



Women and Soap Opera: A Study of Prime Time Soaps

Christine Geraghty

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This is the first major study of the roles of women in prime time soap operas. In a comparative analysis of British and North American television soaps, Christine Geraghty examines the relationship between the narratives on the screen and the women viewers who make up the traditional soap audience.

Within the structure of many of the most popular soaps, such as Dallas, Dynasty, Coronation Street and EastEnders, the split between public and personal life, reason and emotion, work and leisure is turned into a lynchpin of the plot. The author argues that these themes are also linked to broader social divisions between men and women, divisions which soap operas both question and develop as a source of pleasure.

Geraghty analyses the critical role of women characters in the families and communities of soaps and suggests that the utopian possibilities of soaps can be used not just to maintain the status quo, but to promote change and influence attitudes and prejudices. She examines the way in which soaps have been transformed in the last decade, looking at how issues of class, race, sexual orientation and feminism have been handled in the programmes. She argues that in pursuing new audiences more recent soaps such as Brookside may have put at risk the pleasures they have traditionally offered their women viewers.

Women and Soap Opera is a detailed, thoughtful and wide-ranging analysis which will become a central work in women's studies and media and cultural studies courses.

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