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Såpeserie

Også kalt “såpeopera”. Såpeserier var opprinnelig en radiosjanger, men ble senere en TV-sjanger. Betegnelsene “Soap Opera” og “Daily Soap” går tilbake til begynnelsen av 1930-tallet i USA og gjaldt serier som ble sendt daglig. Den amerikanske såpe-produsenten Procter & Gamble var sponsor for radioserien/ familiesagaen *The Guiding Light* (1937 og senere) og fylte reklamepauser med lovprisninger av sine produkter.

“The term “soap opera” was coined by the American press in the 1930s to denote the extraordinarily popular genre of serialized domestic radio dramas, which, by 1940, represented some 90% of all commercially-sponsored daytime broadcast hours. [...] The defining quality of the soap opera form is its seriality.” (Aaliya Ahmed i http://www.ijsrp.org/research_paper_jun2012/ijsrp-June-2012-47.pdf; lesedato 27.09.18)

“Individuals vary as to which programmes they call soaps, since the judgement is based on the look and feel of the programme and is therefore partly subjective. In general, however, soaps are characterized by:

1. serial form which resists narrative closure;
2. multiple characters and plots;
3. use of time which parallels actual time and implies that the action continues to take place whether we watch it or not;
4. abrupt segmentation between parts;
5. emphasis on dialogue, problem solving, and intimate conversation;
6. many of the male characters portrayed as ‘sensitive men’;
7. female characters often professional or otherwise powerful in the world outside the home;

8. the home, or some other place which functions as a home, is the setting for the show.” (Mary Ellen Brown i <http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/serial/AJCS/4.2/Brown.html>; lesedato 26.03.20)

“Episodes alternate between a multitude of continuous story lines that commence and conclude at different points in the season.” (Trisha Dunleavy i *Television Drama: Form, Agency, Innovation*, 2009)

“Because of the longevity [...] there is also the pleasure involved in familiarity and regularity. Brunson (1984) refers to this as ‘ritual pleasure.’ [...] The characters are types, characterized by critics as ‘flat,’ and yet soap viewers seem to take the characters very seriously. [...] fans are quite playful when they talk about characters as real. They are well aware that they are playing with the boundary between reality and fiction (Ang, 1983) which, after all, is what fantasising is all about. Few, if any, women believe that the characters are ‘real,’ but most are willing to speak of them as if they were, discussing them, for example, on a first name basis, and speculating at length on future directions of the show. [...] Fans derive pleasure in this type of gossip about the soaps which Ang (1985) refers to as ‘controlled self delusion.’ [...] The use of multiple characters refuses a single or fixed subject identification and at the same time prevents the hierarchy of discourse present when there is a privileged main character identifiable with because of her well-roundedness or depth. Likewise there is no preferred point of view, but instead issues are seen from each character’s perspective sequentially.” (Mary Ellen Brown i <http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/serial/AJCS/4.2/Brown.html>; lesedato 26.03.20)

“The soap opera form originated on U.S. radio in the 1930s, and expanded into television starting in the 1940s. They normally air during the daytime, hence the alternative name, *daytime drama* [...] By 1937, the soap opera dominated the daytime commercial radio schedule and had become a crucial network programming strategy for attracting such large corporate sponsors as Procter and Gamble, Pillsbury, American Home Products, and General Foods. [...] Procter and Gamble, which established its own radio soap opera production subsidiary in 1940, produced the first network television soap opera in 1950 (*The First Hundred Years*).” (Zdrengeha 2007) En annen kilde hevder at den første såpeserien på TV kom i 1947, da en tilsvarende bruk av reklame dukket opp i serien *A Woman to Remember* (Hitzler, Bucher og Niederbacher 2001 s. 127).

“The term “soap opera” originated from the fact that when these serial dramas were aired on daytime radio, the commercials aired during the shows were largely aimed at housewives. The “soap” in soap opera alluded to the fact that many of the products sold during these commercials were laundry and cleaning items, and included a jingle praising the product. The “opera” suggested an ironic incongruity between the domestic narrative concerns of the daytime serial and the most elevated of dramatic forms. This specific type of radio drama came to be associated with these particular commercials, and this gave rise to the term “soap opera” – a

melodramatic story that aired commercials for soap products. [...] In the United States, at least, the term “soap opera” has never been value neutral. As noted above, the term itself signals an aesthetic and cultural incongruity: the events of everyday life elevated to the subject matter of an operatic form. To call a film, novel or play a “soap opera” is to label it as culturally and aesthetic inconsequential and unworthy.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“Radio soap operas began in Chicago in 1930 when WGN broadcast the fifteen minute drama *Painted Dreams*, about the trials of an Irish-American widow and her daughter. By the start of World War II there were dozens of popular soap operas. The world’s longest-running radio soap opera, *The Archers*, was first broadcast in 1951 by the BBC and reached its 15,000th episode in November 2006. The first concerted effort to air continuing drama on television occurred in 1946 on the DuMont television series *Faraway Hill*. Soap operas were introduced to network television in 1949, with NBC’s short-lived *These are My Children*, followed by NBC’s *Hawkings Fall* in June 1950 and CBS’s two year run of *The First Hundred Years* in December 1950. Two long-running soaps, *Search for Tomorrow* and *Love of Life*, started broadcasting in 1951. *Guiding Light* began on radio in 1937 and first aired on television in 1952.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“Soap operas began on radio and consequently were [i Storbritannia] associated with the BBC. The BBC continues to broadcast the world’s longest-running radio soap, *The Archers*, on Radio 4. It has been running since 1951 nationally. It continues to attract over five million listeners, or roughly 25% of the radio listening population of the UK at that time of the evening.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“The difference between the American radio shows of the 1930s that gave the form its name because of their sponsorship by soap companies such as Procter and Gamble and the working-class dramas labelled soaps on British television today are enormous.” (Taylor og Willis 1999 s. 58)

“Most network soap operas were produced by advertising agencies and some were owned by the sponsoring client. Soap operas continued to dominate daytime ratings and schedules in the immediate post-war period. In 1948 the ten highest rated daytime programs were all soap operas, and of the top thirty daytime shows all but five were soaps. [...] it was unclear in the 1950 if the primary target audience for soap operas – women working in the home – could integrate the viewing of soaps into their daily routines. One could listen to a radio soap while doing other things, even in another room; television soaps required some degree of visual attention.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“Soap opera is related to the *melodrama*, with which it shares such features as moral polarization, strong emotions, female orientation, unlikely coincidences, and excess.” (Zdrengeha 2007) Såpeserier “have complicated stories involving makeups, breakups, betrayals, and dirty dark secrets” (Allie Leeds i <https://www>.

thoughtco.com/how-soap-operas-got-their-name-3022985; lesedato 06.11.18). Samtidig som de ligner melodramaer med appell til intense følelser, har de også likheter med andre sjangrer, f.eks. kollektivromaner i de tilfellene der handlingen er sentrert om et sosialt fellesskap (en familie, et dynasti, en gruppe ansatte eller lignende) mer enn om en enkeltperson.

“Såpeoperaen, med sine melodramatiske og urealistiske historier som aldri ender, er en undersjanger av familiemelodramaet, og har en lang kringkastingshistorie. Den første såpen ble sendt på radio i USA i 1931. Sjangeren ble så hentet fra radioen til fjernsynet i 1946 med *Faraway Hill*, og ble etter hvert et populært dagtilbud for kvinnene som ble hjemmeværende etter krigen. Helt fra starten av har såpeoperaen henvendt seg til et kvinnelig publikum. [...] Først på slutten av 70-tallet fikk såpen sitt prime time-gjennombrudd med *Dallas*, som gikk fra 1978 til 1991. [...] Hva kjennetegner såpeseriene? De har relativt store skuespillerensembler og følger ofte én eller flere familier, et nabolag eller en liten by. Handlingen drives først og fremst av mellommenneskelige, intime relasjoner i motsetning til krimseriens singulære mysterium. I motsetning til den aristoteliske fortellingen, er de strukturert som en åpen og “uendelig” historie uten logisk utgang. Flere av dagens kvalitetsdramaer har også tatt i bruk såpeoperaens *åpenhet*, der avslutningen/løsningen stadig blir utsatt. Feministen Tania Modelski hevdet allerede i 1982 at såpeserien på denne måten imiterer selve menneskelivet ved å iscenesette de mellommenneskelige opplevelsene som en rekke uavsluttede hendelser. [...] Dette er ikke en verden hvor detektiven reetablerer orden, men en kaotisk verden hvor alle perspektiver har legitimitet og krever empati.” (Gry Rustad i *Klassekampen* 18. oktober 2014 s. 40)

“Soap operas are stories about American life. The central concept of soap operas is the family and life within and between families. The drama of the soap opera is the way that the family in various forms survives the forces that attack it. People watch soap operas for two reasons: to escape from their everyday life and to learn to cope with their everyday life (Hobson 2003:248). Since their days on the radio soap operas have been perceived as either character or issue led. If the characters drive the drama then the issues grow naturally out of the character’s personality. Some soaps place more importance on the issues and have the issues, not the characters, guide the story. The issues that are addressed within soaps are the issues that are faced by audience members in the daily lives; therefore, the strength of this genre is in the narratives. Soaps talk to audience members about their lives. All the themes that are present within soap operas are all aspects of social life, emotional life and are examples of the practical elements of life that need to be dealt with [...] Births, weddings and death are three crucial events that occur in soap operas and are central to all storylines. Romance is the cornerstone of all soap operas as they traces through the ups and downs of the personal relationships of the characters and tap into the emotions of their audience. The daily narrative of the soap opera allows for social issues to be dealt with. A storyline examining rape, drug abuse, or HIV will take several months to develop and will examine the causes and consequences

surrounding the issue. Finally all soap operas have villains who sustain the audience's interest and create all the twists and turns in the storyline" (Laura Onofrio i <http://www.yorku.ca/mlc/4319/03-04/onofrio/onofrio6.html>; lesedato 22.11.18).

"There are several unique features of the soap opera genre. Its most distinguishing feature is that they never begin and are never-ending. They are made up of continuing stories with plotlines that compete against one another and often overlap as one storyline generally leads into another preventing any clear resolution. Unlike any other genre on television the soap opera is extremely slow paced as it can take months before a storyline climaxes [...] "The illusion created that events in the world of the soaps is evolving parallel to those in the sphere of reality (Edmondson & Rounds 1973:38)." [...] Leaving the audience hanging at the end of an episode is a ploy that is used to get the audience member to tune into the next episode to see what happens next." (Laura Onofrio i <http://www.yorku.ca/mlc/4319/03-04/onofrio/onofrio6.html>; lesedato 22.11.18)

"Romance has always been and always will be a central theme of the soap opera. Sexuality and sexual relationships fuel soap operas and love is the emotion that drives many of the characters to behave the way they do. To demonstrate how soap operas evolved with societal changes look at the depiction of marriage within soap operas. On the radio daytime dramas placed a significant amount of emphasis on marriage and the family. On radio soaps the goal of romance was marriage not sex. The decades when radio soap operas were popular were years when the nuclear family was the norm and divorce was unheard of. As divorce became more acceptable and new family forms developed the relationship of romance leading to marriage eroded and was replaced with an increased emphasis on intimacy and sex. [...] The transfer of soaps from radio to television also included the transfer of traditional beliefs toward sex. Gone were the pure and virginal women who were replaced with the seductive and sexy women of television soaps and adultery and premarital sex were common acts on television. Daytime serials place significant importance on interpersonal relationships and personal problems. The theme of romance has always been a central force of the genre that has remained a constant element in the genre throughout its evolution." (Laura Onofrio i <http://www.yorku.ca/mlc/4319/03-04/onofrio/onofrio10.html>; lesedato 27.11.18)

"A soap opera involves multiple perspectives and no consensus: ambivalence and contradiction is characteristic of the genre. There is no single 'hero' and the wide range of characters in soaps offers viewers a great deal of choice regarding those with which they might identify. Most soaps follow the lives of a group of characters who work in a particular place, or focus on a large, extended family. The storylines follow the day-to-day lives of these characters. In many soap operas, in particular daytime serials in the United States, the characters are generally more attractive, seductive, glamorous, and wealthy than the typical person watching the show. This is true to a lesser extent in soap operas from Australia and the United

Kingdom, which largely focus on more everyday characters and situations and are frequently set in working class environments. Many Australian and UK soap operas explore social realist storylines such as family discord, marriage breakdown, or financial problems, and sometimes include significant amounts of comedy. In US daytime serials the most popular soap opera characters, and the most popular storylines, often involved a romance of the sort presented in paperback romance novels. Romance, secret relationships, extra-marital affairs, and genuine love have been the basis for many soap opera storylines. Soap opera storylines sometimes weave intricate, convoluted, and sometimes confusing tales of characters who have affairs, meet mysterious strangers and fall in love, and who commit adultery, all of which keeps audiences hooked on the unfolding story twists. Crimes such as kidnapping, rape, and even murder often go unpunished, unless the character is being written off.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“The soaps not only provide women with pleasure in watching, but they are also structured like gossip and provide a source of gossip for their audience. [...] women watching soaps may feel a privileged position as members of a group who in fact know a soap family well enough to gossip about it. Gossip also has other features salient to the soaps. According to Jones (1980), gossip in the home is necessarily serial, taken up and put down between work and children. Gossip, like soaps, is trivialised in dominant discourse and like any form of female solidarity, poses a threat to established codes. Gossip, a language of female secrets, is one of women’s strengths and, like all our strengths, it is both discounted and attacked (195). The verbal exchange between women called gossip, is characterized by reciprocity and paralinguistic responses – the raised eyebrow, the sigh, the silence. The implications of such conversations, according to Jones, are contemplated, not argued, and each participant contributes her own experience to the pattern of discourse. Women are not put down, objectified, or devalued in women’s gossip. Neither are they in the soaps. I would suggest that one prevailing pleasure that women find in soaps is validation of their own kind of talk. [...] Gossip is open-ended, like the soaps, and such openness challenges the cultural dominance of other representational systems which close off, limit, and contain, meaning for women. Within the serial and open structure of the soaps lies the possibility of female resistance and even subversion of the dominant classical narrative form, a form which by its construction and use to define masculine ego boundaries, almost always subverts women’s expression.” (Mary Ellen Brown i <http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/serial/AJCS/4.2/Brown.html>; lesedato 26.03.20)

“In the daytime soaps closeups of faces predominate almost to the exclusion of body shots. Facial closeups always include the whole face rather than segments of it. There are no unmotivated fragmented body shots. Thus the image of the body of women as sexual currency is absent, but the spoken discourse of the power of the female body to create is given crucial importance along with the rules of the attempted containment of that power. [...] the number of pregnancies, the importance attached to paternity and sometimes to maternity or the large number of

sexual liaisons between characters in soap operas. However, contrary to the discourse which places the pregnant woman as powerless over natural events, often women in soaps use pregnancy as power over the father of the unborn child. The father will usually marry the mother of his child, whether or not he loves her (or whether or not the pregnancy is real), thereby achieving the female character's constructed need to be taken care of in the only way that is available to her in the dominant system, even though most women in the soaps do a good job of taking good care of themselves. Women characters use their bodies to achieve their own ends." (Mary Ellen Brown i <http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/serial/AJCS/4.2/Brown.html>; lesedato 26.03.20)

“[T]he power that female characters assert over the relationships in which they participate does not support the idea of the exchange of women as passive commodities. In fact, the presentation of male characters in soaps provides pleasure in seeing and also in hearing, since the male characters talk as much as the female characters. [...] the pleasure in hearing men discuss personal concerns [...] the naturalised idea that characters always should and sometimes do marry ‘for love’ is a dominant theme. Both women and men in soaps have an emotional need for love, marriage and intense relationships. Since soaps have predominantly a female audience, it is possible to conceive of the male characters as objects of love (objects of exchange) for the female viewers in soaps. It is this ‘women’s man’ who replaces, according to Chodorow’s theory (1978), the lost mother for women. Women in Chodorow’s account learn their identity in everyday life by associating with other women. When a female child leaves her mother for marriage, she replaces her mother with a man. The male child, in a sense, gets his mother back in the form of another woman who is his wife.” (Mary Ellen Brown i <http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/serial/AJCS/4.2/Brown.html>; lesedato 26.03.20)

“Certainly the main objective of the British *The Archers* radio soap when it was established in the post war years was to give agricultural advice to farmers in an entertaining format. In recent years it has advocated the benefits of organic farming, and amongst the drama of country folk it does sometimes address farming issues. The British TV soap, *Brookside*, set in a Liverpool housing estate, often introduces stories that raise social and ethical issues. It has covered everything from incest, cults, racism, drugs, crime, lesbianism, mental breakdown, bullying, euthanasia and sexual abuse. It went on to deal with infertility treatment and abortion. The major British soaps, *Coronation Street* and *East Enders* often take such issues onboard. *Coronation Street* has just had a major storyline about the dangers of internet chat rooms. *East Enders* has a plot about abortion, it just toyed with an incest story, but their main storyline is about the court case of local gangster/businessman Phil Mitchell. [...] Soap opera storylines sometimes weave intricate, convoluted, and sometimes confusing tales of characters who have affairs, meet mysterious strangers and fall in love, and who commit adultery, all of which keeps audiences hooked on the unfolding story twists.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

I India “it was “Buniyaad” which was presented in the true tradition of a soap-opera. Running into 104 episodes, it was woven round the life of a family of pre-partition Punjab. The sufferings and acts of fortitude of those affected were shown in this soap-opera. This was followed by “Humraahi” which was conceived and designed as a purposive serial from Doordarshan. The important aspect of the serial was the emphasis it laid on the status of women in India. Their various problems from early marriage to higher education and other problems were taken up in different episodes of this serial. Clashes between tradition and modernity were depicted. It was a success story and even garnered international acclaim as an effort to motivate people to reinforce the power of social communication. America’s “The Soap Opera Digest” attributed it as “Soap in the Service of Society.” ” (Aaliya Ahmed i http://www.ijsrp.org/research_paper_jun2012/ijsrp-June-2012-47.pdf; lesedato 27.09.18)

“Soap-operas are proving to be especially influential in developing countries. They can improve marital communication, advise people on HIV and AIDS prevention, and counsel children about how to get along with their parents. Researchers in Ohio University, in their study of a radio soap-opera broadcast in India suggest the programs can carry effective educational messages and change mass behavior.” (Aaliya Ahmed i http://www.ijsrp.org/research_paper_jun2012/ijsrp-June-2012-47.pdf; lesedato 27.09.18)

“Researchers at University of Mexico and Ohio University analyzed feedback to the themes in “Tinka Tinka Sukh”. (Happiness lies in Small Things). It was a 104 episode program broadcast in 1996 over 27 radio stations to an estimated tens of millions of listeners in the Hindi speaking region. Topics included community pride, equal treatment of boys and girls, marital issues, empowerment of women, educating women and many other gender themes. Nearly 150,000 letters were received; including a letter signed by an entire village that noted the soap-opera encouraged better treatment of women and increased school attendance among children in the village.” (Aaliya Ahmed i http://www.ijsrp.org/research_paper_jun2012/ijsrp-June-2012-47.pdf; lesedato 27.09.18)

“The first *telenovelas* – which differ from U.S. soap operas in that each begins and ends within about a year’s time – appeared in the 1960s, when a group of Cuban screenwriters led by Delia Fiallo began adapting radio theater stories for use on television. From the outset, these stories, with themes taken from classical tragedy – betrayal, forbidden love, punishment – captivated television audiences throughout Latin America.” (Zdrengeha 2007) Ordet betyr “TV-roman”. De produseres og konsumeres i stort antall i Latin-Amerika, med Mexico som en av de største produsentene. Hver serie lages med et forutbestemt, begrenset antall episoder, vanligvis ca. 200.

“In Russia, most popular soap operas explore the “romantic quality” of criminal and/or oligarch life.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

Den australske serien *A Place to Call Home* (2013 og senere) har Sarah Adams som den sentrale karakteren. Hun konverterte til jødedommen da hun giftet seg i Europa, men kommer etter 2. verdenskrig alene tilbake til Australia og blir kjent med den rike Bligh-familien. Hun arbeider som sykepleier samtidig som hun vikles inn i det landlige dynastiets mange konflikter og hemmeligheter (en homoseksuell sønn, voldtekt m.m.), og må takle psykopaten Regina Standishs angrep på henne.

Den norske såpeserien *Hotel Cæsar* (1998-2017) ble 3123 episoder lang. Hotellet er sentralt i familien Anker-Hansens konsern, men forholdet mellom familie-medlemmene og de ansatte ved hotellet er komplisert.

“- Såpeserien har en lav status. Selv med et enormt antall seere over hele verden, og flere eksempler på såpeserier som katalysator for sosial endring, har sjangeren blitt sett på med skeptiske øyne. Det henger sammen med hvilken målgruppe såpeserier ofte har, mener tv-viter Gry Cecilie Rustad. - Som andre kulturformer beregnet spesifikt på kvinner, som for eksempel kiosklitteratur, har også såpeserien en lav status. Såpeoperaens røtter i melodramaet er nok også en stor medvirkende faktor til den lave statusen. Seriene kjennetegnes ofte av å ha en åpen struktur hvor historien tilsynelatende ikke har en slutt. Teoretisk sett kan de fortsette i det uendelige siden historiene gjerne tar utgangspunkt i en familie eller et nabolag og fokuserer sin fortelling på de mellom-menneskelige relasjonene, fortsetter Rustad. - Mange såpeserier som sendes på dagtid kjennetegnes av en billig og rask produksjon. [...] Noen såpeserier i Norge har vært så populære at små tettsteder nærmest stengte ned fordi alle så Dynastiet. I andre land brukes slike serier til å belyse folkehelseproblematikk, som i Sør-Afrika hvor serieskaperen, og tidligere lege, Garth Japhet inngikk et samarbeid med myndighetene for å sette lys på hivsmitte i serien *Soul City*. Selv mener Japhet at dette har hindret over en halv million nye smittetilfeller i sørlige Afrika. Å underbygge slike påstander med fakta er vanskelig påpeker tv-viter Gry Rustad, som likevel tror at mange seere reflekterer over temaene som blir formidlet og at normalisering over tid er en nøkkel til å forstå hvordan endringer i samfunnet kan drives frem av såpeserier. [...] - Såpeserier er ofte progressive, og det finnes for eksempel nesten ikke en slik serie for ungdom uten en homofil figur. Bare det at de handler om kvinner var også spesielt om vi ser noen år tilbake i tid.” (<http://p3.no/filmpolitiet/2014/10/disse-sapeseriene-endret-verdenen/>; lesedato 26.01.17)

“Charlotte Brunsdon argues that the question guiding a soap story is not ‘What will happen next?’ but ‘What kind of person is this?’ (in Geraghty 1991:46).” (Zdrengeha 2007) Seriene appellerer til seernes sans for psykologisk innsikt i enkeltmennesker og i sosiale relasjoner mellom personer som mer eller mindre frivillig må leve sammen.

Den amerikanske medieforskeren Tania Modleski “suggests that the characteristic narrative structures and textual operations of soap operas both address the [female]

viewer as an 'ideal mother' – ever-understanding, ever-tolerant of the weaknesses and foibles of others – and also posit states of expectation and passivity as pleasurable” (Brunsdon og Spigel 2008 s. 230).

“Et av kjennetegnene ved en såpeopera er at de vakre hovedpersonene lever i en slags parallell, konstant høydramatisk sfære. Alle samtaler er konfrontasjoner der liv, død eller, som regel, kjærlighet står på spill. Vi tas fra høydepunkt til høydepunkt der alt er utvendig og uttalt, der hat og kjærlighet stadig slynges i ansiktet på andre.” (Inger Merete Hobbestad i *Dagbladet* 9. september 2010 s. 54) Erotiske trekant og utroskap er vanlig, og andre konflikter i familielivet, dessuten vanskelige moralske valg, sykdom, og spørsmål knyttet til penger og karriere. I mange serier er det flere plot-tråder som veksler med hverandre, men som innen fiksjonsverdenen egentlig foregår samtidig.

“Most soaps follow the lives of a group of characters who work in a particular place, or focus on a large, extended family. The storylines follow the day-to-day lives of these characters. [...] exploring the network of relationships among members of two extended families.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

Christine Geraghty skrev i boka *Women and Soap Opera: A Study of Prime-Time Soaps* (1991) “that ‘more frequently than other TV genres, soaps feature women characters normally excluded by their age, appearance or status’ (1991:17). Unlike a play or a series there is always a wide range of characters in a soap opera (which means that no single character is indispensable). The large cast and the possibility of casual viewers necessitates rapid characterization and the use of recognizable ‘types’.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“*Coronation Street* is a Granada production which is broadcast nationally in the UK on ITV. First shown in 1960, it is the longest-running British TV soap opera. It is watched by about one-third of the British population, by rather more women than men, by older people, and especially by people from lower socio-economic groups (Livingstone, 1990:55). It offers a nostalgic perspective on northern industrial working-class life as group-centered, matriarchal, commonsensical and blunt but also warm-hearted.” (Zdrengeha 2007) Det har blitt vist over 8500 episoder av *Coronation Street*.

“Soaps in general have a predominantly female audience, although prime-time soaps such as *Dallas* and the most recent British soaps are deliberately aimed at a wider audience. According to Ang (1985), and hardly surprisingly, in *Dallas* the main interest for men was in business relations and problem and the power and wealth shown, whereas women were more often interested in the family issues and love affairs. In the case of *Dallas* it is clear that the program meant something different for female viewers compared with male viewers. In ‘realist’ soaps female characters are portrayed as more central than in action drama, as ordinary people coping with everyday problems. Certainly soaps tend to appeal to those who value

the personal and domestic world. [...] *Dallas* featured the rivalry between the Ewing family and the Barnes family, but business life was far more central than in British soaps. The story also featured murder, marital crisis, adultery, alcoholism, illness, miscarriage, rape, air and car accidents, kidnapping, corruption, illegitimate children, secret pasts, chance meetings and so on. Some critics say that ‘too much happens’ in US soaps by comparison with British ones: the pace tends to be faster.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“*Eastenders* has also featured single-parent families, teenage pregnancy, prostitution, arranged marriages, attempted suicide, drug problems, alcoholism, generational conflicts, a protection racket, a cot death, extra-marital affairs and marital bust-ups, sexism, urban deprivation, mental breakdown, disappearances, muggings, a fatal road accident and a suspected murder: it has sometimes been criticized for being bleak! Perhaps in an attempt to attract more male viewers one can sometimes notice a tendency to shift a little towards the genre of the crime series. Nevertheless, much of the action remains deliberately mundane. Although it was part of the intention to handle ‘controversial social issues’ the program makers insist that *Eastenders* is not ‘issues-based’ (i.e. storylines are not developed simply to illustrate predetermined issues).” (Zdrengeha 2007)

Såpeserier på TV er sjelden tydelig “governed by the enigma-retardation-resolution structure which marks the classic narrative”, snarere har de “competing and intertwining plot lines introduced as the serial progresses. Each plot develops at a different pace, thus preventing any clear resolution of conflict. The completion of one story generally leads into others, and ongoing plots often incorporate parts of semi-resolved conflicts.” (Annette Kuhn i Brunson og Spigel 2008 s. 229) Et eksempel på en serie som har hatt stor suksess med dette, er *Downton Abbey* (2010-2015; 6 sesonger). Serien handler om en adelsfamilie og deres tjenere på en praktfull herregård (nesten et slott) i England. Handlingen foregår i årene 1912-1925. Det er både et “heritage drama” (med historisk ekte bygninger, møbler osv.) og en såpeserie med mye dramatik (dødsulykker, mord, voldtekt, homoseksualitet, en hemmelig barnefødsel, prostitusjon, hat mellom søstre, hevn ...). Serien har blitt vist i ca. 100 land, og fikk en Guinness-rekord: beste gjennom-snittlige kritikk for en TV-serie på Metacritic (et nettsted som samler anmeldelser) med 92 % positive kritikker. Det er en av britenes mest suksessrike “television exports” gjennom tidene, antakelig sett av 300 millioner seere.

“The form is unique in offering viewers the chance to engage in informed speculation about possible turn of events. [...] The viewer invests their morals, attitudes and beliefs in to the soap and can speculate about how they would react to the same situations and dilemmas. Just like the characters in soaps they allow us to gossip with friends and family about the goings-on in soaps (Watson, 2006:2). [...] There is no single hero in soaps, no privileged moral perspective, multiple narrative lines (non-linear plot) and few certainties. Viewers tend to feel involved interpreting events from the perspective of characters similar to themselves or to

those they know. Not much seems to ‘happen’ in many soap operas (by comparison with, say, an action series or an adventure serial) because there is little rapid action.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“Their popularity also spawned the sub-genre of the medical soap, in which the hospital replaces the home as the locus of action, plot lines center on the medical and emotional challenges patients present doctors and nurses, and the biological family is replaced or paralleled by the professional family as the structuring basis for the show’s community of characters.” (Zdrengeha 2007)

“*Santa Barbara* was the first American soap opera to be broadcast on Russian television. It started airing on Jan. 2, 1992, with episode 217, and came to a close on April 17, 2002, with episode 2,040. For the first several years, the new episodes ran three evenings per week. Later on, the show’s broadcasts became fewer and further between. For 10 long years – all through the crime-ridden, chaotic 1990s, the early post-Soviet years of timelessness and hardship – life in large cities, small towns, industrial settlements, and snowbound villages across Russia’s 11 time zones would come to a standstill as the remarkably cheery sounds of *Santa Barbara*’s intro issued from millions of TV sets. “Run on home – you don’t want to miss *Santa Barbara*,” the kindly pharmacist from a TV commercial would say to the old woman at the counter. It was that big a deal. Missing an episode was considered to be a personal mini-tragedy. [...] Over the years, for tens of millions of Russians, *Santa Barbara* was their parallel life, their *One Thousand and One Nights* in nearly 2,000 episodes – week after week, month after month, year after year of daily grind, through thick and thin, all through the troubled post-Soviet 1990s and up until the dull onset of the Putin-era stability [...] It could also be suggested that, gleaned through the lens of *Santa Barbara*, Russia’s fascination with Donald Trump may be explained. He is the first American president that Russian audiences of the show can identify with as one of the serial’s characters – and thus, one of the very few categories of Americans with which they are familiar.” (Mikhail Iossel i <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/24/american-soap-opera-explains-how-russia-feels-about-everything-santa-barbara-trump-putin/>; lesedato 27.11.18)

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