



The Golden Age

Danish Public Service Drama Series 1995-2015

Gunhild Agger

I write a comprehensive history of Danish TV drama for the period 1995-2015, investigating the Golden Age concept, mapping main tendencies. The period has seen a development from a domestically based production aiming at the Danish audience, to a transnationally oriented production, targeting Danish as well as transnational audiences. What does that mean for prevailing themes, genres, formats, style and overall aesthetics? Are national traditions abandoned or inherited in new ways? Which kind of legacy is conveyed?

My version builds on my registration of TV drama programmes at DR and TV 2. This registration enables me to document and evaluate the whole picture – not only the frontrunners. Part of this picture are the following observations:

- The genre traditions built up during the period 1988-1997 still form a stronghold: historical drama, comedy and satire, melodrama (family drama), crime fiction, Christmas calendars and contemporary realism. But untraditional genres and blends have also appeared, such as thrillers and political dramas, dramadies and historical comedies.
- Series and long serials are the prevailing formats. Series may be long running. Serials of 3 seasons containing 7-10 episodes establish a norm, allowing continuity as well as encouraging innovation.
- Stylistic development is highly dependent on genre, for example the melancholic style developed in Nordic noir-thrillers.
- Low budget productions such as the comedy *Klovnen* can be innovative.

I discuss the implications, limitations and advantages of the current transnational development focusing on genres and ways in which traditions are negotiated. Historical drama tends to uphold national themes and points of view, and everyday comedies often are underpinned by references to current issues, best known in a national context. This does not mean that these genres cannot appeal to international audiences (*1864*, *Rita*). Crime fiction and political drama often imply transnational aspects, thematically as well as regarding location (*Forbrydelsen*, *Borgen*).