

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**FORMAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF
SHORTLAND STREET and *JUNOON* (STUBBORN):
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts in Media Studies and Communication
at Massey University

**NANDI S LAKSHMANAN
1995**

ABSTRACT

This is a comparative study of New Zealand soap opera **Shortland Street** with an Indian soap opera **Junoon** (stubborn). The purpose of this thesis is to explore the similarities and differences between these two soaps within the context of the cultural practices of each country. The study includes a brief historical summary of the evolution of the serial genre from novel to radio and to television to provide the context for analysis of each soap opera. The research undertakes to examine three important areas (style, narrative structure, and ideology), as means of analysing how significant the contrasts in the cultural practices of New Zealand and India are reflected in these texts.

The first part analyses the conventional differences between **Shortland Street** and **Junoon** by examining their formal presentation. This includes a close investigation of the respective country's soap opera production process, the role of camera in mediating between the fictional world, and the world of the viewer. The second part deals with the characteristics of both soap operas, such as openness, multiple plots, characterization, non-ending closures and cliff-hangers to outline the contrasting patterns in their narrative structure. Some of the arguments in this section are derived from the viewers' familiarity with soap opera conventions. The final part combines elements from the differences in style and narrative structure and examines the ideological aspects of both soaps. This includes a close analysis of the influential social issues amplified in the narratives contrast to the cultural practices of New Zealand and India. The research method is based on the close examination of both texts which utilizes textual analysis within a formalist framework.

Essentially it is argued that, though **Shortland Street** and **Junoon** outwardly share some of the serial conventions of the soap opera family, they have significant variations which are culturally specific to their country of origin. Despite the fact that **Shortland Street** frequently incorporates topical issues of contemporary New Zealand in its narrative, the

program borrows many qualities from its Western counterparts. On the other hand, **Junoon** draws its narrative pattern by interweaving the conventions of popular Indian cinema with the soap opera norms. The social problems expressed through the formal pattern of **Junoon** are inimitable to the cultural practices of India.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Geoff Mayer for his supervision, guidance, encouragement, patience and friendship throughout this research. His talent is greatly appreciated, respected and admired. I am also grateful to the Director of Media Studies Dr. Graeme Bassett for his valuable academic advice and moral support during the year of study.

My deep appreciation is also extended to Dr. Andy Ruddock for making valuable comments on the manuscript. Many thanks to the other staff at the Department of Media Studies for their encouragement and support and especially to Mr. Garham Slater for letting me to use the editing suite and Ms. Maree Fraser for her assistance.

I wish to acknowledge and thank Dr. Arvind Singhal at Ohio University for his timely assistance in sending the relevant literature for this research. My heartfelt thanks to the producer of Shortland Street, Mr. Gavin Strawhan for letting me to visit the studio and observe the various steps involved in the making of the serial.

I am much indebted to Magesh Srinivasan, Chris Dever, Andrew Burrow, Darrin Hodgetts, Stuart Johansen, Judy Lawrence, and Nick Broomfield for their innumerable favors.

Special thanks to my parents and brother, Dr. Bolan and his family for their encouragement. My brother's faith in my academic aims has been constant and encouraging, and he is the source of my desire to learn.

Finally, immense gratitude is extended to Sharmila and Chandni for their patience and tolerance as I wrestled with this dissertation. Their love and support are irreplaceable components of my writing.

ABSTRACT	<i>ii</i>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	<i>iv</i>
TABLE OF CONTENTS	<i>v</i>
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	<i>viii</i>
LIST OF APPENDICES	<i>viii</i>

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION	1
---------------------------	---

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW	7
2.2 ORIGIN OF SOAP OPERA	7
2.2.1 Evaluation of Soap Opera from Novel to Television	9
2.2.2 The Soap Opera Production Process	13
2.2.3 Visual Narrative Structure	15
2.2.4 Soap Opera Narrative Structure	17
2.2.4.1 ‘Openness’ and Characterization	18
2.2.4.2 Non-ending Closure	22
2.2.4.3 Cliff-hanger	24
2.2.5 Ideology and Soap Opera	28
2.3 MATERIALS AND METHODS	34
2.3.1 The Selection of Soap Operas	35
2.3.2 Procuring the Programs	35
2.3.3 General Methodology	36

CHAPTER THREE

CONTRASTING THE STYLE	40
3.1 INTRODUCTION	40
3.2 COMPANY OF ORIGIN	42
3.3 TELECASTING PATTERN	47
3.4 PROGRAM SCHEDULING	52
3.5 THE PRODUCER / DIRECTOR	53
3.6 THE ROLE OF THE CAMERA	56

CHAPTER FOUR

VARIATIONS IN THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE	68
4.1 INTRODUCTION	68
4.2 THE OPENNESS	68
4.3 THE CLOSURE	82
4.4 THE CLIFF-HANGER	86
4.5 CHARACTERIZATION	90

CHAPTER FIVE

IDEOLOGICAL COMPARISON	96
5.1 INTRODUCTION	96
5.2 THE FAMILY VALUES	100
5.3 GENDER REPRESENTATION	106
5.4 THE RELATIONSHIP SAGA	111
5.5 THE ROLE OF THE YOUNGSTERS	114
5.6 THE CONTEMPORARY ISSUES	117

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION 123

BIBLIOGRAPHY 128

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Table 2.3.3.1 Analysis of Scenes and Shots	37
Table 2.3.3.2 Analysis of Camera Proximity	37
Table 5.1.1 Frequency of Various Topics Raised in the Contents of Shortland Street and Junoon	98
Figure 3.6.1 The Differences in the Shooting Space of Shortland Street and Junoon	58
Figure 3.6.2 Comparison of Scenes and Shots of Shortland Street and Junoon	59
Figure 3.6.3 Comparison of Camera Proximity between Shortland Street and Junoon	62
Figure 4.2.1 Open Form of Shortland Street	76
Figure 4.2.2 Closed Form of Junoon	77
Figure 4.4.1 Cliff-Hanger of Shortland Street and Junoon	87
Figure 5.2.1 Family Members of Junoon	103
Figure 5.2.2 The Community of Shortland Street	105

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SHORTLAND STREET AND JUNOON	135
--	-----

APPENDIX B

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF SHORTLAND STREET AND JUNOON	156
---	-----