BOOK 5 Television Genres

- Mini-Series
  - History
    - definitions - series vs serial
    - beginning, middle and end
    - boardroom, bedroom and feud against backdrop of American history
    - 'golden age' late 1970s
    - 1980s - based on contemporary best-sellers, but waning of quality
    - middlebrow entertainment for middle America
  - US Examples
    - *Rich Man, Poor Man*
    - *Roots*
      - 'faction' - true story adorned with melodrama
      - black actors centre stage, BUT
      - used many well-known white actors
      - aiming for widest possible audience
      - linked to American Bi-Centennial
    - *Washington: Behind Closed Doors*
    - *Holocaust*
      - genocide as *Bonanza* with music from *Love Story* (Der Spiegel)
  - Antecedents
    - links to melodrama
    - US - contemporary novels
      UK - historical novels
    - Danielle Steele,not Daniel Defoe
  - Social and Political issues
    - drama documentary vs documentary drama
    - *RMPM* - critique of capitalism?
    - heroes always sympathetic to racial minorities
    - liberal ideology 1970s / more conservative 1980s
- Soap Opera
  - Significance
    - continuous narrative
    - events often reported as news
  - Origins
    - US radio 1930s, sponsored by detergents
    - US 1950s / 60s - daytime TV, 'WASP valley'
    - UK radio - Dales, Archers 1950s
  - UK
    - *Coronation St*
      - Tony Warren, Granada 1960
      - urban, regional, w-c
      - BBC failures - *Compact*
      - ITV alternatives - *Crossroads*
      - Geraghty - community based
    - *Brookside*
      - C4 1982 innovative
      - political authenticity
      - Geraghty - family replaces community in Thatcherite 1980s
    - *Eastenders*
      - BBC 1985, Julia Smith
      - well written, tightly focussed format
      - strong women characters BUT ALSO
      - Kingsley - first soap where men sustain scenes
      - whole episodes with just 2 people
      - Geraghty - family as nostalgia
  - USA
    - *Dallas*
      - 1960s - decline of daytime soaps after *Peyton Place*
      - origins as mini-series, influenced by *RMPM*
      - influenced by Sirk *Written on the Wind etc*
      - US TV Seasons Autumn-Spring, cliffhangers
      - urban / rural dichotomies
      - spin-offs and imitations -Falcon Crest, Knots Landing, Dynasty
      - like melodramas, based on single affluent family
      - no poor people, ethnic minorities
    - Differences USA / UK
      - family vs community
      - melodrama vs realist drama
      - great wealth vs normal people (Subtopic)
      - US - no discussion of social issues
- Television
  - Less history
    - Institutional histories
    - Audience studies
    - Studies of TV texts
  - Ignored by intellectuals
    - Sidney Newman vs BBC traditions
  - Ephemeral medium
    - Live broadcasting tradition
    - Videotape expensive
      - cutting and editing v. difficult
      - workarounds - cut and re-record 16mm film
      - issues of "broadcast quality"
  - Genre
    - Different from film
    - Different *forms* rather than different *narratives*
- Single Play
  - Introduction
    - "vitality of direct electronic picture"
    - "it's happening at this moment" unexpected might happen
    - continuous performance
    - "agitational contemporaneity" Newman
  - Scent of Fear
    - political thriller
    - characters merely ciphers
    - 3 act theatre model
    - no incidental music, simple set
  - Lena, O my Lena
    - Northern working-class realism
    - new generation of TV actors
    - pushing against theatre boundaries - larger range of sets etc
    - origins of Z Cars etc
  - Wednesday Play
    - break with theatrical traditions beginning, middle, end etc
    - lighter cameras, spatial and emotional dynamics
    - jerky effects, fast pace - use of montage
    - followed 9 O'Clock News - link with contemporary issues
    - EXAMPLE - *Up the Junction*
    - elevation of Director -> auteur
    - Mary Whitehouse opposition to realism
- Classic Serial
  - Quality
    - Issues of adaptation - 'fidelity' / work in its own right?
      - adaptation as illustration
      - adaptation as translation
      - adaptation as interpretation
      - Subtopic
    - who for? Why are some Victorian novels chosen and not others?
    - viewing as 'domestic ritual' 1950s / 1960s
    - Sunday evening ''secularisation of religious awe'
    - literary heritage in palatable contemporary form
      - literary source
      - great acting
      - export of heritage / ancillary sales
  - Examples
    - *Oliver Twist,* 1962
    - *The Forsythe Saga,* 1967
      - last in b/w
      - Raymond Williams 'dramatised action divided into episodes'
    - *Hard Times,* 1977
    - *Pride and Prejudice,* 1995