen perhesarjan tuotannossa ja tekstissä

Perhesarja koki uuden tulemisensa japanilaisessa televisiossa 1990-luvun alussa, kun kaupallinen Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) -kanava tuotti *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* -nimisen televisiosarjan. Alun alkaenkin poikkeuksellisen pitkäksi suunniteltu sarja oli niin suosittu, että sitä on jatkettu 1990-luvun aikana kolmella vuoden mittaisella lähetysjaksolla. Yhteensä sarjaa on tehty noin kaksisataa pääasiassa tunnin mittaista jaksoa. Jaksot on lähetetty 'parhaaseen katseluaikaan' prime timessa kerran viikossa.

Nostamalla tutkimuksen kohteeksi kyseisen japanilaisen televisiosarjan tutkija haluaa muistuttaa kansainvälistä ja suomalaista viestinnän ja kulttuuritutkimuksen tiedeyhteisöä siitä, että televisio on keskeinen kulttuurisia merkityksiä tuottava ja ylläpitävä koneisto muissakin kuin angloamerikkalaisissa kulttuureissa. Japanissa perhesarjan lajityyppi ja kyseinen sarja sen osana tuottaa aktiivisesti käsitystä siitä, mikä on 'japanilaista' ja millainen ymmärrys kulttuurisesta sukupuolesta on tässä japanilaisuudessa hyväksyttävää.

Tutkimus hyödyntää ja kehittää eteenpäin genren relationaalista käsitteellistystä. Tämän käsitteellistyksen avulla käy näkyväksi, että tuotanto, teksti ja vastaanotto ovat aina suhteessa toisiinsa, ja että televisio-ohjelmat tuotetaan vastaanotettaviksi aina tietyllä konventiovälitteisellä tavalla. Genre kutsuu televisio-ohjelman tekijät tekemään ohjelmaa tiettyjen lajityyppikonventioiden mukaisesti. Myös vastaanotto noudattelee näitä konventioita, vaikka jotkut katsojat vastustavatkin heille tarjottua katsoja-asemaa tai lukutapoja. Olennaista on, että lajityypin konventiot yleensä tunnistetaan silloinkin, kun tarjottuja merkityksiä vastustetaan. Genren ohella tutkimuksen toinen keskeinen käsite on gender, jonka avulla television suhteita voidaan analysoida sukupuolen kulttuurisen tuottamisen näkökulmasta. Missä genre valottaa tuotannon, tekstin ja vastaanoton kolminapaista merkityssuhdetta eri lajityyppien osalta, siinä gender tekee mahdolliseksi ymmärtää sukupuolen lajityyppisten representaatioiden välisiä ja keskinäisiä suhteita.

Tutkimuksen aineisto koostuu kyseisen perhesarjan tekijöiden haastatteluista ja sarjan teon seuraamisesta, televisiosarjasta itsestään, katsojien ryhmähaastatteluista sekä katsojien täyttämistä kyselylomakkeista. Aineistoa on lähestytty yllä mainittujen käsitteiden genre ja sukupuoli(järjestelmä) eli gender kautta.

Genderin käsitteen avulla tutkimuksessa myös syvennetään genren sosiaalista teoriaa. Aikaisemmissa genretutkimuksissa usein vähälle huomiolle jätetty sukupuolen käsite valottaa sitä, miten tuotanto- ja vastaanottotavat ovat sukupuolittuneita sekä ajatuksellisesti että käytännössä. Tuotanto mielletään usein 'aktiiviseksi' ja tällaisena maskuliiniseksi toiminnaksi, kun taas vastaanottoa pidetään 'passiivisena' ja naisellisena. Myös lajityyppien yleisöodotukset ovat sukupuolittuneita siten, että 'naisyleisölle' suunnattua ohjelmaa katsova mies vaikuttaa poikkeustapaukselta. Miespuoliselle tekijäjoukolle ohjelman tekeminen keski-ikäiselle naisyleisölle ei ole mieluisin mahdollinen työtehtävä, vaikka he pyrkivätkin tekemään työnsä professionalismin vaatimusten mukaisesti.

Genreanalyysia hyväksikäyttävä uutistutkimus on pannut merkille, että uutiset puhuttelee yleisöään 'kansalaisina', mutta ei kutsu näitä kyseenalaistamaan sitä tapaa millä uutiset on tehty tai niitä merkityksiä mitä uutiset tuottaa. Tämä johtuu siitä, että uutiset esittää itsensä välittömäksi ja läpinäkyväksi 'toden diskurssiksi'. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan fiktiivistä lajityyppiä, joka — toisin kuin uutiset — kutsuu yleisöä arvioimaan myös sitä, miten 'toden mukainen' lajityypin tapa kuvata perhettä on. Perhesarja lajityyppinä ja *Wataru seken wa oni bakari* lajityypin edustajana pyrkivät kuvaamaan 'tavallisen japanilaisen perheen arkea'. Tällainen odotus mielessään sekä tekijät että katsojat arvioivat usein kriittisestikin sitä, missä määrin ohjelma onnistuu olemaan 'realistinen'. Tästä huolimatta — tai ehkä juuri tästä johtuen — sarja herättää ajatuksia ja vertautuu katsojien ja joskus tekijöidenkin omaan elämään. Tässä näkyy jälleen ero tv-uutisiin, joka aiempien tutkimusten mukaan ylläpitää vastaanottajissaan lähinnä toimintakyvyttömyyden tunteita.

Pyrkiessään valottamaan tuotannon, tekstin ja vastaanoton suhdetta, genreanalyysi auttaa erittelemään sitä paikkaa, johon televisio yleisönsä asettaa. Riippumatta siitä katsoivatko tutkimuksessa tarkastellun sarjan tekijät tuottavansa sarjaa valistaakseen vai viihdyttääkseen katsojia, he joka tapauksessa mielsivät viestintäprosessin yksisuuntaiseksi ja katsojat prosessissa vastaanottajiksi. Tekijät eivät voineet ottaa yleisön yksittäisiä mielipiteitä huomioon sarjan tuotannossa jo siksikään, että sarjan tuotanto oli yleensä useita viikkoja edellä lähetysaikataulua. Lisäksi yleisön jäsenillä ei katsottu olevan tarpeeksi asiantuntemusta tehdä huomautuksia ohjelman tuotantotavasta. Vaikka sarjan halutaan tulevan lähelle katsojien arkea, ja puhuttelevan heitä 'tavallisina japanilaisina', tieto katsojien arjesta välittyy tekijäjoukolle välikäsien kautta, lähinnä sarjan käsikirjoittajan avulla. Muu tuotantotiimi luottaa käsikirjoittajan tuntumaan siitä 'mitä ajassa liikkuu' ja mitä katsojat ohjelmalta haluavat. Katsojat puolestaan tunnistavat sarjan puhuttelevan heitä vastaanottajina, eivätkä ajoittaisesta ohjelman arvostelusta huolimatta pyri vaikuttamaan ohjelman tuotantoon tai sisältöihin. Tähän genre ei tarjoa heille edes paikkaa.

Koska suora yhteys katsojien ja tekijöiden väliltä puuttuu, katsojat muodostavat käsityksensä sarjan tekijöistä ja näyttelijöistä lähinnä muista tiedotusvälineistä saamiensa mielikuvien pohjalta. Näyttelijöiden nykyinen rooli ja aiemmat tehtävät julkisuudessa muokkaavat vahvasti katsojien käsityksiä heistä persoonina. Tekijät puolestaan pyrkivät vahvistamaan käsitystään yleisöstä katsojalukumittausten ja yhtiön omien katsojatutkimusten avulla. Yksittäisten katsojien mielipide ohjelmista muuttuu tekijöiden kannalta mielekkääksi vasta sitten, kun tutkija on koostanut niistä yhtenäisen ja 'edustavan' kuvan.

Perhesarjan lajityyppinä voidaan siis nähdä tuottavan tietynlaisia merkityksiä perheestä, naiseudesta ja mieheydestä sekä japanilaisuudesta. Vakiintuneet tuotannon ja vastaanoton konventiot ja käytännöt varmistavat sen, ettei näiden merkitysten voi odottaa muuttuvan kovin nopeasti tämän lajityypin osalta. Samaan aikaan on huomattava, että kyseinen lajityyppi on uudesta suosiostaan huolimatta ollut 1990-luvulla melko marginaalisessa asemassa japanilaisessa televisiossa, jonka sarjatuotannossa perhe teemana on alkanut väistyä yksilökeskeisen lähestymistavan tieltä.