The representation of gender and emotion in docusoaps

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The Representation of Gender and Emotion in Docusoaps

by

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The Degree of Master’s of Philosophy

A Master’s Thesis

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of

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By Louise Farrington (2006)
Dedication
This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my wonderful granddad, Eugene Murray, who always made me happy. I love you and think of you always.

Acknowledgements
I would like to first and foremost thank my parents, Patrick and Karen Farrington, for their constant love and support throughout the creating of this thesis. I honestly do not think that I would have gotten this far had it not been for them, I love you. I would also like to thank the rest of my family; my brothers Stephen and Owen and my sister Claire. Of course not forgetting my Nanan, who is always proud no matter what!

In no particular order I would like to say thank you to Simon Reynolds for pushing me when I needed to be pushed and for never loosing faith in me and to Giulia Prenna for the many “you can do its” and for knowing when not to ask “how’s the thesis going”. A ‘special’ merci beaucoup to Chris de la Vallee Poussin whose encouragement has meant so much to me and whose ‘outings’ kept me sane. Also thanks a million to Deirdre Lombard who has been a great help to me throughout. Finally, but definitely not lastly, a big thank you to Louise Clark and Andy Brand who have always been willing to ride the rollercoaster of creating this thesis with me, always there to listen ...thank you both.
Abstract

The representation of gender and emotionality in the major public media has long been the subject of much discussion and research. This thesis sets out to assess the impact on this field of representations of docusoaps, a television programme form, which by crossing generic boundaries has the potential to unpick the ties binding the chain of dichotomies that organise everyday mental maps around the binary oppositions between male/female, reason/emotion, rational/irrational, and public sphere/private sphere.

This question is explored in four main ways; historical and theoretical research on changing concepts of gender and emotionality; contextual research on the origins and development of docusoaps as a genre; detailed textual analyses of the organisation of meaning in three programmes chosen to represent the major sub genres of contemporary docusoaps; and explorations of audience understandings and responses to these programmes using focus group methodology.
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Chapter 1- Introduction

Emotion is a very complex element of our existence, an element that impacts on our lives constantly. It appears as a simple component yet we are so unaware of the extent to which it affects the core structures of our society, not only today but also historically. Emotion appears to be linked to or related with, in some shape or form, many of the prevailing dichotomies of our time such as; male/female, essentialism/anti-essentialism, fact/fiction, private sphere/public sphere and obviously emotion/reason. It is for this very reason that the theorising of emotion is important and essential because it could be the key to the understanding of some of the core binarisms of our postmodern society.

In this paper emotion and gender will be investigated in relation to docusoaps. "Docusoaps can be very dynamic with ‘an emotional structure’ that has a ‘strong impact on the viewer’" (Bondebjerg, 2002; 176). This study is designed to find out how gender and emotionality are represented in docusoaps. In doing this the thesis will investigate the two elements, documentary and soap opera, that have merged in order to make this hybrid sub-genre. With this comes an investigation into several dichotomous relationships such as fact/fiction, rationality/emotionality, male/female, public sphere/private sphere and political/literary. My hope was that through this study we would find out whether docusoaps have challenged binarisms and blurred dichotomies.

In order to answer all of these questions I felt that it was essential that every aspect of the docusoap be dissected in order to discover its place and meaning in our postmodern society.
How better to see how emotion and gender are dealt with then to take a new and fresh genre, like docusoaps. It is for this reason that I chose to look at docusoaps because they appeared to, their title even suggesting this, scramble binarisms and in doing so challenge long held assumptions about men and women and their displays of emotion. I was excited by this prospect, believing that, if this was found to be the case then what we would be looking at would represent an equalising of the playing field for men and women, in which emotionally anything goes! This is something that our patriarchal society has not witnessed as of yet.

Research Questions

The research questions, which this paper set out to investigate and answer, are listed below and are followed by an explanation of how I set out to answer them;

- How is emotion gendered?
- Have we moved into a postmodern state in which it is acceptable for men and women to show emotion? Have we reached a postmodern public sphere of diversity of expression and expressers?
- Have docusoaps challenged the relationship between public/private? Are we seeing, for example, men showing emotion publicly now?
- Do docusoaps bring public and private spheres together in a manner that accepts the role of emotion in cognition?
- How does the contemporary public sphere deal with emotion? Have things changed or are we still seeing social constructionism taking place within a hegemonic society?
• What is it that makes docusoaps so appealing? Is it their emotional realism, their connection to actuality or do they just appeal to the voyeuristic element in each of us?

• Do daily life issues/experiences equal emotional experiences? Is this what we are attracted to? Is this seen as the feminization of respected genres like, for example the news and documentaries?

• What does the popularity of Reality Television (Reality TV) demonstrate? Is private emotional response more fascinating because it has been defined previously as private and therefore out of reach of public display?

• Does making the private public validate our own experiences or merely titillate?

• How do the audience deal with the hybridity of docusoaps?

• How does it impact on the meaning making process?

• Are traditional gendered characteristics challenged or reinforced?

• If, overall, docusoaps are seen as nothing more than entertainment, will they ever truly challenge value judgments based on patriarchal gendered divisions?

In order to answer these research questions this paper takes a step-by-step look at emotion, gender and docusoaps and other elements that affect them. Chapter 2 deals with the ‘history of emotion’, which provides us with an introduction to how emotion and gender have historically been viewed. It is essential that this is done because in order to study contemporary debates around emotion, gender and docusoaps we must have an understanding of what has come before. Chapter 3 then leads the reader into the ‘theorizing of emotion’; creating a theoretical framework early on in the paper. It is
important to recognize that there are many varying theories on emotion, from humans containing an essence to opposing views. It is essential that the reader understand from which theoretical standpoint I attempt to answer the above research questions. Chapter 4 discusses public sphere debates, demonstrating women’s alienation from the political public sphere. Public sphere debates lead nicely into contemporary discussion around docusoaps and what they signify as a hybrid form. Chapters 6 and 7 lead the reader into the analysis of three docusoaps, *Soldiers To Be*, *The Clampers* and *Popstars*. Chapter 6 involves a textual analysis of the three docusoaps with a discussion of various clips. Chapter 7 looks at how audiences receive the three docusoaps. This was achieved through focus groups (all the clips that were shown to the focus groups are highlighted in Chapter 6 by a *). These two chapters allow us to answer some of the more challenging research questions, to find how the sample audience receives emotion and gender in docusoaps and whether as a genre they can be seen as unparalleled. Finally Chapter 8 brings to a close the paper and ties up all loose ends.

It will be immediately noticeable, when reading this thesis, that when I began this study I believed that docusoaps (as a hybrid form) had the potential to deconstruct and even dismantle established binary categories. Unfortunately, I was gradually disappointed as I researched and wrote the thesis systematically. Each chapter acts as a step in an intellectual journey, what I refer to as ‘the journey of discovery’, in which I gradually began to recognise (especially as I reached the stage of writing the chapters on textual analysis and focus groups) that docusoaps, in fact, only confirm these divisions. At the end of each chapter I have added a brief section titled ‘the journey of discovery’ so that
the reader is able to fully embark on this journey with me. This section will outline my thoughts at each stage of the journey.
Chapter 2- Emotion and Gender in Historical Perspective

This chapter explores the shifting relations between emotion and gender focusing particularly on the two historical moments that have had the greatest influence on contemporary constructions- the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement - demonstrating how conceptions of emotion have been inextricably tangled up with the overlapping binary oppositions – male/female and rationality/emotion.

Emotion through Historical Eyes

Even the most cursory reading of the historical record reveals that the interlinked dichotomies between reason and passion (emotion); male and female; and rationality and the irrational, have deep roots in Western cultures (Crawford, 1992; Lupton, 1998; Jaggar, 1990; Lutz, 1990; Fisher, 2000; Gatens, 1996).

"From the beginning of philosophical thought, femaleness was symbolically associated with what Reason supposedly left behind- the dark powers of the earth goddesses, immersion in unknown forces associated with mysterious female powers" (Crawford, 1992:17; Lupton, 1998).

From Ancient Greece onwards men have been seen to be ‘rationally grounded’ while women have been viewed as emotional and irrational and thus inferior (Gatens, 1996; Managan, 1987). In addition, men have been able to choose the way in which they manage their emotion, whether through male, homosexual love or simply through self-control. The legitimacy of expressing homosexual love openly however has varied over time. In the Middle Ages, and in Victorian England, the deepest and most meaningful way for a man to show emotions was through love for another man (Managan, 1987; Lupton, 1998). Such expression during other periods in history has been subject to
negative sanctions and actively discouraged. In contemporary Britain, even though homosexuality has been decriminalised, men are expected to promote a strong and in control, heterosexual attitude. In marked contrast to this variability the expression of emotion for women appears to have remained static. Because women live in a patriarchal society, it can be argued that men have had the opportunity to decide what is acceptable when it comes to the expression of emotions, both for themselves and for women:

"...society continues to devalue women, to segregate them and to preserve the social and cultural conditions of male-dominated society replete with all-male groups...This was true to the nineteenth century as it was of the ninth century" (Managan, 1987: 95).

The strong underlying association of man with reason and woman with emotion has had an effect on the way certain styles of fiction and poetry have been regarded throughout history.

"It has become apparent that suspicion of the emotions and the restriction of their functioning have had dire effects. It has become apparent that the subjective world of desire, imagination and myth is, in the complex economy of human nature, the world from which arise ideals, morality and aesthetic expression. To establish a dichotomy of the emotional and the intellectual and to suspect the ‘subjective’ fosters distortions of many kinds" (O’Conner, 1956: 1).

When studying these dichotomies, most commentators have focused on the Enlightenment and the major reaction to it, which became known as the Romantic Movement. The Enlightenment was concerned with the promotion of intellect, rationality, reason, and science (Shweder, 1984). It was about reason "...not ignorance, emotion or superstition" (Jones, 1985: 130).
Thurley (1983) argues that many novels of the time display a marked ‘dissociation of sensibility’. Writers of the Enlightenment were concerned with creating rational fictions for the reader and not sentimental, irrational prose. Likewise poets of the Enlightenment tried to produce poetry that was ‘concrete’ and ‘less abstract’ than before (Armstrong, 1999: 5). This sort of attitude also governed conduct in public life as well, with men and women being expected to ‘control’ certain emotions while displaying others in acceptable forms. Men, but not women, were allowed “...to express angry and assertive feelings, rather than to express sad and submissive feelings” (Brody, 1999: 243). For women, however, it was the other way around.

Men were able to exercise a considerable degree of choice over their lives and their modes of expression. Women were expected to show control over undesirable emotions, like anger. These unequal degrees of freedom “…reflected and promoted women’s lower status relative to men’s, and continued to enforce women’s lack of control over their own lives” (Brody, 1999: 243; Lutz, 1990). “Maleness is associated with order not disorder, with the mind not the body, with knowledge and subjugation of nature” (Crawford, 1992: 17).

As we move into the later stages of the Enlightenment it is noticeable that many people were beginning to question the foundational principles of the Age of Reason. Several writers of the time wanted to restore “…all natural feelings and bodily passions to a ‘Nature’ they called ‘humane’, they...attacked the gentlemanly hardness they saw making inroads among scholars and aristocrats” (Barker-Benfield, 1996: 66-67). Novelists and
poets attempted to bring sentimentality into their writings. But many resisted, seeing sentimental writing as ‘naive’, and investing the word ‘romantic’ with negative connotations (McGann, 1996; Siebers, 1984). The slippage towards sentiment was seen as a danger to all that was rational in society, a movement in which ‘economics’ and ‘politics’ would be replaced with ‘feeling’ and ‘response’, and male concerns by female concerns (Skinner, 1999). At the same time, observers could not ignore the fact that under this regime of rationality men appeared emotionally ‘cold’ and ‘repressed’. This led in turn to calls for change, not only from women but also from men (Cohen, 1990).

Nineteenth century Romanticism can be seen as the most important reaction to the ‘confinements’ of eighteenth century Enlightenment (Thurley, 1983; Ross, 1989; Shweder, 1984). Early nineteenth century Americans provide a perfect example of this shift in thinking:

“this was a culture which put a high value on feeling and on its full expression. Where their eighteenth century forebears had tried to control emotion, fearing the disruptive effects of unbridled feeling, where they had as a consequence expressed themselves formally, using the form to shape and check the feeling, early nineteenth century Virginians sought to give the fullest and most sincere expression to what they felt” (Taylor, 1989: 293-294).

This was a transformation that reflected a movement towards the externalization of expression that was going on in all Western societies at the time (Taylor, 1989).

The shift from the Enlightenment to Romanticism represented

“...an important transitional stage...in which there was a natural congruency of power and cultural excellence, towards the nineteenth century, where there was a more or less absolute divorce between power and art” (Thurley, 1983: 98).
The Romantic period was seen as a time when the public was able to feel emotions strongly and to express them openly and freely because it was believed that this capacity for expression defined us as uniquely human. Romantic ideology had well and truly "...established its 'sovereignty' in the literary world" (Ross, 1989: 53). English romantic poetry changed the way poems were written forever, with feeling and passion being brought to the forefront. As Taylor (1989) and Summers (1969) point out, romantic poetry was about 'human experience' and 'human relationships'.

“Our ideas about the nature of the individual, the society in which he lives, the natural world which surrounds him, and the role of art in society, all of these are inherited from the Romantic period” (Watson, 1985: 44).

It was at this time that female poets started to emerge in greater numbers and to gain more influence. This is not at all surprising given that women had long been seen as more emotional than men and therefore equipped with a greater ability to write about feelings in the way romanticism demanded. However, it was for this very reason that female writers were more often than not looked down on and feminine writing placed in an inferior position in the 'literary hierarchy' by male critics (Zaczek, 1997: 150).

Howells (1995) points out that;

"the Romantic novel as a genre has most to contribute to English fiction in the area of feeling, by which I mean the whole nonrational side of experience- emotional, imaginative and sensational- and within this genre the Gothic novel makes its own distinctive explorations" (Howells, 1995: 1).

The gothic novel and gothic poetry were an important expression of Romanticism and, like romantic poetry and novels, gave feeling and passion greater importance than reason and rationality. The gothic romance was like nothing written previously in that it was concerned with portraying the power of darkness by substituting terror for love and
anguish, and using these emotions in a violent manner (Fiedler, 1990). This was an unprecedented way of approaching emotion and became extremely popular during the period.

Many of the most successful and popular gothic poets and novelists were women who came under sustained critical fire because “the plots...included mysterious and supernatural events that were intended to frighten the reader (Merritt, 1985: 268), having nothing to do with important issues. Although men were encouraged to express emotions more, raw emotion was still something, which was very much viewed as feminine. Gothic novels and poetry may at first seem to simply be “...an undifferentiated mass of sensationalism” it is also possible to “...see a number of remarkable attempts to explore the private hinterland of the human personality” (Howells, 1995: 27). Howells (1995) goes on to point out that gothic novels and poetry demonstrated

“...problems of personal moral responsibility and judgement, questionings of restrictive convention and a troubled awareness of irrational impulses which threatened to subvert orthodox notions of social and moral propriety” (Howells, 1995:7).

Romanticism then was not irrational sentimentality but rather a different way of engaging with the social issues of the time.

The Romantic Movement changed the way emotion was viewed but it cannot be argued that the Romantic period liberated feelings, passion and sensibility for the benefit of all. Although it did prioritize emotion, it did so to the advantage of men and not women. This could be likened to the contemporary stress on male fashion where men don the
costumes of femininity without any of the consequences, enabling them to have their cake and eat it.

The Romantic period did, however, in literary terms move away from the constraints on expression, which went hand in hand with the Enlightenment. Even with this in mind it was still a period when;

"...ideas and practices had their foundation in neither logic nor empirical science, that ideas and practices fall beyond the scope of deductive and inductive reason, that ideas are neither rational nor irrational but rather nonrational" (Shweder, 1984: 28).

'Passion', 'imagination' and 'inspiration' constituted the nucleus of romanticism with 'imagination' as greater in importance then 'reason' or 'logic' (Jones, 1985; Watson, 1985). Romantic novels and poetry had the goal of making the reader literally feel the words on the page. The writers and poets often looked

"...outwards to nature to find emblems of the mind. They externalize their emotions in describing them through natural correspondences: the calm and steady lake, the high mountain, the stream or the river" (Watson, 1985: 52).

It was almost as if everything was looked on differently, seen with a new pair of eyes,

"Objects are treated with clarity, and the senses are explicit. So, too, are the activities not only of daily working life, but of bodily life, the impulses and receptions that make for sense-experience, as well as the realm of movement.” (Armstrong, 1999: 4).

By giving the expression of emotion so much importance they could be seen as releasing both men and women from the prison that made up public life. For men, Romanticism provided the key to unlock an inner cell of emotional expressiveness and for women it allowed them to share emotionality with the opposite sex.
At the same time, emotion became, or more precisely remained, linked to the female and also, as many novels of the time demonstrated, to gay men and black men as well (O'Farrell, 1997; Jaggar, 1990). Many poets, especially male poets, felt it necessary to relate emotion to the female. For example one male poet of the time was described:

"as a poet and as a man, he identifies softness with vulnerability, vulnerability with earnest feeling, and earnest feeling with weakness. Any display of emotional effusion in his poetry must be given a feminine cause..." (Ross, 1989: 31).

Although it could be said that the Romantic period was liberating for women and men it appears that men still associated emotion with weakness. Sentimental novels and poetry may have been seen as articulating ‘the true voice of feeling’ (McGann, 1996: 170) but this voice continued to be regarded as female.

"The Romantic cult of genius celebrated an ideal of transgressive masculinity while simultaneously endowing the male artist with qualities of sensitivity, intuition and emotional empathy characteristically seen as the province of women" (Felski, 1995: 94).

This is probably because no matter what point in history we look at and no matter what major cultural changes were/are taking place we have always lived in a male hegemonic society (Ross, 1989; Spacks, 1990). This is one of the major criticisms of the sentimentality of the Romantic period; it tended “...to leave the existing social hierarchy intact or stronger than ever before” (Richetti, 1999: 247).

Many critics of the novels of the Romantic period saw plot as being lost if sensibility was a major part of the book (Van Sant, 1996; Spacks, 1990; Skinner, 1999). Even if it is obvious that “...plot is significant in a sensibility narrative, as it is in Gothic fiction, it becomes parodic because subordinated to producing sensations” (Van Sant, 1996: 118). Here we are seeing a perfect example of how sentimentality is looked down on because
of its relationship with the female. As a result it was believed that not only were novels becoming increasingly feminized but men were too:

"As a feminine attribute, all those characteristics that go to make up sensibility are particularly associated with women: the man who possesses them must, necessarily, be in some degree feminised" (Skinner, 1999: 10).

Another demonstration of the need to avoid the 'feminization of men' is provided by one poet of the period who believed that "any display of emotional effusion in his poetry must be given a feminine cause or undercut with masculine derision or both" (Ross, 1989: 31; Spacks, 1990).

It is at this point that we truly see the failings of romanticism as a force for eroding gendered dichotomies.

"The romantic desire to articulate visions that can speak for the whole, in the end, is betrayed by the poets' need to adopt a masculine posture made in order to fulfil that desire, a posture made to seem natural and universal by suppressing its own vital relation to the politics of gender" (Ross, 1989:49).

Men felt it necessary to demonstrate their masculinity in order to retain power as we see with many female poets, for example Mary Chandler (1687-1745): "Her poetry like her body, is presented as weak and lame, required the helping hand of a male authority to give it acceptable coherent shape" (Armstrong, 1999: 37).

“Sentimentality, whether in women or men, was an inescapably feminine attribute” and anyone who dealt with it, whether it be in public life, novels or poetry “...were recognised as dealing in a feminine form” (Skinner, 1999: 2). It was because of this perceived feminization of the public that change was demanded in the late nineteenth century. Men were once again expected to be strong and unemotional, while women were, as before,
expected to be the emotional sex. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century men were encouraged to spend time with the family, in order to provide a strong masculine role model for their sons because it was feared that they would become too feminized being around their mothers all the time (Lupton, 1998).

Men were taught to believe that by controlling their emotions they were demonstrating strength. This is something that women do not encounter as much because their expression of emotions is much more acceptable; "emotional self-denial is often more familiar to men than it is to women, who are allowed to be more 'emotional', though they are put down for it" (Seidler, 1991: 89). The public began to accept

"...the stereotype that it was masculine to be aggressive, forceful, tough, assertive, decisive and independent. Having feelings was irrelevant. It was feminine to feel, care and nurture" (Cohen, 1990: 76).

Neither of these stereotypical role positions are of any benefit to either men or women. On the contrary they limit both sexes.

By the 1920's anthropologists agreed that society was split into two; between emotional women and 'feeling-dead men' (Cohen, 1990: 75). By the 1940's boys were taught to be strong men and scolded for showing emotions (which was associated with weakness), while girls were comforted when they cried (Lutz, 2001; Managan, 1987). Mundane actions like these anchored the stereotype of what it was to be a man and to be a woman ever more securely in the everyday interactions of Western cultures.

"Although the emotionality of women is a familiar cultural stereotype, its grounding is quite shaky. Women appear more emotional than men because they, along with some groups of people of colours, are permitted and even required to express emotion more openly. In contemporary western culture, emotionally
inexpressive women are suspected as not being real women, whereas men who express their emotions freely are suspected of being homosexual or in some other way deviant from the masculine ideal” (Jaggar, 1990: 157).

Men and women are now expected to fit into these prescribed conventions. Neither appears to be to the benefit of men or women (Jaggar, 1990). Contemporary western cultures are united in the stereotypical belief that women are more emotional than men (Fisher, 2000; Lutz, 2001; Seidler, 1991). History makes us aware that whilst men and women may feel the same emotions, it is the social and cultural hegemony of the time which will decide whether it is acceptable for particular groups to express them or not.

How then is emotion gendered in the present-day? Have we moved into a state in which men and women are both allowed and expected to display both emotion and reason? Is this because more women are taking up positions of responsibility in the workplace, the media, or because men are playing a greater role in the private sphere? These are all questions that will be investigated in later chapters.

Contemporary literature and popular culture have inherited part of the emphasis on expression from the Romantic period. For example “the soft-boiled mystery novel...inherits the blush along with other preoccupations...but its blushes are largely conventional and uninvested” (O’Farrell, 1997: 141). What stands out however from the study of the history of emotion is the recognition that our Western society is a society that is historically defined by patriarchy. Therefore, although shifts in the relationship between emotion and gender have occurred in different time periods, these changes have largely been to the benefit of men whilst women appear to have remained in a static
expressive state. The next chapter discusses the ways in which emotion has been theorized revealing clear links between historical representations of emotion and contemporary debate. The preliminary investigation of history and theory will lead us to the primary focus of the present study—docusoaps—and to the main question; by combining elements from previously separate programme forms (the one strongly associated with rational exposition, the other with sentimentality) do docusoaps provide a new kind of cultural space in which the long established self-reinforcing dichotomies—male/female, rationality/emotion—can be challenged and perhaps even overturned?

*The Journey of Discovery*

At this point in the study I was very positive, believing that docusoaps would astonish by demonstrating that it had managed to break down dichotomies and in doing so reveal that society had moved on in leaps and bounds. Although faced with the historical evidence that pointed out that this would be an extremely difficult task, I was sanguine in my belief that it could be achieved.
Chapter 3- Theorizing emotion

The brief historical investigation presented in the last chapter suggested that whereas the Enlightenment with its overarching focus on rationality and science reinforced essentialist views of the relations between gender and emotion, the Romantic Movement's championing of 'imagination' and 'feeling' supported anti-essentialist views, although, as we noted, these were continually recuperated to repair core dualities.

Throughout the modern period there has been constant traffic between medical and social theories and popular culture with expert knowledge providing a major resource that can be plundered and reshaped into saleable forms. Darwin's model of evolution and Freud's notion of the unconscious, for example, have been plundered by countless popular fictions. Consequently, to fully understand the way that docusoaps construct the relations between gender and emotion we need to briefly review the theoretical repertoires that are available to be drawn on. Accordingly, this chapter looks in greater detail at the ways the overlapping dichotomies - male/female, rationality/emotion - have been constructed or challenged by various major currents of theory within the social and human sciences.

Theorizing Emotion

Emotions have been theorised from many different perspectives. Lupton (1998) neatly summarises these various views:

"emotions as coming from within the self/body; emotion as the product of thought; emotion as instinctive response to stimulus; emotion as the interrelation of mind and body; emotion as part of the soul; emotion as the product of experience or learning" (Lupton, 1998: 69).
Theories of emotion fall broadly into two camps: those that are essentialist and those that are anti-essentialist.

"Essentialism is most commonly understood as a belief in the real true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the 'whatness' of a given entity" (Fuss, 1990: xi).

Essentialism states that emotion is something that cannot be 'learned' or 'constructed' rather it is dependent on sex and inscribed in our genes. The view that women are more emotional than men is explained by recourse to biological differences (Lutz, 1990; Brody, 1999). Essentialism demands that we “…think of ourselves as having a particular nature, both as individuals and as a species (i.e. ‘human nature’), and this nature determines what people can and cannot do” (Burr, 1995: 20).

Anti-essentialism, in contrast states that

“since the social world, including ourselves as people, is the product of social processes, it follows that there cannot be any given, determined nature to the world or people. There are no ‘essences’ inside things or people that make them what they are” (Burr, 1995: 5).

Anti-essentialists, such as social constructionists, believe that essentialism places unnecessary constraints on men and women by asserting that they have an ‘essence’ that is unchanging. They believe strongly that this results in injustice to human beings “…and beneath the lie of essentialism is a whole teleology of false dichotomies” (Brunner, 1998: 29). Anti-essentialism provides men and women with the opportunity for change. In denying that we all have an inherent essence that governs our behaviour we come to see our identities as learned and taught and therefore open to willed choice (Thomas, 1999; Burr, 1995).
Essentialism: *Evolutionary Theories*

In 1872 Charles Darwin wrote that he believed that emotional expressions both in man and animals were 'innate' and 'inherited' "...that is, have not been learnt by the individual" (Darwin, 1998: 348). He was supported by most of his fellow scientists. His essentialist theory stated that emotions had an evolutionary history (Plutchik, 1994; Lazarus, 1970; Harre, 1996). He believed this was for four reasons: firstly, many lower animals were seen to have some of the same expressions of emotion; secondly young children were seen to have some of the same emotional expressions as adults before it was believed they could have realistically learnt them; thirdly people who were born blind expressed emotions in exactly the same way as those who could see; and fourthly many expressions of emotions appear in a similar form in a diversity of races and groups of humans (Plutchik, 1994).

Since Darwin a number of writers have offered variants of evolutionary theories, but all of them "...share a profound belief in the generality of emotions across species and in the concept that emotions have positive adaptive value" (Plutchik, 1980: 44). In relation to gender the 'unemotional man' and the 'emotional female' (Lupton, 1998) exist because it is argued, we are essentially made in this way and have evolved in accordance with this reality. We, like animals, are in a sense already 'prepacked' (our emotions and reactions, are predetermined and therefore beyond our control) so it seems pointless trying to fight this fact.

"As the task of conforming to a specified physical design is a gender mission that few...care to resist, conforming to a prepackaged emotional design is another imperative task of gender" (Brownmiller, 1984: 207).
Evolutionary theory believes that our reactions and actions are instinctive.

"Physiological disturbances characterizing emotions (facial grimaces, changes in the metabolic rate, sweating, trembling, tears and so on) are continuous with the instinctive responses of our prehuman ancestors..." (Jaggar, 1997: 389).

Consequently, the way men and women express emotion is inescapable and should not be stifled in an attempt to change. It is part of our nature, our 'essence'. Here, the body, as in physiological theories, is of the utmost importance and central to the concept of emotion.

Essentialism: Physiological Theories

Physiological theories view "...emotions as an essentially non-cognitive, involuntary phenomenon which, though capable of influencing intelligence, language and culture, is not itself dependent upon these complex and historically conditioned factors" (Harre, 1986: 2-3). Physiologists look first at emotion and its peripheral physiological activity and secondly at the central nervous system as influencing emotion processes (Harre, 1996; 219). As an essentialist standpoint, physiological perspectives on emotion tend to look at 'genetic hardwiring' (Biologism) as the influential factor in determining how we express emotions (Kaplan, 1990; Grosz, 1992; McNaughton, 1989). They also "...very broadly speaking, argue that women's reproductive functions are governed by biological constraints, which in turn shape their social lives" (Smith, 1986: 89).

This sort of Biological Determinism, like evolutionary theories, state that we cannot really change how we act because biology has already decided. Therefore it is the physiological differences in males and females, which make our behaviour so different...
(Simon, 1969). Women live in 'masculine parameters' (Irigaray, 1996) because that is the position that our biological make-up has determined. A woman's body has decided how she will operate. From this view, "...people with wombs are more likely to be emotionally unstable" (Goddard, 2000: 1) because emotion is a direct result of biological make-up. Men have been made biologically stronger, rational and unemotional. "Men are seen to be the providers, the breadwinners, the protectors of women and children, strong people with little emotional need upon whom the family can lean" (Orbach, 1983: 56).

If we accept either the evolutionary theory or the physiological theory of emotion then what we are left with is a 'natural' self that cannot be altered. This is pure essentialism that leaves little or no room for manoeuvre and excludes all that is social about us. When psychology comes into the frame essentialism starts to be diluted slightly in psychophysiological theory as the ideas of constructionism creep in at the margins, moving us away from a fundamentalist essentialism, although essentialist it remains. Other psychological approaches try to address the social more fully.

Essentialism: Psychophysiological

The Psychophysiological perspective concerns "the association of emotional with physiological processes on the basis of extrinsic symbolic relationships" (Harre, 1996: 206). William James was the 'founder' of the psychophysiological tradition, with his theory becoming known as the 'James-Lange Theory' (Lange being a contributor to the theory). James described emotions as having two groups of phenomena, a physiological
and a psychological, in which physiology played a greater role (Denzin, 1984; Sartre, 1971). He said "...we feel emotional because we sense our body reacting" and therefore "it follows that each different emotion must be accompanied by different bodily reactions" (Grings, 1978: 3; Plutchik, 1994).

Thus the idea of psychophysiological theories is that without bodily reactions, there will be no emotion. James believed that the physical causes the emotion, for example tears cause the feeling of sadness (Sartre, 1971). Another example is when "we do a performance, have butterflies, tremble and stutter" this results "...in our feeling anxious" (Strongman, 1973: 14). This theoretical approach says that "...physiological disturbances are integral elements in emotion" but psychological issues should to some extent be considered (Jaggar, 1997: 388).

Psychophysiological theories account for the view that women express emotions more than men (Hatfield, 1994) by claiming that women feel emotional more often than men. Men do not have bodily reactions as often as women do because this is not how they have been made. This type of theory leaves little space for women and by the same token men to manoeuvre, as our bodies are essentially in control of us, leaving the claim that "...women activists should be dismissed because their emotionalism made them irrational" (Montini, 1996: 9) a seemingly reasonable one.

Essentialism: Psychological Theories
Psychological theories of emotion look at 'cognitive', 'affective', 'phenomenological', 'situational', 'motivational' and 'interactional' aspects in humans (Denzin, 1984: 21; Strongman, 1973). Janet's Theory provides us with a useful example of a psychological theory in which it is believed that emotion involves mental and physical phenomena (Sartre, 1971). Psychological theories take "...emotions out of the unconscious into the conscious world of the person" (Denzin, 1984: 23). These theories build on the 'physiological and neurological substrate' of emotions (Denzin, 1984: 23). “Genetic causes are effective independently of experience (innate) while environmental factors are dependent only upon it” (Richardson, 2000: 6-7), suggesting that psychological theory places a great deal of importance on the essentialist factors of the body.

However, as Segal et al. (1997) state, psychology has 'no unifying theory' and for this reason struggles to decide whether it is primarily essentialist or anti-essentialist. Some commentators describe it as leaning towards the body (as shown above) while others believe that it favours cultural factors more. For example Domagalski (1999) states that in psychological terms emotion is described as an 'individualized', 'intrapersonal' response to a stimulus. From the point of view of some authors writing about psychological theory, we are no longer a 'whole' with predetermined reactions but instead a separate entity with individual responses and expressions (Denzin, 1984). The body is of little importance because emotions are cognisant to humans and not as other more essentialist theories conceive them to be, "...natural bodily experiences and expressions...unconscious rather than deliberate" (Edwards, 1997: 170).
Therefore psychological theory could both disagree and agree with, for example, the change from the old, non-expressive male to the 'new man', who "...combines feminine intimacy and emotional expression with masculine independence and competence" (Cancian, 1987: 8). No matter which way psychological theory chooses to lean, it is important that it acknowledges that culture and biology are not enemies of each other. It is necessary to integrate 'sociocultural models and changing social structures and processes' with 'unchanging genetic underlay' (Segal, 1997: 532). It could be argued that it is better "...to recognise that the human is a complex blending of emotional/social needs and motives- as well as reasoning processes and sensory experiences" (Birkeland, 1995, 179). However the fact of the matter is that because psychological theory involves a genetic underlay that is unchanging it has a foot firmly in the door of essentialism.

**Anti-Essentialism: Social Constructionism**

Social constructionism believes that

"...most standard emotional reactions transcend any biological imperatives related to self- or species- preservation. They are based instead on human capabilities above the animal level and, in particular, on the ability of man to create symbolic systems of thought and behaviour (i.e. culture)" (Harre, 1996: 223).

Therefore social constructionism does not doubt that the expression of emotions has roots in biology but it denies that this is the most important element and that we are therefore all *essentially* the same. Thus individuals behave in a way that can be understood through gaining an insight into their social group because their culture teaches them how to act or react (Harre, 1986; Mussen, 1969). Social constructionists believe "...that once emotions have been socially constructed, they 'feel' natural..." and we continue to use them in social interaction depending on our position in culture (Lutz, 2001: 157).
Children are taught what their culture expects or accepts, for example to fear strangers, enjoy spicy food, and "on a less conscious level, children also learn what their culture defines as the appropriate ways to express the emotions that it recognises" (Jaggar, 1997: 389; Jaggar, 1990; Underwood, 1997). Emotions are not innate or biological but instead socially constructed. "Constructionism maintains that emotions are constituted by non-natural attitudes, these being acquired in, and explicable by reference to, specifically sociocultural contexts" (Harre, 1986: 37).

Montini (1996) carried out a qualitative study on the role of gender and emotion in a political setting and found that men and women are aware of how their culture expects them to respond to certain situations and what is the 'right' way to express their emotions. It was the social conventions of their culture that determined how they would act. Social constructionist's believe that we are taught early on which emotions we should express and which emotions we should control (Cohen, 1990).

For the most part feminism, in particular socialist and liberal feminism, also takes an anti-essentialist approach (Birke, 1996), exemplifying a strong antipathy towards the notion of an unchanging essence in human beings. However, some forms of radical feminism believe that women are inherently different to men and adopt separatist gynocentric politics (Steele, 1997).

**Feminist Approaches to Emotion**
As noted above, socialist and liberal feminist theories are on the whole anti-essentialist;

"...the body in question is pursued in its socially, culturally, experientially, or psychically constituted forms, but rarely in its physiologically, biochemically or microbiologically constituted form, the idea of biological construction having been rendered either unintelligible or naive" (Wilson, 1998: 15).

Such theories of emotion are primarily defined in opposition to essentialism, denying that we have a human essence that can explain why we express ourselves in certain ways.

"For human beings exist in a social environment structured through language and symbols and this plays a much more influential role in determining how we behave than do the biological factors which we share with other animals" (Jackson, 1996: 63).

Feminist theories on emotion are primarily concerned with women in society. They believe that women are dominated by men and as a result are taught to react in a subordinate manner including being more emotional (Beauvoir, 1953; Grosz, 1992; Green, 1995). For example when angry, women may cry as a means of expression, this is often viewed as an ‘inferior’ way to express oneself in a patriarchal society because it implies weakness. Most socialist and liberal feminists do not believe that humans are merely defined by biology believing that such a view has resulted in women’s subordination to men, through denying the possibility for change (Birke, 1996; Jamieson, 1998; Beauvoir, 1953; McNay, 1992):

"simplistic accounts of animal societies combine with various normative assumptions derived from our own society to yield a powerful picture of coy submissive females and dominant, pioneering males" (Birke, 1996: 108).

Rather it is agreed that it is culture that has created this hierarchy:

"Women and men are divided by gender, made into the sexes as we know them, by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institutionalizes male sexual dominance and female sexual submission" (Mackinnon, 1997: 73).
It is almost as if there is a political necessity for feminism to follow an anti-essentialist argument;

"Feminist essentialism is exposed as a strategy of power, an attempt to enclose and foreclose the field of feminism which can backfire in policy debates: to attribute to women a set of essential characteristics or experiences (caring, compassionate, etc.) can have the effect of reproducing existing inequalities" (Fenton, 2000: 725).

Anti-essentialism is seen as providing feminists with a political tool that allows them to demand change for the simple reason that change is possible. It provides women with the opportunity for social democratic progress.

Some Feminist theories on emotion believe strongly that at a young age boys and girls are taught to act in certain ways. For example, girls are taught that shouting is unladylike while boys are encouraged to be assertive. Feminists say that this has devastating consequences for how society is constructed. While we may be aware of this and should stop it from occurring many feminists believe that it still continues;

"although, there is no reason to suppose that the thoughts and actions of women are any more influenced by emotion than the thoughts and actions of men, the stereotypes of cool men and emotional women continue to flourish because they are confirmed by an uncritical daily experience" (Jaggar, 1990: 158).

Anti-essentialist feminism believes that we can alter this reality because "like everything else that is human, emotions...are socially constructed" (Jaggar, 1997: 395).

Anti-essentialist feminism goes further to argue that essentialism's use of the body as an explanation for how we act/react is merely a means for men to maintain superiority:

"The idea that women are inferior to men is naturalised and, thus, legitimised by reference to biology...Women's bodies are marked as inferior by being compared
with men’s bodies, according to male standards... and... biological functions are conflated with social characteristics” (McNay, 1992: 17).

It is for this very reason that most feminists tend to take up anti-essentialist positions that provide them with the opportunity to contest women’s position in society.

However it is important that we recognise that some feminists have chosen to take up the essentialist view or as Steele (1997) puts it, ‘the gynocentric position’ over ‘the constructivist position’ (anti-essentialist view). The gynocentric position “...argues for the distinctiveness and value of women’s practices and an embodied, situated subject” (Steele, 1997: 76). This is a view that believes that women should all be united in their womanhood or female essence and do things the way they want to, instead of trying to go against who they are in order to fit in under a patriarchal system.

“Women have been stereotyped and devalued, and they do not simply want access to a world that is already scripted; they want to redefine the texts, ‘the symbolic order’, in which we and our children will live” (Steele, 1997: 85).

Thus the gynocentric position takes a political standpoint based on the desire to ‘affirm women’s practices’ against men’s and to reject equality by ‘male standards’ (Steele, 1997).

This essentialist point of view for feminists is also taken up in queer politics. Lesbian women and gay men are also very much concerned with debates around essentialism and anti-essentialism (de Lauretis, 1991). In this case the essentialist view, like the ‘gynocentric position’, believes that instead of only seeing homosexuals as deviant from the ‘natural’ form of heterosexuality
“...male and female homosexualities- in their current sexual-political articulations of gay and lesbian sexualities...may be reconceptualised as social and cultural forms in their own right, albeit emergent ones and thus still fuzzily defined, undercoded or discursively dependent on more established forms” (de Lauretis, 1991: iii).

Thus it is an essentialist view that believes that homosexuals should be united in their sexual preference, which is seen to be their essence. Instead of trying to mould themselves to a heterosexual society, which would go against who they are, they should instead ‘redefine the texts’. Many feminist lesbians find this especially necessary because of the way in which there is an

“...association of heterosexuality with the natural, the healthy, the living and the life-giving, and its consequent linking of homosexuality with the unnatural, the sick, the dead and deadly...” (de Lauretis, 1991: x).

Essentialist feminist lesbians and essentialist gay men are very different from their anti-essentialist peers believing that,

“...while some would try to constitute ‘identity’ as the ground for claiming larger social inclusion (e.g. we are the same as everybody else and hence should not be treated differently), others would use ‘difference’ as a strategy to interrupt the hegemony of dominant social/sexual arrangements (e.g. we are different and our difference will resist those practices that try to make us the same)” (Cohen, 1991: 73).

However there are those who believe that in trying to get rid of this sort of negative dichotomy of heterosexuality and homosexuality we actually reinforce dominant ways of seeing.

“The basic taboo in patriarchal society is against homosexuality and lesbianism. Domination by men is based on their splitting the world into the categories of women and men, heterosexuals and homosexuals” (Douglas, 1990: 152; Tyler, 1994).

Therefore essentialism has been criticised for intensifying dichotomies.
It is probably for this very reason that many feminists remain suspicious of essentialism, affirming their loyalty to anti-essentialism. Essentialism claims that all women are fundamentally the same whereas anti-essentialism embraces difference and heterogeneity in both feminism and the category 'woman'. However feminists still want to make the political point that women \textit{in general} are oppressed under patriarchy which is where 'Strategic Essentialism' comes into play (Spivak, 1992). Strategic Essentialism is a political approach that allows feminists to continue to argue from a collective point of view. It recognises that “there can be no feminist position that is not in some way or other involved in patriarchal power relations” (Fenton, 2000; 736) and therefore is not in some way or other speaking for all women who exist in patriarchy. Thus feminists are saying that we must strategically use essentialism while recognising, paradoxically, that difference is our starting point (Fenton, 2000).

It is for this reason that;

\begin{quote}
"Feminism is placed in an unenviable position: either it clings to feminist principles that entail its avoidance of essentialist and universalist categories (in which case its rationale as a political struggle centred around women is problematised); or it accepts the limitations patriarchy imposes on its conceptual schemas and models and abandons the attempts to provide autonomous self-defined terms in which to describe women and femininity" (Grosz, 1995: 55).
\end{quote}

This has produced something of a theoretical stalemate with essentialist and anti-essentialist polar positions threatening to stymie theoretical development. However, some commentators are beginning to challenge the absolutism of the essentialism versus anti-essentialism divide suggesting that if we were to get rid of ‘the last bastion of the
mind-body dichotomy' (Segal, 1997: 527) and allow for knowledge of biology and culture to be united then we will be able to move towards a more sophisticated approach. In order “to develop transformative theories and strategies...” (Birkeland, 1995, 178) on emotion it is argued that it is vital to do this. ‘Transformative’ refers here to the ability to change whilst ‘strategies’ signals an argument that can counter anti-feminists.

Contemporary debate however is presently caught in a stalemate with feminists anxious to ensure women are not forever bound by stereotypical characterizations and that the influence of patriarchal culture is given due consideration.

The feminist project that has begun to look afresh at the antagonism between biology and culture that has dominated feminist philosophy in modern times has been termed ‘New Biology’. It is a line of thought that should and must be considered (Irigaray, 1996).

“What ought to guide theory and practice are democratic values of mutual recognition, attention to others, autonomy, freedom, equality and care...In this way, a feminist democratic project re-emerges from the constructivist and gynocentric critiques” (Steele, 1997: 94).

New Biology provides this opportunity, not just for feminists but other theorists of the subject. It gives us the chance to release the stranglehold exerted by the polarised positions of essentialism and anti-essentialism and to challenge existing orthodoxies. But before that it is important to look at Sociological theories.

Anti-Essentialism: Sociological Theories

Sociological theories see emotions as most importantly social in origin but also acknowledge physiological aspects (Thoits, 1990). They are concerned with society and believe that it is from here that we will be able to gain an almost complete understanding
of emotion. "A sociological perspective reveals how seemingly individual experience and action, such as emotions, are influenced by social forces" (Gordon, 1990).

Sociologists believe that the way our society, for example, places men in the public sphere and women in the private sphere will have an enormous influence on the way in which males and females express/repress their emotions or in what forms they are shown. The core belief of the majority of sociological theories is to suggest that, "most emotions originate in cultural definitions of human relationships, not in human biological nature" (Gordon, 1990: 150). Also that "through socialization, individuals learn to feel, attend to, express and recognise the particular emotions identified in their society" (Gordon, 1990: 151).

Several sociologists have begun to question the foundations of their teachings in light of a revival of some of the ideas of essentialism. They have started to argue that the expression of emotion may be concerned with biological components and social components combined (Brody, 1999; Thoits, 1990; Kemper, 1990; MacDonald, 1988).

Based on the notion that "emotions are embodied experiences...The place of the body as an instrument in the expression of the emotion cannot be denied" (Denzin, 1984: 30).

Sociological theorists are attempting to understand further the interconnections between the social and the physiological. As Kemper (1990) argues:

"...a complete theory of emotion must ultimately deal with the fact that emotion is biologically rooted, and regardless of the degree of social conversion, construction or management, the interface between the two must be illuminated" (Kemper, 1990: 21).
This is a crucial step for sociological theories as they head into unknown and difficult
territory.

"Although sociologists of emotions are not required to explore physiological
questions, they also must see the merit of any approach that makes possible some
articulation between the two domains." (Kemper, 1990: 230).

This is where New Biology comes into its own.

Essentialism versus Anti-Essentialism revisited: New Biology

'New Biology' is a contemporary way of looking at emotions; one that promotes a
'doubled commentary' (Wilson, 1998: 199) and has for this reason proved controversial.
It combines constructionist views with essentialist views. Supporters of New Biology
believe that it is necessary that essentialism be reconsidered, something which many
feminist theories have chosen to deny.

"Over the last few years there have been hesitant yet increasing signs that
'essentialism', as it is commonly understood, is not necessarily 'something' which
we could, or should, dissociate ourselves" (Kirby, 1991: 92).

Theorists who follow the ideas of New Biology recognise that by choosing to go either to
one extreme, as for example evolutionary theorists do, or to the other, like many anti-
essentialist feminist theorists, one looses sight of the role that both might actually play.
They ask the question; 'can we really continue to be comfortable, as most contemporary
theories are, with the belief that there is nothing natural about us and that we are merely
products of our culture?' (Kirby, 1991; Lowe, 1986; Oudshoorn, 1994; Fuss, 1990;
Wilson, 1998)? They argue that both constructionism and essentialism need each other
and that the opposition that has been created between the two is misguided. "The
building blocks or raw materials must in some sense be essentialist. In short, constructionism ultimately implies and relies on essentialism" (Grosz, 1994: 213).

According to this argument, in order to get out of the rut, which contemporary theories on emotion have got into, it is essential that we reconsider the essentialist argument. However while suggesting that we need to think about biology again, New Biology emphasizes that this is "...without falling back into biologically essentialist presumptions" (Wilson, 1998: 63). This sort of view obviously is a difficult one for many feminist theorists who strongly believe that biology should not be reconsidered as it is in no way, shape or form conducive to change, something which is imperative to the feminist project. New Biology rocks the boat by throwing "...into question the stability and impermeability of the essentialist/constructionist binarism" (Fuss, 1990: 1-2).

Emphasizing instead interplay between the two (Braidotti, 1994), New Biology claims, "for all the components of emotion...we have evidence for both 'innate' and 'learned' determinants of their form" (McNaughton, 1989: 181). As Wilson (1998) sums up:

"...antibiologism, antiessentialism...are loosing their critical and political purchase- not necessarily because they are wholly mistaken, but because they have relied on, and reauthorized, a separation between the inside and the outside, the static and the changeable, the natural and the political, the chromosomal and the cultural" (Wilson, 1998: 200).

New Biology believes that in order to move forward we must in a sense look to the 'old' way of thinking. As Kirby (1991) points out, it is crucial that we reconsider essentialism and thus in a sense return to 'the body'.
New Biology attempts to eliminate oppositions that have for so long been in place. As a theory it argues that previous theories on emotion have created binarisms. Emotion is continually related to oppositions, for example;

"emotions are seen to be 'honest' in their closeness to nature, contrasted with the 'artificiality' of culture. Emotion is positioned against estrangement or disengagement in the same way as life is contrasted with death, community and connection against alienation, the subjective against the objective and authentic against the contrived" (Lupton, 1998: 89).

Unfortunately the very fact that it plays into essentialism means that it has headed into thorny territory.

**Conclusion**

I approach this study from the theoretical framework of social constructionism where I take an anti-essentialist approach. I accept that 'the body' plays a part but deny that it plays the most fundamental role in the making of man and woman. This theoretical position that I have taken is reinforced when we look at how emotion and gender have been dealt with by men and women historically. Society has dictated what has and is considered an acceptable display of emotion and gender by men and women.

Unfortunately because of the patriarchal nature of our society, this is being set from a male vantage point.

I have pointed out in the previous chapter that the relationship between women and emotion has historically remained static, while men have had more variation. This does not contradict the argument that emotion is socially constructed. Docusoaps, as a postmodern creation, are the perfect base to see what our society expects from men and
women when displaying emotion nowadays; for example are women still expected to be
more emotional than men but yet are they still continually criticized and denigrated for
conforming to type (Seidler, 1991)?

What we are left with is the idea that if we are to look at history (as shown in the previous
chapter) and the present day we will be able to see whether change has taken place
(docusoaps is a creation of today's society). Are docusoaps merely playing with the idea
of change but never actually intending to carry out this change; 'flirtations of change' that
are ultimately deceiving us into thinking that the road to change has begun to be
travelled? To explore these debates further and pursue their relevance to the thesis in
hand we now turn to the concept of the public sphere, since it is in this sphere, and more
specifically in the mediated public sphere constructed by the contemporary media, that
competing theoretical models are drawn on and translated in popular cultural forms.
However, this process is only part of the story.

As we shall see, the mediated public sphere has a double relation to constructing the links
between gender and emotion. It not only represents (and plays with) these relations
through an array of cultural forms, it also embodies them through the institutionalized
ways it separates these forms, and their audiences.

_The Journey of Discovery_

At this stage in my intellectual journey I remained in a positive frame of mind. Coming
from a social constructionist vantage point, I was in no doubt that docusoaps would
demonstrate that many of the dichotomies, that men and women had lived with historically, had become hazy. Docusoaps would show that change was occurring because of its hybrid nature.
Chapter 4- Rethinking the Public Sphere

This chapter begins with a discussion of Jurgen Habermas' highly influential conception of the public sphere and goes on to examine the argument mounted by feminist critics who allege that Habermas' model excludes certain forms of expression from the political public sphere because they are linked to the feminine (a question we shall return to later in our analysis of docusoaps). This will lead us into the dialogue surrounding the contemporary mediated public sphere and how it deals with gender and emotion.

Habermas' Conception of the Public Sphere

Jurgen Habermas, the contemporary German philosopher whose 1962 book, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, introduced the term 'the public sphere' into mainstream academic debate defines it as;

"...a realm of freedom and permanence. Only in the light of the public sphere did that which existed become revealed, did everything become visible to all. In the discussion among citizens issues were made topical and took on shape" (Habermas, 1989: 4).

In other words, he envisages it as a space of debate and discussion in which talk could be conducted freely and openly. His public sphere is therefore

"...a zone for discourse which serves as a locus for the exploration of ideas and the crystallization of a public view...in which there is sufficient access to information so that irrational discourse and the pursuit of beneficial general norms is made more likely" (Price, 1995: 24).

It is a sphere of social expression where it is hoped that the sharing of information and ideas and the rational resolution of disputes will produce a provisional consensus capable of supporting progressive change.

"By the 'public sphere' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every
conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion—that is, with the guarantee of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions—about matters of general interest” (University of Maryland, no date, www.wam.umd.edu/~jklumpp/spch652/Pemble.htm#Moves, 28 November 2001).

Habermas argued that free speech and consensus building within a public arena was essential to the “…development of a healthy public sphere” (University of Maryland, no date, www.wam.umd.edu/~jklumpp/spch652/Pemble.htm#Moves, 28 November 2001) but that ‘consensus’ could only be achieved by people shedding their subjective views and replacing them with a commitment to rational debate (no date, www.georgetown.edu/bassr/gaynor/publics.htm, 28 November 2001). This emphasis on rationality is one of the most important aspects of Jurgen Habermas’ conception of the public sphere. Indeed, his main goal was to legitimize “…political authority through rational discussion and reasoned agreement” (Barna, no date, www.baylor.edu/~Andrew_Barna/habermasbio.htm, 28 November 2001).

Habermas sees this end being achieved through a democratic approach with an open discussion in which all are involved and included, and all topics and issues can be discussed. He

“Like the postmodernists…hopes to create a dialogue which occurs outside of the realm of government and the economy. But Habermas’ public sphere model attempts to thwart postmodern, chaotic dissipation by reinstalling Enlightenment values of reason and freedom into a modern discourse which aims at pragmatic consensus” (no date, www.georgetown.edu/bassr/gaynor/publics.htm, 28 November 2001).
The public sphere then is an arena that promotes rational argument based on empirical evidence rather than the emotional sympathy generated by fiction. It is for this reason that many theorists have labelled it as primarily a male domain (Dahlgren, 1992). Habermas felt that if the public sphere focused on rationality then it would “...produce democratic judgments which...” would “...have universal application while remaining anchored within the practical realm of discourse among individuals” (no date, www.georgetown.edu/bassr/gaynor/publics.htm, 28 November 2001). At the same time, in his original formulation of the concept he accepts that, alongside the ‘political public sphere’ devoted to rational discussion of issues of the day and holding public authority to account, the end of the eighteenth century also sees the emergence of a ‘public sphere in the world of letters’, based on the novel, which attracted readers interested in ‘what was “human”, in self-knowledge, and in empathy’ (Habermas, 1989: 50). As he points out, whereas the political public sphere was dominated by men, particularly men of property, ‘women and servants often took a more active part in the literary public sphere’ (Habermas 1989: 56).

This ‘cultural public sphere’, as later writers have dubbed it (acknowledging that it now extends beyond popular literature to the whole range of popular culture), was from the beginning, a feminised and proletarian sphere, powerfully rooted in the emerging entertainment complex of cheap theatres and pleasure parks, standing in marked contrast to the sober pursuits of reading respectable journals of opinion and taking part in coffee-house debate that Habermas saw as forming the basis of the political public sphere. ‘Reality’ TV and the more raucous forms of participatory talk shows stand in a direct line of descent to these early precursors and the fact that women continue to ‘take a more active part’ in them as consumers has made them a
logical focus for feminist commentary on the relations between the ‘two’ public spheres.

**Feminist Analysis of the Public Sphere**

Feminism is concerned with the constitution of power and inequality in relation to gender (Mackinnon, 1997). It has been demonstrated time and time again that our society has an aversion to anything that is viewed as being too feminine or feminised (Joyrich, 1990). In the late 1960’s, during the Women’s Movement, women fought for more rights and equality with men. “These rights were regarded as the rights which citizens could possess in the public realm” (Seidler, 1991: 33). Women felt that they were being treated as the negative pole in a series of dualities and that anything connected to them was as a result subordinated;

“...women grow into a social order, the meaning of which have been shaped by a male social order. We must necessarily construct ourselves in terms of our positioning in that order and in relation to the hegemonic understandings. While men, too, construct themselves within the same matrix, their location within that matrix is different from women’s. It is men who are dominant. We are likely to construct ourselves and our emotions, as not only different, but as subordinate” (Crawford, 1992:191).

Feminism interrogates the gendered inequalities that have been created in society and examines what course of action is required in order to eliminate them;

“...Feminism systematically converges upon a central explanation of sex inequality through an approach distinctive to its subject yet applicable to the whole of social life, including class” (Mackinnon, 1997:70).

Habermas’ theory of the political public sphere has continually been criticised by feminists for excluding or devaluing the contributions of women and confining them to the private sphere. As Meehan (1995) argues;

“He fails to recognise and explore gender as an ‘exchange medium’ and thus misses this gendered division of roles, in addition to failing to recognise the
extent to which the role of the citizen, figuring in his scheme as the participant in political debate and in the forming of public opinion, is configured as male” (Meehan, 1995: 7).

As we noted above, this gendered conception of the political public sphere also excludes emotion, locating it exclusively in the cultural public sphere.

“More extensive feminist criticism addresses the essentially gendered nature of the public sphere itself, whose defence and reconstruction thus become the ambitions of a blinkered patriarchy rather than a comprehensively progressive and emancipatory political programme, blind to the necessary appreciation of difference within the ‘public’” (Golding, 1995: 26).

In every sense then feminists regard the political public sphere as a domain, which promotes a positive view of masculine qualities and devalues female qualities thereby reinforcing the binary oppositions that sustain women’s subordination.

“terms such as reason, cognition, orderliness and objectivity, which are aligned with rationality, invoke favourable masculine impressions, whereas emotionality, coupled with concepts such as chaos and subjectivity, is devalued because of its association with a female worldview” (Domagalski, 1999: 833; Giddens, 1993; Jaggar, 1990).

By excluding women, the political public sphere undermines everything that it is supposed to stand for. It is meant to be a space, which is open to all members of society but a substantial gap has opened up between the ideal and the reality (Dahlgren, 1992). Men are consistently assumed to be concerned with political issues while women are supposed to be interested in social and personal issues (Thornham, 2000).

Women are very often characterised as dependent, submissive, insecure, illogical, passive, able to express tender feelings, aware of others’ feelings, and gentle. Men on the other hand are seen as independent, dominant, self-confident, logical, active, apt to hide emotion, not aware of others’ feelings, and aggressive (Cancian, 1987: 4).
The positive valuation given to these sorts of qualities profoundly affects men and women’s behaviour in society (Cancian, 1987) by reinforcing the equation of feminization with sentimentization, with the consequence that;

“A woman thinking scientifically or objectively is thinking ‘like a man’; conversely, a man pursuing a nonrational, nonscientific argument is arguing ‘like a woman’” (Keller, 1985: 77).

Hence, if a woman thinks in a way that is seen as acceptable for debate within the political public sphere she is seen to be demonstrating masculine characteristics. Feminists see this as a major limitation of the political public sphere as it has come to be constituted and one, which must be addressed. They argue that it is essential that women have equal access to this realm not as women who act like men but as women who act as themselves, whether that is rational, emotional or both. Feminists believe that inclusion in the political public sphere for women would be a big step towards greater equality, one that should and must be taken.

Many feminists, however, are sceptical about the value of incorporation and believe that in order for women to be fully active in public debate they have to create their own female public sphere (Calhoun, 1992). Proponents of this solution see it as an empowering way for women to have their voices heard in a realm that is made up of and created by and for women. Other feminists however see it, as confirmation of just how dire the situation is that women are being so comprehensively excluded from the political public sphere that it is necessary for them to create their own alternative. They argue that if women lag behind men in the rational development, which is seen to be so central to the effective operation of the political public sphere, this “is a result of the customary and prejudicial manner in which they are raised” (Gatens, 1991: 32; Jackson, 1996) and not because women are born without these characteristics.
solution, according to this argument, is to change the way men and women are educated, along with their environment (Gatens, 1991). However, as numerous commentators have pointed out, this will be a difficult task because “the domain in which she (woman) is confined is surrounded by the masculine universe…” (Beauvoir, 1953: 629).

However “until the ground is cleared in this way” advocates of re-education argue, “superficial proposals for social change only succeed in perpetuating, albeit unintentionally, the very relations they seek to overcome” (Gatens, 1991: 33). This may be unduly pessimistic however since feminism can already be seen to have destabilised “the confident, ahistorical, coherent, rational, essentialist and unambiguously gendered…” (West, no date, http://www.helsinki.fi/jari/esrea/west.html, 15 May 2001) framework on which the political public sphere was originally established. To continue this deconstruction it is essential that we critically interrogate all of the dichotomies that are in place and explode binary thinking because this prevents “feminists from properly challenging male dominance and the subordination of women” (Prokhovnik, 1999:37). Arguably the most important aspect of this dichotomy is the embedded separation of public life from private life.

**The Public and Private Spheres**

Historically public space has been viewed as primarily a masculine domain while the private sphere has been considered a feminine arena of action. This dichotomy has roots stretching back to Medieval European society which worked with a sharp separation between the spheres for men and women in for example the religious, court
and military arenas (Hearn, 1995). Indeed, some commentators locate its origins in
the classical world arguing that;

"The infamous public/private divide of men as citizens, public decision-makers,
and women as private property, outside of state affairs, hidden in the home, has
been part of the Western concept of citizen since Socrates sent his wife,
Xanthippe, home" (Handrahan, 1999, 2).

This separation of spheres is based on the assumption that women lack the appropriate
characteristics required to partake in the public sphere, which requires rationality and
competitiveness, both of which men are assumed to possess. This distinction between
the two spheres was further reinforced by the "...feminization of the ‘domestic’, or
‘the home’, and of the family" (Lupton, 1998: 109; Ortner, 1998: 34) with no escape
in sight.

Women's only link to the political public sphere was through their role as mothers
who were "...expected to regulate their male children and produce them as rational,
dispassionate citizens, even though they themselves were portrayed as irrational and
emotional" (Lutz, 1990: 111). As Lutz (1990) points out, this paradox underlines the
artificiality of the "...distinction that is commonly drawn between the ‘private’ and
the ‘public sphere’ " and draws attention to the fact that " it has historically been
women who have enabled men’s continuing success in the public sphere (Lutz, 1990:
128; Macmurray, 1972: 77; Skinner, 1999: 2). Therefore women in fact do play an
important role in this masculine sphere’s continued development.

"The ‘home’ has been dominantly portrayed as the sphere of women rather
than men, as the domain where they exercise power and hold major
responsibility. It has been considered to be women’s role, in part, to maintain
emotional equilibrium within the home for their partner and children" (Lupton,

However the difficulty arises when one acknowledges the way this separation of the
two spheres is viewed, with the political public sphere being considered intellectually
superior to the private sphere. Unfortunately, because of the way in which these spheres are so strongly related to gender, this view reinforces a negative view of women’s capacities. “An important aspect of (dominant, public) discourse is the construction of the valuing of the public over the private” (Hearn, 1995: 200; Sennett, 1995: 166) and thus man over woman (Smith, 1986). Men at the end of the day control public life (Lorimer, 1994) and women do not. It is essential that we remember that the masculine self is defined in opposition to the feminine in the construction of male gender identity in the public sphere (Plumwood, 1993).

This strongly gendered division between the (political) public and private spheres also relates to the separation of emotion from the public sphere. “The distinction that is routinely drawn between the ‘private’ and the ‘public’ spheres is also an integral dimension of the ways in which emotion is gendered” (Lupton, 1998: 105). This has consequences for all of us because the cultural products, which we create, are influenced by these distinctions (as we will see with docusoaps). The

“...cultural logic connecting women and emotion corresponds to and shores up the walls between the spheres of private, intimate (and emotional) relations in the (ideologically) female domain of the family and public, formal (and rational) relations in the primarily male domain of the marketplace” (Lutz, 1990: 87; Lupton, 1998: 109).

Hence we can see that several other dichotomies (male/female, rationality/emotion) are linked to this main public/private dichotomy in a sort of chain reaction, influencing how we view our society and classify the cultural genres and artifacts it generates.

Docusoaps cut across these dividing lines. Suddenly, the well-respected documentary form based on rational investigation and exposition is mingling with the
emotionally charged conventions of soap opera. Whether this boundary crossing constitutes a radical de-centering of established dichotomies is one of the central questions to be answered in the empirical analysis presented in later chapters. One way to think about this generic hybridity, and one, which has attracted considerable support, is to see it as an instance of an emerging postmodern public sphere.

**A Postmodern Public Sphere?**

Postmodernism is widely associated with the blurring or dissolution of conventional categories and resistance to all attempts to re-impose established systems of classification. As James Morley notes, it is about “collage, diversity, the mystically unrepresentable...” and the “…rejection of all attempts to define, reify or re-present the human subject” (Keep, no date, [http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/elab/hfl0242.html](http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/elab/hfl0242.html), 27 January 2002). This prohibition clearly includes all efforts to label certain characteristics as either male or female. Consequently, for postmodernists man does not have to suppress and a woman express emotions. Rather, they should be free to create a ‘collage’ of expression. If there is to be a postmodern public sphere then, it should follow these ideas and promote;

“...the diversity which defines contemporary democracies. From right-wing talkback radio, through highbrow current affairs shows which appeal to urban elites, through daytime talk shows which deal with the disasters of everyday life, to the most amateur website...” (Patmore, 1999: blank).

We could add docusoaps to the above list as well if, as its advocates believe, it is;

“...a vast collage of diverse viewpoints, audiences and forms of speech. It’s a sphere saturated with politics, but not simply the politics of dominant groups...” (Patmore, 1999: blank).

Docusoaps embrace a diversity of groups expressing themselves in different ways. However, this diversification does not weaken democracy, as many followers of
Habermas' traditional ideals for the public sphere would suggest. Nancy Fraser (1992) refers to the newly emerging groups as 'counterpublics'. Members of these counterpublics, like Habermas, believe in a public sphere that will allow them to share their ideas with a wide audience but they see this sphere as constituted in difference, with different cultures, gender, race, sexualities, all having an equal claim to voice. From this perspective Habermas' ideal outcome of 'consensus' is problematic since it is seen to result in the suppression of difference (Patmore, 1999: blank).

Hartley (1996) sees the postmodern public sphere as having different priorities to that of Habermas' traditional public sphere. For Hartley the central form of knowledge is;

"...not so much knowledge of public affairs as traditionally defined, but new modes of knowledge which bespeak new ways of forming a public, in communities whose major public functions - the classical public functions of teaching, dramatizing and participating in the public sphere - are increasingly functions of popular media and whose members are political animals not in the urban forum but on a suburban couch; citizen readers, citizens of media" (Hartley, 1996: 155).

This argument rests on the assumption that since contemporary society is 'post' modern its priorities are inevitably different to those embedded in Habermas' model of a political public sphere that was formed during the emergence of modernity at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. In this new society difference is to be celebrated not argued away.

"Contemporary popular culture may seem irrational, contradictory, prurient and spectacular when compared with the sober, rational and discursive public sphere ideal. But it has a multitude of virtues, which weren't in the original Athenian blueprint for democracy. In the late twentieth century, Western public spheres have become a forum for voices and interests which were largely excluded from public debate even thirty years ago (Patmore, 1999: blank).

As Hartley (1996) argues within contemporary popular culture, Habermas' public sphere has been
...superseded by a privatized, feminized, suburban, consumerist and international domain of popular media entertainment; a domain constructed in the three-way space between texts, politics and popular readerships” (Hartley, 1996; 58).

Gender, the Public Sphere and Cultural Production

As we noted earlier, Habermas identifies a literary public sphere, which he acknowledges was established before the political public sphere but was separated from it, with its own institutions and forms of participation. In this ‘other’ domain, fictions and narratives thrive, emotion can be expressed and women can have control.

Fiction has long been associated with the private sphere of everyday life rather than the public domain of political issues and has for this reason often been seen as inferior or relatively trivial (structures that were first applied to the novel have been effortlessly transferred to subsequent forms of popular fiction, including television soap operas). However, as feminist researchers have pointed out, this cavalier dismissal ignores the ways that soap operas can serve as an emotional resource (Brunsdon, 2000). It is through the investigation of soap operas and related cultural forms, including docusoaps that we can illuminate how society comes to ‘naturalise’ the way in which fiction is pushed into a separate sphere along with gender and emotion (Lorimer, 1994).

Lee (1990) believes that postmodern theory is still replete with stereotypes of what it is to be a man and a woman, as well as defining which sphere they both belong to. Some theorists have suggested that the increase in female writers in popular fiction is a positive step forward but that the genre remains a denigrated form. Far from signifying empowerment, mass fiction is considered an inferior cultural product that
does not belong in the masculine domain of fact-based representation (Gibson, 1996; Harper, 1994). The greater visibility accorded, for example, to women and ethnic minorities in fiction, appears at first glance to signal the empowerment of groups that were previously viewed as inferior. Unfortunately this is not the case. Although the political public sphere is seen to exclude fiction, it is also seen as controlling it and because of this its approach to dualities is ever present, although more difficult to identify. What we read has been created under the tight constraints of ‘literary hegemony’ and reproduces the constraints of western, patriarchal society.

“Language reveals the unequal value of gender...Literature is guilty of presenting us with stereotypes and male fantasies of women’s behaviour” (Kenyon, 1991: 1).

Hence, although on the outside postmodern fiction appears to have been transformed into a medium of equal representation and production for men and women, on the inside it continues to reinforce patriarchal ways of thinking. There are however many writers who believe that fiction in contemporary society does signify a new way of seeing. For them postmodern fiction

"...has opened up new areas of study that no longer take for granted such basics as the definition of 'Man' as a rational being, in control of everything...we are facing a new situation: exit man, enter Humankind, including Woman” (Hutcheon, 1988: 18).

Such writers see postmodern fiction releasing people from the confines of patriarchy and bringing everyone to centre stage. This includes women, ethnic minorities and anyone else who has been pushed out by the ‘old’ masculine discourse that previously dominated literature. Postmodern writing

"...enshrines a revamped individualism, a post-liberalism, according to which the traditional democratic social contract...is reformulated so that individual’s can ‘take’ from the collectivity...” (Agger, 1990: 10).
Cinema provides another instance of the way in which women have been excluded from the political public sphere and made to appear inferior. The early 1960’s were seen as a time that saw “...the creation of a set of sociological discourses which suggest that young women might be more powerful and more confident than before” (Geraghty, 1997: 157). This was because of their increasing inclusion in fiction. They were seen by many to have, for the first time, their own personalities and voices, which did not relate to men. Since then cinema has shown more and more strong women, women who go against the norm by being unemotional, muscular and decisive. *Terminator 2* provides a prime example, featuring a leading female character, Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton), who is powerfully built, dominant over most (but not all) of the male characters in the film and is willing to kill (Radner, 1998). Or we might take a more recent release, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, in which Lara Croft (Angelina Jolie) plays the part of an action heroine riding fast motorbikes and killing men.

It is claimed that Lara and Sarah occupy

“...a position that confounds any clear-cut opposition between the rational and the irrational, defying a traditional association of the masculine with the former and the feminine with the latter” (Radner, 1998: 257).

They blur the traditional dichotomies through their ability to exert influence and to empower. Nor are they unique. What we are seeing are more and more female cinema characters doing battle with men and winning. Men are being shown, in comparison as weak. Yet at the same time in both these examples there is a return, at some point in the film, to traditional feminine ideals as the heroines display their emotions, shed some tears and make us feel naïve in thinking that these fictitious characters had ever in fact been included in the public sphere in the first place.
Although characters like Sarah Connor and Lara Croft may appear to place men and women on an equal footing this is not the case. Both characters are represented primarily as sexual beings. Their muscular bodies remain feminine bodies. They are made into sexual objects that return to the typical role of female by letting their emotions take over. For example Lara almost joins her enemies’ because of her overwhelming emotional desire (in a sense an irrational desire) to be reunited with her dead father. It appears then that women, in order to be feminized, must at some point in fictional narratives be portrayed as weak, vulnerable and emotional (Lebeau, 1995). Sarah Connor, Lara Croft, GI Jane and other female characters like them;

"...defy the... machinery that all too often reduces femininity to her image, the flattened body that functions as a projection of masculine desire. None the less these figures maintain the convention of an opposition between masculine and feminine...variously deconstructed and reconstructed...A crucial question...is that of the persistence of gender in spite of the increasing plasticity and indeterminacy of the body that defines terrain. This is an issue that...will continue to rework as part of the struggle to assert the dream of human agency as the grounds of a future that has not already been condemned by the irrationality of man” (Radner, 1998: 260).

In short, what we are witnessing is a profoundly ‘masculine bias’ in cinema, one “...which decisively shapes contemporary...sensibility” (Ang, 1992: 24). It could be suggested that this is simply another means of control. By appearing to make fiction more powerful but at the same time presenting it as a primarily female and emotional domain its separation from (and irrelevance to) the public sphere is maintained. From this perspective, the increasing number of ‘women’s pictures’ in contemporary cinema reaffirms the position of the barrier placed around the public sphere;

"The existence of the women’s picture both recognises the importance of women, and marginalises them. By constructing this different space for women...it performs a vital function in society’s ordering of sexual difference” (Cook, 1998: 229).
Once again we see a separate sphere being created for women, fiction and emotion.

Participatory talk shows present a different instance because they are viewed as being based on 'real life' stories. Even so, they are still seen primarily as a female playground because of the way they appeal to the emotions (Silverstone, 1981: 82). For this reason they too are discounted as arenas of debate that belong to the political public sphere. Academic commentary on talk shows tends to fall into two camps: those who dismiss them as 'cheap daytime television' and those who emphasize their liberating potential in providing an opportunity for the public to talk (Livingstone, 1994:1).

Gamson (1998), talking about talk shows produced in the United States, believes that they are very often viewed as sites of 'outlaw culture' because of the way in which they are filled with displays of emotion. He also notes that because they are mostly broadcast during the daytime they are strongly associated with female consumers. Other commentators have argued that talk shows portray men as less emotional than women, and that the experts who appear to comment on the dilemmas displayed are overwhelmingly male (Leurdiijk, 1997; Lull, 1997). Women, on the other hand are assumed;

"...to become flustered in the most minor crises; she is seen as sensitive, often fearful and anxious, and generally dependent on male help and support in all kinds of personal and professional situations" (Gunter, 1995: 15).
It seems difficult to escape these overlapping sets of dualities which group together fiction/private sphere/emotion/women and fact/public sphere/reason/men. Talk shows may celebrate transgression but in the end they too;

"...emphasise the dual image of woman as decorative object and as the home and marriage-orientated passive person, secondary to and dependent on men for financial, emotional and physical support" (Jaddou, 1981: 105).

These dichotomies, which talk shows reinforce, disadvantage both genders. They prompt men to suppress their emotions in a bid to remain 'properly' masculine, while they encourage women to express their feelings in order to demonstrate their essential feminineness. This duality in turn reinforces the political public sphere’s single-minded emphasis on rational argument and its refusal to admit narratives (whether fictional or grounded in everyday experience) as a legitimate arena for exploring social issues and differences.

It is not however just women who are disadvantaged by the exclusion of emotion from the public sphere. Men also suffer from the overlapping dichotomies that have created these exclusions. For example one of the long running subplots of StarTrek are moments when Spock’s capacity for calculation is threatened by the awakening of his emotions. “With the development of modern societies, control of the social and natural worlds, the male domain, became focused through ‘reason’” (Giddens, 1993: 200). The public sphere denies men the opportunity to express their emotions because they are viewed as irrational. “Traditional, hegemonic constructions of masculinity have involved the neglect of feelings and alienation from inner emotional life” (West, no date, http://www.helsinki.fi/jarj/esrea/west.html, 15 May 2001). Men are taught to exclude emotions from their lives because they are viewed as a sign of weakness. Showing emotions for men is seen as losing control of ones rational side (Seidler,
1991; Fisher, 2000). The political public sphere, in its present form, demands rationality and because of the dominant ways it is viewed, emotionality simply does not conform to this ideal. As a consequence men are both oppressed and oppressing in relation to the way in which emotions are excluded from the political public sphere (Cohen, 1990).

From looking at the work of Prokhovnik (1999) we are forced to ask ourselves this question; why should emotion be excluded from the public sphere and are all emotions really irrational? Emotions have many facets and if the political public sphere is to do what it says it wants to do and be open to the public as a whole, it must find space for their articulation and also recognise that there are significant differences between

"...active and passive emotions, between emotions as either non-rational or rational/irrational, between emotions as psychological states that can either be explained by and reduced to physical processes or not, between emotions as voluntary or nonvoluntary states" (Prokhovnik, 1999: 66).

As we pointed out earlier very often people forget that in his original formulation Habermas describes the emergence of two separate but parallel public spheres, the political and the literary (as discussed earlier). The literary sphere, as Habermas points out, was established before the political and its "...public institutions ... were 'refunctioned' to become institutions of the political public sphere" (Dahlgren, 1992: 90). This 'intimization' meant that emotions and things that previously would have been seen as purely personal or private were now included in the political realm (Dahlgren, 1992). Consequently, emotionality often featured in early debates until it
was banished by the onwards march of rationality as the core organising principle for legitimate argumentation.

However there are those who strongly disagree with this view. Dahlgren (1992) himself says that although the literary public sphere was created alongside the political, it nevertheless remained semi-separate. Habermas himself stated

"...the specific function of the literary/cultural sphere was to be the 'space' where the subject formed in the private sphere of intimacy 'arrived at an understanding of itself for itself'" (Dahlgren, 1992: 90).

This interior 'field' was not important to the male bourgeois because it was not related to business and public affairs (Dahlgren, 1992). As a result, any emotions that did manage to accidentally penetrate the political public sphere were mediated through the discourses of rationality (Dahlgren, 1992).

Society operates on the basis of a 'Rational Hierarchy', which makes rationality dominant over emotion (Plumwood, 1993; Poynton, 1990). This creation of emotion as inferior is a problem for women and other subordinate groups who are linked to it.

"The basis of this link in rationalism was precisely that the emotions involve qualities or express needs of the kind shared with animals, and are therefore both inferior and not truly human" (Plumwood, 1993: 168).

However, given that emotions are an integral part of the human condition how is casting them as 'the nonrational elements' of life (Fee, 1986) in any way beneficial to society?

Cohen (1990) argues strongly that men are not 'emotionless' and that presenting them as such only manages to wound them. They are left feeling that to show emotion is to
show weakness when in fact emotion in certain circumstances can be the most rational of responses.

"Emotionality...is legitimised as a rational and essential component of organisational experience rather than something to be managed and commodified" (Domagalski, 1999, 841; Macmurray, 1972: 50).

Emotions are present for a reason, for example if we get angry, we are angry at someone about something (Domagalski, 1999). For men the expectation of continuous rationality, which has been imposed on them, and the consequent denial of opportunities to express emotion, has resulted in confusion. They are left “...in a contradictory situation in relation to...” their “...emotional lives” (Seidler, 1991: 850).

Vincent (1990) believes that passions (or emotions) are something that every man is subject to and for this reason they actually have cognitive functions. From this perspective, emotion like rationality appears as an intelligent state of mind. To deny men and women knowledge of this fact is to deny them the right to express themselves in a mode that best fits the circumstances they are confronted with at any particular moment. Emotion discourse is an essential resource for talking about events and social relations (Edwards, 1997). As Green (1995) points out

“...conceptualizing humanity as rational is quite compatible with understanding ourselves as embodied, emotional creatures whose sense of self is made up of a mixture of reason and feeling which cannot be sharply separated" (Green, 1995: 168).

Macmurray (1972) attempted to demonstrate the same point by saying “…that the capacity for reason belongs to our emotional nature, just as much as to the intellect” (Macmurray, 1972: 33).

The persistent dualism between emotion and rationality is damaging to society because it affects everyone. It can be seen as an ‘institutional division’ that has
resulted in ‘a massive psychological process of repression’ which has been closely followed by a division in gender lines (Giddens, 1993). We must recognise that

"...the prevailing binarised or dichotomised categories governing Western reason and the privilege accorded to one term over the other in binary pairs (for example: mind over body, culture over nature, self over other, reason over passions)..." (Grosz, 1995: 42)

are in fact destructive and must be dismantled if we are to move forward. As we have noted, dichotomies lead to more dichotomies so it essential that we recognise the need to explore each of them.

"It is...vital to the argument of the present work that the complicity of the dominant ‘modern’ notion of reason in the systematic subordination of women be recognised and challenged by undermining the mapping of reason/emotion on to man/woman. This mapping is accompanied by the associated mapping of other dichotomies such as object/subject and abstract/concrete, as well as rational/irrational" (Prokhovnik, 1999: 54).

Instead of separating the ‘political public sphere’ and the ‘literary public sphere’ we should unite the two and include fiction and ‘women’s genres’ in an extended popular space for debating and negotiating across social boundaries. In common with the theorizing of emotion in Chapter 3, it is essential that we deconstruct the old borders and barriers (Kristeva, 1980; Hutcheon, 1988) between the public sphere/private sphere and fact/fiction and dismantle the dominant understanding that;

"as both an analytic and an everyday concept in the West, emotion, like the female, has typically been viewed as something natural rather than cultural, irrational rather than rational, chaotic rather than ordered, subjective rather than universal, physical rather than mental or intellectual, unintended and uncontrollable and hence often dangerous" (Lutz, 1990: 69).

**Gender, Emotion, the Public Sphere and Docusoaps**

I have argued that the political public sphere, as it has been traditionally defined and constituted, has been inhospitable to both fictional representations and women’s voices. It also excludes emotion.
"Historically and philosophically the bourgeois public sphere model assumes and prescribes a universal distinction between rational public aspects of human nature and emotional private ones. Not coincidentally this distinction is interlinked with fixed gender roles and identities" (Dahlgren, 1992: 89).

Women and emotion are situated in a separate sphere, the private sphere (which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter). This banishment of emotion from the public sphere ‘indicates symbolic annihilation’ (Baehr, 1996: 12) for women.

Hence soap operas and popular series dramas with their abundance of emotionality and their frequent focus on women’s lives are excluded from the political public sphere (even when they deal with contemporary social issues) while documentaries are welcomed as worthy contributions to the nurturing of an informed and rational citizenry. Take for example the science fiction series Star Trek: The Next Generation in which Marina Sirtis plays the character Deanna Troi aboard the Starship Enterprise. She is a counsellor who has the ability to sense emotions in living people. Every aspect of her character conveys society’s idea of the female; from the way she dresses to her ability to be so in tune with emotions. Her “…professional role is defined by her ability to exemplify those traits considered most inherently feminine (empathy, nurturance, emotionality, intuition)...” (Joyrich, 1996: 5). Her intuition stands in marked contrast to the hyper-rationality displayed by one of the key characters in an earlier version of the series, Dr Spock, whose refusal of emotions often positions him as the advisor in times of crisis. Spock is the paradigmatic example of the way that;

“... ‘Reason’ has helped to define ‘man’, ‘man’ has helped to define ‘reason’, and both definitions by their dichotomous nature have contained a subordination and exclusion of ‘woman’ and ‘emotion’” (Prokhovnik, 1999: 3).

The problem now arises when one recognizes that docusoaps (with its two parents; documentary and soap opera- one included within the political public sphere, while
the other is not) are deemed to be pure entertainment- the influence of one parent being totally disregarded. With this exclusion from this so-called arena of fact and of rationality in the documentary genre, comes the exclusion of women and emotionality from serious television.

The political public sphere has excluded emotion largely because it is a female defined concept. Television as a space of public representation however, has the ability to relate to both positive and negative emotions (Kubey, 1990). It is impossible to say that emotion and/or fiction are distinct from reason and/or fact. These apparent opposites can be expressed together through cultural forms that bring reason and emotion together. To realize this potential however, we need to break down the dichotomies that we have come to live with. As Silverstone notes;

"...the diachronic dichotomy, of the evolution of one form to another, and its replacement by a synchronic one. It is in the nature of man that both forms, emotion and rationality, myth and science will coexist" (Silverstone, 1981: 55; Prokhovnik, 1999).

We can and should be accepting of both emotion and rationality; otherwise we will persist in excluding women from full participation in public life. To embrace equality we need to embody all the fragments of society in order to stop their exclusion (Thornham, 2000).

"Dichotomies such as reason/emotion and man/woman represent fundamental polarities, fixed deep within Western philosophy and reflected in the structures of our language" (Prokhovnik, 1999: 1)

It is time to explode these binarisms and dismantle dichotomies.

In the next chapter we will explore the relationship between the public and private spheres, emotion and rationality as they are presented in docu-soaps, which deal in the hybrid form of ‘faction’. Docu-soaps pose problems for conventional conceptions of
the political public sphere for two reasons. Firstly, they combine elements from the respected genre of documentary with presentational and representational devices borrowed from the denigrated form of soap opera. Secondly, they mount a popular challenge to a rationalist view of emotion

"both for its implicit gender bias and ....its construction of public reason as sharply differentiated from and controlling private emotion" (Plumwood, 1993: 168).

Mestrovic (1997) believes that we have already entered a time of post-emotionalism, characterized by an increased blurring between emotion and rationality. Men, it is argued, are now encouraged to express emotions instead of suppressing them (Lupton, 1998; Gagnon, 1973). Men may still be defending their preemptive claim to rationality but emotions have been reborn after years of suppression and confinement. “Men do not only rationalize their feelings: they also emotionalize their reasons” (Gellner, 1992: 67). At the same time, women are also being seen in a different light. If men can show emotions as well as rationality then surely women can too? In which case, so the argument goes, the historic tangle of suppressive dichotomies will eventually be unpicked.

The next chapter explores whether docusoaps demonstrate this unpicking by crossing the line drawn between the two public spheres. Is this done by combining elements of a cultural form- documentary- which has long been associated with the rational analysis of public affairs, with elements borrowed from soap opera, a form that stands in a direct line to the succession of the romantic and sensationalist serial fictions that were an integral part of the original literary public sphere which Habermas describes?
The Journey of Discovery

I think at this point the enormity of what I was expecting of docusoaps had started to hit home. Uncertainty had begun to creep in at the edges; questions that I had asked initially, and that I had previously been sure would reveal that I had been correct to be so positive, were suddenly brought to the forefront of my mind but now doubt was the prevailing emotion.
Chapter 5- Defining Docusoaps: Origins and Characteristics

Docusoaps are “…essentially a hybridized format, combining certain structural and narrative features of soap-opera with elements of observational documentary” (Kilborn, 2003: 57). This chapter discuss what characteristics mark out docusoaps as a distinctly new genre, which particular elements have become fore grounded and how docusoaps have emerged as a major element within the contemporary broadcasting mix. This chapter will investigate other sub-genres of Reality Television to see what it is that makes docusoaps distinctive from these adjacent sub-genres. Once we understand what exactly docusoaps are, we will be better equipped to explore what makes them so appealing. Is it their emotional realism, their grounding in mundane everyday lived experience or do these sort of shows simply “…appeal to the nosey-parker” (Gillow, 2002: 30) in each of us? First, however, it is important to understand the space that docusoaps occupies, i.e. Reality Television.

Reality Television and its Sub-genres

Docusoaps are usually characterised as being part of the wide package that is Reality Television or Reality TV as it is also known. Kilborn (2003) rightly points out that this term is often confusing because it tackles a wide ‘generic category’.

“One moment the term Reality Television is being used to refer to slice-of-life observational modes of documentary film making, the next it is being used to describe types of fictional drama rooted in real life programming” (Kilborn, 1994: 423).

For this reason Kilborn (2003) helpfully separates these broad categories into sub-genres under the umbrella of Reality Television. He describes ‘A&E formats’, ‘Reality game-does’ (also described as Surveillance Television by others) and of course ‘docusoaps’.
A brief outline of each is given below:

Docusoaps (Bethell. 1999: 14);

- Show any aspect of British life.
- Contained location.
- Manageable cast of characters that can engage in whatever activity and with the public.
- One or two characters that will become the 'stars'.
- Commentary.

A&E formats (Kilborn, 2003: 56);

- Usually things like police and rescue programmes.
- Footage of the event
- Re-enactments of the rescues or raids, often made using structures and conventions borrowed from fictional forms of television or film drama.
- Interpolated 'live' studio discussion where A&E officers are introduced to those that they have rescued or otherwise assisted.

Reality game-docs (Kilborn, 2003: 58);

- Things like Big Brother and Survivor.
- Takes the form of an elimination contest.

Reality Television and its these sub-genres will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter so that the distinctiveness of the docusoap can be recognized fully but now let us return to the docusoap and look at it in more detail.
The Docusoap Described

Docusoaps represent a major shift away from the defining didactic characteristics of the classic documentary format towards a new, more populist, form of actuality programming. Their hybrid nature has been viewed by many commentators as blurring the boundaries between public and private, fact and fiction, entertainment and actuality.

"The 'docusoap' runs in mid-evening, primetime, regularly commanding a 30 to 40% audience share. Using some of the visual conventions of observational documentary this new serialised TV adaption of documentary is often referred to as simply 'fly-on-the-wall'...Docusoaps use multiple character-led storylines, generate their own stars, are set around one physical location and use the day-to-day chronology of popular drama. They occupy schedule slots that are intended to be diverting, amusing and entertaining" (Dovey, 2000: 133; Winston, 1999: www.latrobe.edu.au, 3 January 2001).

Docusoaps mix the fly-on-the-wall elements of observational documentary with the everyday dramatic incident of soap operas in a way that manages to represent ordinary people in new ways, not as illustrating a social 'problem' or social type but simply going about their everyday lives and coping with whatever adversities are thrown up (Kilborn, 2003). It is this representation of everyday dramas that makes them so appealing to viewers. Docusoaps fall into three main subcategories depending on whether they are based around; particular institutions or work settings (like Airport- BBC), geographical locations (like Paddington Green- BBC) or specific events (like The Cruise- BBC) (Holland, 1997). They are about discovering stories in a range of social and cultural spheres covering a variety of aspects of national everyday life, not only in its 'trivial routine form' but also in its 'melodramatic and ritual moments' (Bondebjerg, 2000).

Docusoaps are different from other Reality Television, for example Reality game-docs
like *Big Brother* (in which a group of strangers are picked to live in a house filled with cameras, cut off from the rest of society, for several weeks and are one by one voted off by housemates and the public till only a winner is left) precisely because they are not staged but promise to show men and women in their everyday lives.

Docusoaps however attempt to not only entertain but also to inform. The entertainment value is provided by the soap opera style, which gives the audience the chance to follow certain personalities in each episode, while the informative aspect can be found in the documentary aspect of the genre. The emphasis is not on explanation or contextualisation however, rather, docusoaps encourage deduction from close observation - the chance to draw conclusions and make comparisons on the basis of seeing someone else's world apparently reflected in all its rough edged reality.

"The characteristics that have come to represent the docusoap subgenre of observational documentary are its emphasis on the entertainment as opposed to serious or instructive value of documentary, the importance of personalities who enjoy performing for the camera, soap-like fast editing, a prominent, guiding voiceover, a focus on everyday lives rather than underlying social issues" (Bruzzi, 2000: 76; Holland, 1997: 147).

As a genre docusoaps treat their audience knowingly, as viewers well versed in television's stock conventions of reality construction.

"Everyone accepts the breaking of the classic naturalist illusion. Realism is no longer simply within the television frame, but is seen to be constructed in dialogue between the filmmaker and their subject, with the occasional wink at the audience" (Holland, 1997: 148).

Docusoaps are extremely popular and research into docusoaps has suggested that this is because they are seen as 'real'; exciting, involving; and connect directly to viewers,
creating a feeling of ‘chumminess’ and ‘commaderie’ (Kilborn, 2003). I want to suggest that this achievement is accomplished largely through the hybrid aspects of the genre. This hybridity is explored in more depth in the rest of this chapter.

The Contemporary Elements

"Television’s ability to produce moving images, live or recorded, is clearly the single most important defining feature of it as a medium" (Corner, 1995: 13). Although we noted earlier how factual evidence is valorised within the public sphere while fiction is not, it is important to remember that television as a medium has frequently been viewed as non-rational and therefore feminine. As Baudrillard put it:

"postmodernism- and television in particular- seems to disallow the security and mastery of the masculine position, and as this stable site disappears, we are all left floating in a diffuse, irrational space- a space traditionally coded as feminine" (Baudrillard quoted in Joyrich, 1990: 160).

Against this, television has also been celebrated as an important part of the modern day political and literary public spheres, reaching people who would usually never be reached and opening up the opportunity for discussion. The accepted view is that the news system stands at the centre of the political public sphere providing the public with information on what is happening in society accompanied by relevant arguments around the issues. News claims to be based on verifiable facts and to reject fiction (Buckingham, 2000). It is a complex form but for the most part it appeals to reason (Silverstone, 1981). However news has recently come under increased criticism because it is seen to be dealing more and more with issues of ‘daily life’, for example ‘human interest stories’, rather than the ‘political issues’, which in Habermas’ eyes are essential for a healthy
This critique begs three questions; are everyday mundane experiences inevitably more emotionally charged than the activities of elites? Does their increasing depiction therefore signify the feminization of television news? If so, is it the feminine that is objected to?

Documentaries have played a crucial role in the development of television and have been seen as one of the medium’s chief providers of information, especially in the case of public service broadcasting. They have been defined as films “dealing with a natural history, archaeological, industrial, travel or similar subject, usually accompanied by an explanatory talk” (Fowler, 1967: 361). The audience “…look to documentaries to provide them with an experience which can, among other things, be socially educative or knowledge-enhancing” (Kilborn, 1997: 231).

The pioneering documentary maker John Grierson was one of the most influential early figures in defining the nature and purpose of documentaries and his views have left an enduring legacy. Writing in the 1930’s he stated:

“As a practice and a form, documentary is strongly informationalist (and therefore requires a level of accuracy) but it is also an exercise in creativity, an art form drawing on interpretative imagination both in perceiving and using sounds and images of ‘the living scene’ to communicate ‘the real’” (Corner, 1996: 15).

It is this claim to the ‘real’ that is of interest here. “Whereas most spectators assume that fiction ‘offers access to…a world’, documentaries…seem to offer us ‘access to the world’” (G’Schwind, no date, http://lamar.colostate.edu/~gschwind/publicmemory.html, 18 January 2002). Without this claim they would probably not have been given the status and centrality they have enjoyed. As Michel Renov puts it in Bruzzi (2000):
"it is important to recall that the documentary is the cinematic idiom that most actively promotes the illusion of immediacy insofar as it forsakes 'realism' in favour of a direct, ontological claim to the 'real'. Every documentary issues a 'truth claim' of a sort, positing a relationship to history which exceeds the analogical status of its fictional counterparts" (Bruzzi, 2000: 3).

Documentaries endeavor to record real events and people in real situations in an attempt to provide information to the public and to educate them.

"It is television's ability to record the images and sounds of actuality which underlines documentary practice as a distinctive kind of seeing and hearing experience orientated toward observational truth claims" (Cross, 1999: 43)

They attempt to guarantee the audience access to the truth about situations. In doing this they predominantly appeal to the intellect (Silverstone, 1981: 82).

Documentaries have from the beginning endeavored to enlighten the television audience. As a consequence they have 'become a central element in broadcasting's performance of its public informational and critical roles as well as a general source of knowledge and pleasure" (Corner, 1996: 190). "Documentary's driving ambition is to find a way of reproducing reality without bias or manipulation" (Bruzzi, 2000: 68). In other words, documentaries are concerned with 'event' and 'representation' (Bruzzi, 2000: 73). This is why people tend to trust them. They seem to;

"...share a respect for knowledge with prestigious academic disciplines, gaining 'instrumental power' through its association with... 'discourses of sobriety' (science, economics, politics, foreign policy, education, religion, welfare, and, of course history)" (G'Schwind, no date, http://lamar.colostate.edu/~gschwind/publicmemory.html, 18 January 2002).

When an audience watches a documentary they want to be able to actively retrieve the information that they see. The documentarist must put the recorded reality into a form (programme) where the language is easily understood by the audience (Kilborn, 1997).
With this emphasis on transforming reality into an accessible form for the audience, it is no wonder that docusoaps have been born partly from the documentary format. "In fiction realism serves to make a plausible world seem real; in documentaries, realism serves to make an argument about the historical world persuasive" (G'Schwind, no date, http://lamar.colostate.edu/~gschwind/publicmemory.html, 18 January 2002).

However, by no means have all documentary makers followed Grierson's austere emphasis on education in its didactic mode or his marked preference for programmes that illuminate contemporary social issues. What we are seeing are producers focusing more and more on 'daily life' issues. Some, like Paul Watson, have simply offered slices of everyday domestic life, thick descriptions of the ways we live now. His best known works, *The Family*, which tracks the lives of the Wilkins family in Reading, and *Sylvania Waters*, which dissects the pretensions of an Australian noveaux riche family, offer scenes that would not be out of place in a soap opera, thereby blurring the boundaries between the two genres. *Sylvania Waters* was billed as a 'real-life soap opera' with the camera crew living with the Australian family for six months.

"Documentaries make their appeal by virtue of the fact that they claim to be artefacts with a social function. The pleasure in watching them comes from knowing that what we are witnessing can, potentially at least, spill over into the world which we or others like us inhabit" (Kilborn, 1997: 231).

It is easy to see how Reality Television and docusoaps in particular were able to rise to popularity so quickly.
Reality Television (Reality TV)

These pioneering series paved the way for what has become known as Reality Television (as briefly discussed earlier in the chapter). This new genre began to appear in the 1980's when John Willis produced a land-mark series called Jimmies, about life at a hospital in Leeds, followed by Animal Squad about an animal rescue team also in Leeds (Bondebjerg, 2000). Other more recent programs have included Animal Hospital (BBC), Vets in Practise (BBC), Airport (BBC), LAPD (Channel 5) and Cops (BBC).

“Both docusoaps and reality-magazines were developed by public service and commercial channels with BBC’s Crime Watch (1984-), Airport and Driving School as the initiating successes, commanding around 30% of prime time viewers” (Bondebjerg, 2000: 170).

By using everyday individuals in their ordinary settings these programmes drew on devices previously related solely to the soap opera. They allowed viewers to witness things many would have never before had the opportunity to see, such as births, vasectomies, liposuction and major heart surgery. The difference between this emerging genre of Reality TV and the traditional documentary is that the audience has the opportunity to follow events and participants over several weeks (in soap opera style) instead of simply watching a single hour-long programme.

Recognising these recent movements within actuality television goes some way to helping us understand both the origins and the distinctive characteristics of docusoaps but it is essential that we also tackle the other major contributing genre, soap opera, and its approach to reality.
Soap Opera: Empiricist and Emotional Realism

Soap Opera has been labeled as a ‘women’s genre’ because it has proved particularly popular with women, having originally been broadcast during the day for the benefit of housewives (Fiske, 1987). Soaps are seen by many to represent the familiar, intimate, reality of everyday life (Brown, 1994; Livingstone, 1990), with their focus on affairs, divorce and family rows (Dyer, 1981). Surveys report that 88.5% of the public claim to watch soaps for their realism because they often focus on contemporary social problems and issues (Livingstone, 1988; 55). But what is meant by ‘realism’ in this context?

One of the characteristics of recent UK soaps has been their increasing engagement with topics and social issues that would fit equally well into a documentary format. Brookside (Channel 4), for example, is set in a modern Liverpool housing estate. Phil Redmond, the producer, stated in 1982 when it was first aired “...that it would tell the truth and show society as it really is, dealing with what are seen as topical issues and problems such as employment” (Chandler, 1994, www.aber.ac.uk/media/modules/tf33120/soaps.html, 20 May 2002). Eastenders (BBC 1) is also another excellent example; set in East London, it was first broadcast in 1982. The programme’s original producer Julia Smith stated that

“we decided to go for a realistic, fairly outspoken type of drama which could encompass stories about homosexuality, rape, unemployment, racism, birth, death, dogs, babies, unmarried mums- we didn’t want to fudge any issue except politics and swearing” (Chandler, 1994, www.aber.ac.uk/media/modules/tf33120/soaps.html, 20 May 2002).

Following Ien Ang, we can call this quality ‘empiricist realism’. Securing it “involves foregrounding the story and back grounding the use of the conventions of the medium
(e.g. using 'invisible editing'). This 'transparency' of style encourages viewers to regard
the programme as a 'window' on an apparently unmediated world rather than to notice its
constructedness (Chandler, 1994, www.aber.ac.uk/media/modules/tf33120/soaps.html, 20
May 2002).

However, as Ien Ang (1985) has argued, on the basis of her attempt to unpack how Dutch
female fans of a very popular American soap opera (Dallas) understood its 'realism',
empiricist realism is only one dimension of 'realism. She found that the program can be
understood or read on two different levels: firstly the 'literal, denotative level' which has
to do with the content of the narrative (discussions, actions, reactions, etc) (Ang, 1985:
41); and secondly the 'connotative level' with its "...associative meanings which can be
attributed to elements of the text" (Ang, 1985: 42).

The audience members who wrote to her did not see the 'literal, denotative level' in
Dallas as realistic but at a connotative level they invested the show with powerful
emotional meanings, leading her to argue, "in this sense the realism of Dallas can be
called 'emotional realism'" (Ang, 1985: 45). As she notes, "what is recognised as real is
not knowledge of the world, but a subjective experience of the world: a 'structure of
feeling'" (Ang, 1985: 45). Here we see that;

"It is emotions which count in a structure of feeling. Hence emotions form the
point of impact for a recognition of a certain type of structure of feeling in Dallas:
the emotions called up are apparently what remain with the letter-writers most"
(Ang, 1985: 45).

It is at this point that we can begin to recognise why docusoaps are so popular. They
show the emotional ups and downs that are characteristic of life for everyone, something
that Ang’s *Dallas* audience continually stressed as essential to the pleasure of watching
the program. However docusoaps go one step further because the personalities shown are
actual, with real lives and not, as in *Dallas*, fabricated characters displaying or conveying
a sense of emotional reality.

What this look at *Dallas* fans demonstrates is that the programmes perceived ‘emotional
realism’, provided immense satisfaction for them because it brought them closer to the
program or rather; it brought the program closer to their everyday lived reality.

“*What we can deduce from this is the notion that in life emotions are always being
stirred up, i.e. that life is characterised by an endless fluctuation between happiness
and unhappiness, that life is a question of falling down and getting up again. This
structure of feeling can be called the tragic structure of feeling; tragic because of
the idea that happiness can never last forever but, quite the contrary, is
precarious*” (Ang, 1985: 46).

Docusoaps share this structure. The ‘tragic structure of feeling’ that emphasizes the
fragility of human relationships and personal happiness is relayed back to us with added
sincerity – the soap element gives us people’s personal worlds, the documentary element
affirms to us that this is how life ‘really’ is for them. In other words, docusoaps combine
both the ‘empiricist’ and ‘emotional’ dimensions of realism.

*Reality Game-Docs (Surveillance TV) and A&E Formats*

Surveillance TV has also proved to be a popular entertainment format with the
introduction of programs like *Big Brother* (Channel 4), *Jailbreak* (Channel 5), *Castaway
2000* (BBC), *Who Dares Wins* (Channel 4), *The Mole* (Channel 5) and *Survivor* (ITV).

In common with both A&E formats and docusoaps, these programmes have been
criticised for ‘dumbing-down’ the documentary format. In particular critics have objected to what they see as the jettisoning of any effort to illuminate everyday life in favour of placing ordinary people in situations which are meant to be embarrassing for them and positioning viewers as voyeurs rather than as sympathetic observers who are encouraged to empathise with the people shown on screen. Dawn Airey, Director of Programs at Channel 5 however, countered “critics who suggest the phenomenon means the end of authored documentary” arguing instead that it represents - “an evolution of the genre” (Guardian Unlimited, 2000, http://media.guardian.co.uk/edinburghtvfestival/story/0.7523.365155.00.html, 20 May 2002).

Liesbet Van Zoonen’s research on Big Brother is worthy of attention as it closely investigates a programme, which has brought surveillance TV to the forefront of popularity. Big Brother, originally a Dutch creation, and now in its fourth ‘series’ in Great Britain, has received an enormous amount of both praise and criticism.

“The Dutch public debate on Big Brother provides a first key to understanding the collective desires and needs awakened by the programme. Most arguments rest on the division between ‘public life’ and ‘private domain’, and the premise that this divide is self-evident and worth nurturing. Big Brother transcended this dichotomy by turning the private lives of ordinary people, with all their normal, everyday, seemingly unimportant experiences and worries into a daily public spectacle” (Van Zoonen, 2001; 670).

Commentators around programmes like Big Brother are split into two camps: those who commend them for making the everyday lives and worries of ‘normal’ people important; and those who criticise them for publicizing experiences that should remain private.
Programs like *Big Brother* certainly confront long held notions of the appropriate division between the public and private domains. What we are now seeing is

"primal experiences and emotions ('basic instincts' as it were) of ordinary people lie at the heart of hundreds of successful formats. Each of those formats has been subjected to similar criticism: one does not flaunt private emotions, nor does one relish observing another's private emotions. You don’t hang out your dirty linen in public or even in fact, your clean linen" (Van Zoonen, 2001; 670).

What does the popularity of surveillance/reality TV demonstrate? Are private emotional responses more fascinating because they have been defined previously as out of reach of public display? Does making the private public validate our most intimate experiences and expressions or merely titillate?

Van Zoonen (2001) believes that *Big Brother*’s popularity demonstrates that the division between public and private is no longer relevant, either that or the public simply does not care anymore. She goes on to state that

"the combination of television and internet in Big Brother has created a collective experience characterised by a desire for everyday communality and by a rebellion against the norms of 'civilised' public culture" (Van Zoonen, 2001; 673).

It is

"...rooted in ordinary daily humdrum experience...It springs from the contemporary bourgeois division between a private realm and a public realm that has isolated private life, marginalized it and made it invisible" (ibid).

Reality game-docs have been criticised for manipulating 'real life' situations. For example in one episode of *Big Brother 2* when romance appeared to be blossoming between two of the participants, the producers decided to pair all the contestants off and
persuade them to have intimate dinners with each other. Unsurprisingly the new couple was put together in a separate room from everybody else obviously in the hope that things would develop which would attract audience statistics. As one commentator complained, what we are seeing is manipulative production at work as producers strive to keep audiences interested (Kilborn, 2003).

In contrast, docusoaps have been complimented by some commentators for reflecting everyday reality more truthfully. For example Maureen and her husband from the docusoap series Driving School did actually argue that much in reality. More recently we see another example of manipulative production at play in Big Brother 3, in which the household was split in two, one side reflecting 'riches' and the other 'rags'. This is manipulation in its most blatant form, designed to enliven the drama of daily drudgery. But we would be naïve to think it does not also take place in docusoaps (Kilborn, 2003)- but it appears more blatant in other Reality Television formats.

However it is not this sort of overt manipulation that Van Zoonen regards as the most important feature of these programmes. Rather, she sees programmes like Big Brother demonstrating a fundamental shift in society, a shift characterised by the amalgamation of public and private. As she puts it, “Big Brother and its spin-offs have taken the world by storm: the hegemony of public and private conventions as we witnessed them in the last century seems dead and buried” (Van Zoonen, 2001; 676). Van Zoonen’s work

“...focuses on the resistance against the hegemony of the bourgeois public private division and its conventions, and on the desire for recognition- in
both senses of the word- of everyday modern experiences” (Van Zoonen, 2001; 675).

We know that docusoaps share the space underneath the umbrella of Reality Television but what is it that sets them apart from Reality game-docs and A&E formats?

**Docusoaps and their distinctiveness**

So what distinguishes docusoaps from these adjacent genres? Firstly, and most obviously, unlike, for example Big Brother and Shipwrecked, docusoaps follow participants in their daily lives. They do not remove them from normality and place them on an island to survive or in an unfamiliar house to live with complete strangers. As a result, they are closer to everyday lived realities. Docusoaps are arguably able to illuminate a greater range of experience and to present audiences with greater challenges in constructing their responses.

“If these strange realities are remote from you- as say the exotic foreign societies shown in TV’s, Discovery Channels, National Geographic’s...the strangeness will not feel threatening” (Wingate, no date, http://www.kopecfilm.com, 3 January 2001).

Kilbom (2003) supports this view saying;

“They place high premium on audience accessibility; they make no bones about the fact that they are principally conceived as light entertainment vehicles, and...they exploit the appeal of seeing ‘real-life’ individuals indulging in various types of performance activity, this time not in a contained, made-for-TV environment but in the context of their everyday working situations” (Kilborn, 2003: 89).

This difference can not be made when compared with A&E formats because they follow people in their normal lives but here the biggest difference lies in the fact that docusoaps are “...more gently paced and much less centred on dramatic incident than the fast-
moving Reality Television formats” (Kilborn 2003: 57) like the A&E formats. Their aim is “...to produce a mildly diverting entertainment more likely to provoke an amused chuckle than to produce new insights into the world and its workings” (Kilborn, 2003: 102).

However docusoaps are not alone in occupying the space between actuality and fictional genres.

The Alliance between Documentary and Fiction

Docusoaps have been viewed by many as being responsible for the relaxing of “...the boundaries between documentary and fiction (as the term docusoaps attests)...” (Bruzzi, 2000: 76). The classic documentary format has always been seen as a genre, which above all else has the responsibility of providing viewers with factual information. It has historically been separate from the fictitious world of comedy, drama and soap operas, the latter forms being viewed as inferior. Docusoaps however have disrupted this classificatory schema by taking aspects from the documentary format and mixing them with elements from soap operas to produce a new hybrid genre. They offer “a unique blend of fact and fiction...” (Rosenthal, 1999: xiv).

“In the new dominant forms of docusoaps, which are essentially a new form of reality serials, the classical form of the observational documentary merges with elements of the fictional soap-genre and thus with the melodrama of everyday life and the ordinary” (Bondebjerg, 2000; 172-173).
It is very easy to see how docusoaps have developed from the documentary format into a sub-genre that includes fiction to such a large extent. The ingredients appear to have always been present when one considers that documentaries are

"...simply film about the real world; or it is film using shots of the real world. Its articulations are the same as those used for fiction, and it therefore does not differ in any significant way from fiction; or its articulations are so rudimentary as not to deserve serious scrutiny at all" (Vaughan, 1999: xiii).

Although many writers see any sort of link between documentary and fiction as 'unnatural' (Winston, 1999, www.latrobe.edu.au 3 January 2001), this now appears inaccurate. By blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction docusoaps provide us with the opportunity to explore the similarities as well as the differences between the two.

It is in this blurring of fact and fiction that confusion arises. We do not know how to deal with this blurring yet; should it be praised or condemned? The problem is that critics approach docusoaps from a base within either the classic factual documentary genre or the entertainment based, fictional genre of soap opera. What is needed is a critical deconstruction of this dichotomy so that we can locate docusoaps within a new realm and different realm. Hopefully we can then put a halt to the negative way in which docusoaps are regarded because of their supposed 'fictionalisation' (Edgar, 1999). This however seems unlikely when one realizes that docusoaps are mostly viewed as pure entertainment.

Many critics studying docusoaps from the vantage point of the established documentary tradition ask whether they are simply another branch of popular entertainment or whether they have a serious function to perform in society? This second question, answered in the
negative has figured heavily in ‘dumbing down’ debates (Winston, 1999, www.latrobe.edu.au, 3 January 2001). Against this we can argue that by blurring familiar boundaries docusoaps usefully challenge and problematise established perceptions. With this in mind we can take a quote from Vaughan’s (1999) book, “fiction is film’s effacement of the fact of witness” (Vaughan, 1999: 125), and alter it so that it reads; “docusoaps allow fiction to recognise the importance of the ‘fact of witness’ and vice versa”. Hence, Docusoaps ‘blurring of fact and fiction (Woodhead, 1999) could be seen as a refreshing encouragement to reflection.

Docusoaps are populist- they reflect viewers’ own real life experiences back to them. Nick Shearman of BBC Bristol believes that they have made documentaries more appealing and that “the primary tool...in achieving this has been the prioritisation of people over issues, the elevation of the emotional response and personality” by touching on ‘common experiences’ (Bruzzi, 2000:80). When we hear this sort of endorsement from both broadcasting professionals and academic critics we are forced to question exactly why docusoaps are still looked down on by so many other commentators. Is it because ‘issues’ are suddenly mixing with ‘emotions’, elements that are considered to be from very different spheres?

“In terms of the ‘first person media’ the docusoap, like the chat show or Reality TV, portrays ‘ordinary people’ talking about themselves in the first person. In fact ‘talk’ is the central activity of the docusoap. Despite the handheld mobility of the visual design it represents a deeply conversationalised documentary form. In its concentration on a popular ethnography of the everyday it occupies exactly the shifting terrains of private and public” (Dovey, 2000:138).
The Blurring of the Public and Private Spheres in Docusoaps

Docusoaps are not a "...journalistic but a dramatic medium, like a soap-opera...that has been developed...in response to the changing world...and should be defended as such" (Edgar, 1999: 175). They have attempted to create a medium that will speak to everyone;

"These programmes are led by 'ordinary people', not experts or traditional 'public sphere' spokespersons. They speak almost entirely of their 'first person' experience of the world." (Dovey, 2000: 149).

'Ordinary people' are allowed to voice their views on life in their own environment instead of being instructed and led by the all knowing 'public sphere spokesperson', providing them with the opportunity to inform and instruct viewers on their lives. People are given priority over issues with the emotional aspects of life being elevated to a level of greater importance (Bruzzi, 2000). Emotions, which are usually seen as something belonging to private experiences (Sims, 1993), are suddenly brought into the public arena because of the nature of the docusoap format. The genre "...often speaks of feelings. Emotional states may well be the spring inside the narrative..." (Dovey, 2000: 149).

In relation to gender politics, docusoaps are seen to appeal to both men and women but for varying reasons. "Men guffaw at the comic...while women...love watching" them (Tonnella, 1999, www.cios.org, 23 August 2002). In a Radio 4 Woman’s Hour broadcast, titled Emotion and Gender, psychologist Stephanie Shields and columnist Deborah Orr were asked whether men really are willing to let emotions out and if so will this outflow of emotions mean that women might be compelled to bottle their feelings up? It began with the interviewer pointing out:

"It seems you can’t open a newspaper or switch on the TV these days without finding some celebrity, usually male, shedding tears without a hint of
embarrassment, whether it’s Jonathan Ross recently pictured head in hands after an alleged domestic or a red eyed PJ off Big Brother, which will no doubt end in even more sobbing tonight. The idea of maintaining a manly stiff upper lip, in public at least, was already shaky before Paul Gascoigne lost it so memorably in the World Cup. So does gender still pay a part when not so tiny tears are involved?” (Radio 4 interview, Friday 26 July, 2002).

There are two points worth making about this introduction to the discussion. Firstly, there is the remark about PJ who has obviously been crying when filmed. The interviewer’s comment that this “...will no doubt end in even more sobbing tonight“ suggests that when it comes to reality TV and programs like Big Brother and Popstars we are open to and expect to see displays of emotion. The second point to note from this quotation is the suggestion that showing emotion is no longer simply something, which belongs in the private sphere but has crossed over into the public sphere, a crossover, which most notably has been taken by men. The “idea of maintaining a manly stiff upper lip, in public” appears to be disintegrating. One however is still left wondering whether, as history has demonstrated, this opening up of displays of, what previously were seen as weak, feminine emotions, have only been of benefit to men?

Shields believes that the old stereotype of women as emotional and men as controlled, only becoming emotional in response to substantial provocation, is ever present. The difference however nowadays is that “we see men acting very emotional but don’t recognise it as emotion” because it is received so differently from women’s displays of emotion in public. She goes on to say that

“there is more latitude for men to express emotion and more latitude for women...very often emotion and who has a right to emotion is used as a way of reasserting who is in control of themselves and even if you take a look at the type of language that is used to describe women and men then you see that he’s angry and stands up for his rights, while she’s lost it, she’s a bitch”.

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This is a critical point because it suggests that although emotion and its relationship with gender has changed over time and crossed over into the public sphere it is far from equal between men and women. Is this also the case for docusoaps?

Let us take the example that the interviewer uses, which on one level is hopeful, as it presents women taking part in the public sphere of politics, and also demonstrates how displays of emotion by men in this sphere are received positively. Unfortunately on another level it is disheartening as it demonstrates that approval of displays of emotion within this sphere does not extend to women. With a

"...particular female democratic candidate when she withdrew from the race she suddenly found herself quite overcome and burst into tears and she was absolutely criticized for this and yet when male politicians have done the same everybody’s says ‘oh what a lovely, decent guy, in touch with his feelings’”.

Shields suggests that previously it was men that were much more affected by the constraints of displaying emotion in the public and private sphere, but now it appears to be women who are carrying this burden. Men are seen as ‘in touch with their feelings’ if they get upset in public, but at the same time if they do not this is also seen as natural. Women on the other hand do not enjoy such liberties. They are expected to remain unemotional in some settings, like politics, and to express emotions in others. For example;

"years ago, Lyndsey Chamberlin, the mother of the dingo baby case and quite recently another case in Australia of the backpacker Joanna Leece whose boyfriend disappeared in the outback. Now both of those women appeared very together and very calm in press conferences and because they didn’t show emotion they were
judged by the public and it has affected the way that they are perceived. So you know if women cry they are vilified, if they remain in control they are also.”

When asked the question whether it is as acceptable for women to get angry in public, as it is for men, Shields decisively stated ‘no’. This is interesting because it brings to the forefront the issue of how gender and emotion are dealt with in docusoaps, and the wider changes that are taking place in relation to gender, emotion and the public and private spheres.

Docusoaps have the ability to bring “...public life into private, and private life into public life, for pleasure and enjoyment as much as for information and education” (Scannell, 1992: 325). It is for this very reason that they are both eagerly praised and fervently criticised. They are popular because they represent the ‘ordinary’ and replicate/represent the everyday yet they have clearly evolved from the ‘parameters’ of the classic documentary (Bruzzi, 2000). It is with this knowledge that we are armed with the ability to recognise the blurring of the public with the private sphere within the confines of the docusoap.

It is essential that this dichotomy between public and private be dismantled because, as we have seen, it is strongly linked to a chain of other dichotomies, which deny women full equality and respect. Habermas himself has been criticised for his half-hearted approach to this dichotomy:

“His failure to question the segregation of the (masculine) public sphere from the (feminine) private world of child-rearing and domestic labour leads Habermas to exaggerate the differences and to occlude the similarities between these two domains” (Buckingham, 2000: 24).
Docusoaps with their movement between different spheres have the ability to challenge entrenched binarisms. Yet many people find this hard to come to terms with and continue to see docusoaps as having “...trivialised the documentary form” and having “prioritised entertainment value over seriousness of intent” (Bruzzi, 2000: 79; Dovey, 2000) a shift which they fear may spell the ‘death’ of ‘genuine’ documentary.

"Along with criticism that docusoaps were ‘commercials’, ‘comedy’ and ‘weak repetitious stories’ came a secondary level of criticism – docusoaps are cheap TV compared to the ‘properly researched’- and expansively resourced postproduction of existing forms of factual television. Therefore the rash of docusoaps will replace other forms of documentary on TV, making the ‘serious’ documentary redundant” (Dovey, 2000: 137).

Docusoaps first emerged as a major new genre in the late 1990s, between 1996 and 1999, (Dovey, 2000) and have continued to increase in popularity. Maybe it is this evidence of viewer demand that should be allowed to speak to us above all others. It indicates that it is time to “...take up the task” of mediating “...between a historical public world and an unhistorical my-world” (Scannell, 1996: 163).

In pursuit of this goal the following chapter offers a detailed textual analysis of three British docusoaps, using these exemplars to explore how the genre is organized and how it works, focusing particularly on how representations of gender and emotionality are constructed.

The Journey of Discovery

At this point the journey was well and truly underway. I had not surrendered fully the idea that docusoaps could scramble binarisms and in doing so challenge long held
assumptions about men and women and their displays of emotion, but I was becoming more and more aware that it was unlikely that anything I found would represent an equalising of the playing field for men and women, with regard to displays of emotion.
Chapter 6- Organising Emotions: A textual Analysis

As we noted earlier, Holland (1997) has very usefully divided docusoaps into three major sub-genres- institutional, locational, and event oriented. After viewing all docusoaps broadcast on the UK terrestrial television channels, during the pilot period, this classification was used to select three ideal typical case studies, one from each sub-genre, for intensive analysis. They are:

(1) **Institutional form.** *Soldiers To Be,* which follows groups of male and female recruits to the army (institution) through their initial training.

(2) **Locational form.** *Clampers,* which follows a group of traffic wardens as they patrol their 'beat' in suburban London (location).

(3) **Event-oriented form.** *Popstars,* which tracks would-be pop stars as they audition (the audition is the event) before a panel of experts.

**Methodology**

This chapter presents a qualitative textual analysis of these three series based on repeated viewings of off-air recordings of each episode. Textual analysis, however detailed and elaborate, can only ever offer an educated guess at the possible ways a text might be interpreted (McKee, 2001). It can highlight different dimensions of its organization, point to key incidents and episodes that constitute ‘turning points’ in the narrative, investigate the way voice-over commentary and on-screen dialogue are deployed, and explore the programme’s visual landscape, but it cannot substitute empirical investigation of how actual audiences interpret and respond to what they see on the screen.

“If we want to understand the role that the media play in our lives and precisely how its messages participate in the cultural construction of our view of the world, then we have to understand what meanings audiences are making of
television programmes, films, newspapers, magazines and radio programmes—
in short, of 'texts'” (McKee, 2001; 139).

Audience meaning making is explored in the next chapter, using focus group viewings of selected programmes from the sample. For the moment however, I want to focus on developing a map of the resources for meaning making that the programmes offer, and to ask whether these are mobilized to promote a ‘preferred’ reading that nudges viewers towards a particular way of looking and responding. At the same time textual analysis recognises that no one interpretation of a text is correct: “...when doing Media Studies, you must never...claim that a text is an ‘accurate’ or an ‘inaccurate’ representation; never claim that it ‘reflects reality’” because with textual analysis “...there is no simple, single representation of reality against which you could measure...” the programme “...in order to judge how ‘accurate’ a representation it is” (Mckee, 2001). Textual analysis does however allow us to investigate how emotion is used in docusoaps and what combination of emotion and rationality creates the most dramatic impact? My analysis is also concerned with how, as a ‘factional’ format, these docusoaps represent emotion and gender?

I chose to use qualitative textual analysis for two main reasons. Firstly, quantitative content analysis would not have allowed me to explore key dimensions of the text I was interested in so flexibly. Secondly, it provided a better fit with the qualitative focus group analysis that I had chosen to deploy in exploring audience responses. By way of introduction, I will begin by describing each of the case study programmes in turn detailing their;

(1) primary aim
(2) communicative design
(3) thematic development

(4) and visualisation techniques (Corner, 1990).

The second half of the chapter then turns to a discussion of defining moments that crystalise ‘preferred’ meanings in each text. I have highlighted the clips that were selected to be shown to the focus groups by a *.

Soldiers To Be

Primary Aim

The programme follows the lives of new male and female recruits at two army camps in England (Winchester and Pirbright). It charts their highs and lows as they embark on a new and very disciplined way of life. The programme allows us to hear commanding officers commenting on the new recruits and vice versa. We witness the disappointment, joy, unity and sometimes helplessness of the recruits as they are introduced to life in the army, from drills to room inspections. The programme provides us with an insight into a world that many of us will never witness first hand and to see directly how young, naïve, individuals are initiated into an institution that claims to be “the best of the best”.

Although the audience is given an insight into the world of army recruitment and training, it is nevertheless a docusoap, which appears to have been produced with the enjoyment of the audience in mind. The primary aim is to show the recruit’s reactions to their new regimented lives. There are echoes of early English popular television dramas, such as The Army Game, which dealt with the basic training of national servicemen. However, whereas those shows spoke to a shared generational experience of being legally compelled, often unwillingly, to take ‘time out’ of civilian
life, *Soldiers To Be*, deals with entrants to a new permanent job which most of the contemporary audience would have no direct knowledge of. It is as if the intended message is 'look at how they are dealing with this, could you do it?’ We see this when the recruits are being trained with continuous drills and exercises. Witnessing their reaction to the constant instruction and criticism we are invited to place ourselves in their position and to ask ourselves whether we would succeed or fail.

*Soldiers To Be* (and in my opinion all docusoaps) thrive on catching the candid reactions of those involved (in this case the recruits and commanding officers). The camera eagerly consumes the outbursts of anger and the shedding of tears deploying moments of emotion to attract and hold the interest of the audience. *Soldiers To Be* however, combines these displays of emotion with rational reflection throughout. It achieves this firstly, through the all-knowing voice of the narrator commenting on the emotional displays of the recruits at particular moments, and secondly by emphasising the rationality of the commanding officers. Although they continuously display aggression while training the recruits, they are presented as rational, expressing entirely justified reactions.

**Communicative Design**

- *Soldiers To Be* opens with a male voice-over commentary, the voice, which speaks in a marked working class estuary English accent, is provided by the radical singer, Billy Bragg. This unseen voice acts as a provider of information; detailing which camp we are viewing, what the recruits are doing in particular episodes, and what happens to certain individuals. As viewers we never actually see Bragg but are continually reminded of his presence. The
use of a down-to-earth narrative voice encourages the audience to feel a
connection with him, instead of feeling that they are being dictated to by a
voice of authority. His voice never suggests an emotional response on his part
although, as noted above, he describes the feelings and emotions of the
recruits at particular moments. In this sense the commentary upholds the
primacy of male narratives rather than those of women and, because of the
nature of the programme, suggests a male-rational response. The use of an
unseen voice-over commentary is taken from the established style of the
documentary format with its ‘all knowing nature’ and lack of emotional
response. Thus we see rationality being very much written into the narrative
structure. However, it is also important to remember that the voice is populist.
It is the voice of a popular singer associated with protest. Because it does not
comply with standard BBC tones or delivery it opens the way for the populist
structure of feeling mobilised by soap-opera.

- Each episode begins with the voice-over commentator telling the audience
  where we are and what time it is. This regimented approach establishes a
  rational narrative structure and follows an ordered documentary style.

- Each episode ends with the narrative voice explaining what has happened to
  the recruits we will not see again in later episodes. For example, in one
  episode we are told that recruit “Colin Mutch left the army and is trying to
  now get into the Scots Guards” (Friday 25th January).

- Soldiers To Be is set in an institution that has historically been viewed as a
  predominantly masculine domain. It is a world of regimentation, which the
  communicative design appears to reinforce.
Most of the recruits appear to be from working or middle-class families and have often had troubled childhoods or teenage years (making the army appear almost like a rehabilitation camp). This combination of the characters' 'ordinariness' and emotional vulnerability is part of the narrative appeal of the text.

*Soldiers To Be* contains interview sequences with the recruits and the commanding officers.

We see discursive hybridization (Bondebjerg, 2000) with very different types of discourse mobilised within the same programme. For example the talk is more relaxed in barracks as opposed to out on the training court or during expert interviews with the commanding officers.

One of the major organizing principles of the communicative design is the way in which it follows the recruits contrasting fortunes from the very beginning, offering the audience multiple points of connection with their individual experiences as they develop. This trades-on the 'never-ending' format of the soap opera. By doing this, the docusoap hopes to appeal to audiences from both the documentary and soap opera genres.
Thematic Development

- In the very first episode of *Soldiers To Be* we hear one of the commanding officers state that the female recruits need to be treated differently to the male recruits because they are ‘mentally weaker’. Because they cry more and are more easily upset the commanding officers have to be more ‘understanding’ in their approach towards them. This immediately invites the audience to compare how male and female recruits are treated. From the first stages of this particular docusoap then, we see discourses of emotion and rationality being gendered.

- The audience is constantly made aware that we are viewing a traditionally ‘macho’ arena which women are being permitted to enter on sufferance. This is conveyed in two ways. Firstly, the majority of the programme is spent looking at the male recruits. Secondly, when the women are shown they always seem to be laughing playfully and messing around, suggesting that they do not really ‘belong’ in a deadly and serious domain devoted to preparing individuals for war.

- At the same time, *Soldiers To Be* can be seen to both uphold and subvert patriarchal representations of the public and private sphere. If we are to see the army as an institutional domain where the effects/outcomes of decisions taken in the political public sphere are felt at their strongest, then this programme can be seen to reinforce representations by, having the female recruits in a separate, smaller sphere that is less harshly regulated than the men’s sphere. However one could also suggest that since female recruits are
in the army they are therefore members, albeit peripheral members, of the same public sphere.

- There is no doubt that the intense highs and lows experienced by the recruits shown in *Soldiers To Be* create a powerful and effective emotional appeal; but it is important to be aware that there is a reading of the programme which enhances the risk of reinforcing gender divisions and their relation to emotionality.

**Visualisation**

- The music is masculine with the use of bass and guitar. The title song *Like Soldiers Do* is composed and performed by Billy Bragg who also provides the voice-over commentary. The use of participants in a program to sing the title music is an ingredient of many popular dramas, as in the situation comedies, *Goodnight Sweetheart* and *Birds of a Feather*, for example. This involvement also makes Bragg appear less distanced as the voice-over commentator. This is a clever mix of fictional and documentary conventions designed to put the audience at ease. In conventional documentaries the narrative voice appears both serious and superior but by using the narrator to sing the title music the programme immediately reinforces sense of familiarity and down-to-earthiness.

- The dialogue between the participants is also very down-to-earth with a great deal of swearing and vernacular speech. This style of talk borrows from the soap opera format. While the dialogue between male recruits is very ‘macho’ it also evokes mateship and collective care. In contrast, the conversation between the female recruits is more personalised and is punctuated by sayings
like "she's my best friend" (Monday 28th January). Dialogue between the commanding officers and the recruits is strongly dependent on gender. With the male recruits there is a great deal of shouting, swearing and insults, whereas with the female recruits voices are rarely raised and the officers take on a more fatherly role.

- The camera work and editing is basic and similar to the style employed in soap opera. It consists primarily of group shots and close-ups of single characters for emphasis. At the same time techniques that are often used in documentary are also employed. Fades to black are used frequently, as the programme moves on to another recruit or issue and there are still shots at the end of the programme of those recruits who we will not see again. Both devices are accompanied by an explanation from the voice-over commentator.

- The imagery used is also central to establishing the contrast between the emotionally strong male and the emotionally weak female. In one sequence the camera pans across a room filled with male recruits. Adorning their walls are posters of naked women, the targets of fantasy and pursuit. We then cut to a dormitory full of female recruits; sprawled out on their beds, chatting to the camera. In the background we see photos of their families and friends. These images of difference, when combined with statements about how the men are mentally stronger while the women need a gentler approach, reinforce the impression of women as always needing the emotional back-up of family and friends, whereas men are portrayed as competitive and self confident.
Whenever we see the commanding officers talking it is in a formal manner, almost like an interview, whereas the recruits often assume a more soap opera like style of talk, chatting amongst themselves. This contrast, once again, mixes the formal presentation of authoritative speech characteristic of news and classical documentary with scenes of conversation seemingly overheard by accident, something which is typical of soap opera.

Although much of the footage in *Soldiers To Be* appears to be mundane, cumulatively it constructs a stable set of oppositions. The glimpses the camera gives of pictures of naked women on the walls of the male recruits’ rooms in contrast to the family photos that we see decorating the female recruits’ space. The camera panning over the male recruits being sworn at, yelled at and insulted in contrast to sequences showing the female recruits being treated with a much gentler approach. The audience also sees the women carrying around make-up bags on an over-night exercise in the forest. Taken together these images of expected gender differences combine to reinforce a conventional view of women as weaker and of men as stronger and ‘able to take it’.

One might expect that a programme about men and women becoming soldiers would
challenge pre-conceived perceptions of gender and emotionality; instead it manages to reinforce them.

**The Clampers**

*Primary Aim*

The docusoap *The Clampers* follows the work of Ray, Sandy, Keith, Mr.Crabbe, Miguel, Mike, John, Roger, Sharon and Bradley who all work in London as car clampers and parking attendants. Their day-to-day routine is made up of handing out parking tickets and clamping and towing-away vehicles. The series follow them as they walk the streets of London, depicting them frequently encountering public hostility and abuse, and shows how, in the end, it becomes too much for some of them. To an extent, *The Clampers* fictionalises real life people by making them into ‘characters’. This technique, borrowed from soap opera, is combined with actuality footage of street encounters in documentary style.

The representation of emotional responses is central to all the critical sequences in *The Clampers* (as we will discover in more detail later on in this chapter). This focus is inevitable given that the programme sets out to demonstrate the difficulty of life working as a clamper on the streets of London and how everyday can be a struggle because of constant abuse and confrontations. Presenting altercations as they occur and detailing the reactions of the clampers and the public to them repeatedly reinforce this emphasis on confrontation.
Communicative Design

- *The Clampers* (in common with *Soldiers To Be*) mobilizes a male voice-over commentary, which provides the audience with details of what is happening. This unseen, informative voice never signals an emotional response. The voice used is that of Ross Kemp, well known for his part in *Eastenders*, a popular BBC1 soap opera. The use of Kemp is effective for three reasons; firstly he stars in a soap opera, which, like *The Clampers*, is set in London. Secondly his down-to-earth, cockney voice is immediately recognizable to many in the audience making him accessible in a way that is rarely the case with the more formal voice-over commentators in classical documentaries. Thirdly, the character Kemp played in *Eastenders* is well known for his outbursts of anger and is shown as exactly the kind of person who would be abusive, and possibly violent, towards a traffic warden. These connotations, in combination, offer an economical way of mobilizing the pleasures of soap opera while retaining a key element of documentary presentation.

- The title sequence displays portraits of the main participants with their names written beside their faces, a device which is used at the start of a number of soap operas, particularly those popular with young people, such as *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*. This inter-textual reference, coupled with the use of a soap opera star to do the voice-over, establishes expectations that the programme will deliver many of the pleasures of soaps, whilst retaining the unseen authoritative commentary of the action typical of documentary.
As in soaps, the on-screen discourses in *The Clampers* mobilises ‘various levels of everyday talk’ (Bondebjerg, 2000) from family and group conversations to gender related discourse and aggressive outbursts.

The three main individuals or ‘characters’ in *The Clampers* offer very different personality types, which immediately open up the communicative design of the programme and allow an exploration of contrasts and possible conflicts. Ray is the typical gay man, very camp in his movements and attitude. Sandy an unconfident mother of three who struggles to make ends meet. Keith is a typical ‘lad’- big, strong and intimidating in every way. These are three stereotypes personified; the sensitive gay man, the ‘weak’ female who finds it uncomfortable arguing, and the strong lad who appears to fear nothing.

**Thematic Development**

*The Clampers* focuses on emotional expression (mostly negative) and sets out to provoke strong responses in the viewer, either of resentment at the clampers for giving mostly underprivileged people tickets and clamps, or of disgust at the public’s hostile responses to them. There is no doubt that arguments, swearing and arrogance “…makes for a powerful emotional appeal…” (Corner, 1990; 15) and they are used to their full advantage in the programme’s thematic development.

*The Clampers* constantly highlights the bad behaviour of the public and points out gender differences with the men reacting much more aggressively than the women. They are seen to shout, swear and become offensive, verbally abusive and even on occasions physically abusive.
• This particular docusoap could be said to subvert the traditional patriarchal representations of gender and its relationship with emotion and rationality. For the majority of the time we see women responding in a calm, rational fashion, while the men on the whole tend to loose control and become emotional.

• As a docusoap, the audience sees the workers/characters develop in each episode. They see them argue, cry, and socialise, as we would see characters do in soap operas. At the same time, we also are constantly given information and explanations as we would if we were viewing a documentary. As noted earlier, this is a clever way of integrating elements taken from very different programme forms.

Visualisation

• A woman composed the instrumental title music of *The Clampers*. It is light and playful and establishes the programme as primarily entertainment. Then immediately we hear the unseen voice and are confronted with the programme’s documentary elements.
• There is a great deal of cursing, arguments and abusive speech. This makes the dialogue highly emotionally charged. Whenever we hear the abuse, we immediately hear the reactions.

• The camera work and editing moves back and forth between different situations as they unfold, which is very characteristic of a soap opera. However after a few of these shifts between situations we are reminded of the presence of the unseen voice. The audience also witnesses a lot of face-on camera work, almost like an interview, with the parking attendants and some of the public. This is continuous with the traditional documentary format.

At first glance *The Clampers* appears to be typical entertainment but below the surface lies something much more interesting, the emotional intensity of the docusoap. Emotional outbursts at first appear to challenge established binary oppositions between male/rational and female/irrational by inverting them. This effect occurs when we see a man crying and a woman angry. Anger in a man appears normal, almost masculine, but not in a woman, just as tears in a woman appears natural but is a sign of weakness in a man. This ability to throw standard classificatory schemas into disarray, with divisions becoming blurred and dichotomies confused, is what invests the genre with its subversive potential. Even when the audience does see rationality demonstrated in its classic form in *The Clampers* it is by a gay man, camp in every way.

The defining moments in *The Clampers* (some of which we will return to later in this chapter) occur when emotion and rationality are combined, creating a dramatic impact for the audience. During the arguments between the public and the clampers we see
the emotional dramas associated with the popular but we also hear the narrative voice explaining what we have just seen and framing these defining moments.

**Popstars**

*Primary Aim*

The docusoap *Popstars* follows the journey of several hopefuls who embark on rigorous tests of their singing and dancing skills in the hope of becoming members of a five person pop group. They are evaluated, at every step of the process, by three judges: Nigel Lythgoe, Nicki Chapman and Paul Adam. As Nigel Lythogoe has noted, *Popstars*, is a programme, which “…is not just about music- it’s about dreams, joy, tears and happiness” (episode 1). The programme sharpens emotional intensity because of the extreme highs and devastating lows of the selection process. Over several weeks we follow the contestants, from the first nerve-wracking auditions up to the selection of the five final members of the new pop group *Hearsay*. The auditions take place around the country and with thousands of hopefuls. Each week the audience gets to know the contestants better and rides the emotional roller coaster with them.

Emotion is encoded into every sequence of *Popstars* to the extent that it is impossible to imagine the programme without it. Feelings, reactions, hope and disappointment are sewn into every stitch of the programme. *Popstars* offers audiences the chance to see other people going through what we all go through at one point in our lives—wanting something so much that you are willing to ride an emotional roller coaster as you deal with the possibility of fulfilling your dream and face the devastating realization that it maybe out of your reach.
Communicative Design

- *Popstars* is organized around a specific event that the audience can follow knowing that the ultimate goal is to form a new pop group made up of unknown performers.

- It is accompanied by a male voice-over commentary, spoken by Tim Quiche, using an ‘open’, relaxed, tone with no obvious air of superiority, (Bondebjerg, 2000). Every episode opens with him telling us where the auditions are being held and what is happening in this episode and concludes with him describing what will be happening in the next episode. Quiche already knows what will happen to certain contestants and what decisions the judges have reached. However, to sustain audience attention he withholding this information, simply hinting at whether a particular hopeful is liked/disliked or is treading on thin ice. The audience never hears him express an emotional response. He simply describes the feelings of the hopefuls, judges and families of the contestants. The voice-over commentary in *Popstars* could therefore be said to uphold the established conventions of the male narrative voice in every way.

- *Popstars* moves between the discourse of the judges in the hall where the auditions are held, to the contestants in their hotel rooms by themselves. We also hear a lot of couple and group discourses (Bondebjerg, 2000) as they talk amongst themselves and to the camera.

- The communicative design is carefully constructed to make the audience feel emotionally connected to what is happening on the screen. We see interviews with the hopefuls and judges; we see the contestants crying, laughing, nervous, scared, and unsure.
• Many of the shots evoke the enormity of what being a popstar means to the hopefuls, constantly reminding the audience of what rejection and acceptance will mean to them.

*Thematic Development*

• *Popstars* is focused on a specific group of people who are all "...united by a special interest...wishing to be a popstar" (Bondebjerg, 2000: 174).

• It attempts to tie the audience emotionally to certain hopefuls by encouraging them to give or withhold support, "I think she should get in" or "I don't like her". By doing this it becomes more like a soap opera as viewers wait eagerly to see what will happen in the next episode.

• Emotion does not appear to be gendered as we witness a total acceptance of the expression of emotion by both the men and women in the programme.

• There are positive consequences for those who express emotion whether it is a cuddle or a pat on the back. Both males and females in the programme provide this positive reinforcement.
Visualisation

- The title music for *Popstars* is, as would be expected, very pop like and features female vocals. It is visually accompanied by a lot of colour and images of people playing instruments, singing and dancing. The shortness and brightness of the opening is similar to the beginning of a soap opera.

- The audience witnesses a lot of chatting between contestants and judges, making it feel as if you are watching the next episode in your favourite soap opera. At the same time, talk also appears in documentary style excerpts of direct address to the camera (almost like an interview) when we get the facts about the contestants and the judges. It is also interesting to note that it is during these sequences that we see very candid images of the hopefuls as they enlighten us on how they are really feeling, mixing the informative nature of documentary with the emotional revelations of a soap opera.

- The camera work used in *Popstars* is what we would expect of a soap opera. Cutting is largely motivated by the flow of dialogue and moves between group shots and close-ups. Unlike soaps however, movements between individual contestants/judges and general situations are usually accompanied by the voice-over commentary explaining what is happening. When the narrator is informing us of what is happening to a hopeful we often see a black and white view of the event in question, for example showing how one contestant partied too hard the night before and is now feeling the effects. This technique could be likened to American soap operas like *Days of Our Lives* or *The Bold and the Beautiful* as characters reminisce. Occasional panning shots across the faces of contestants and judges reveal emotional states and keep the audience involved in what the people on the screen are feeling.
*Popstars* is full of expressions of emotion and rationality from both the male and female contestants and judges. The audience witnesses the judges (‘the experts’) become upset along with the young hopefuls who are battling it out to make their dreams of becoming popstars a reality. However, it does not allow for discourses of emotion and rationality to be gendered because all participants—whether male or female—display a range of reactions.

At this point I think it is important to justify why I chose to analyse *Popstars (The Clampers and Soldiers to Be* are a much more straightforward choice), thus categorising it as a docusoap; why I defined it as an event-orientated docusoap; but also why I chose to include a docusoap with such a highly overt emotional content. There is no doubt that *Popstars* falls into the genre of Reality Television but under that umbrella where does it lie; it is not an A&E format so is it a docusoap or a reality game-doc?

As stated in Chapter 5, Reality Television is a confusing term because it tackles ‘a relatively broad generic category’ (Kilborn, 2003: 55), something which I was made very aware of when choosing which docusoaps to carry out my textual analysis on. Without work like Kilborn’s (2003) it is often confusing knowing whether particular programmes should be categorised as a docusoap or not, especially when dealing with programmes like *Popstars*; because of the way it appears to fall itself between docusoaps and reality game-docs.
*Popstars* could be conceived as a reality game-doc because it is staged for the cameras as opposed to being an already planned event. It contains elements of the reality game-doc where people are asked to respond to an artificial situation rather than a real event and were elimination of characters is present, as witnessed in programmes like *Big Brother*. However *Popstars* can also be viewed as a docuseries because it follows the lives of young hopefuls who have been trying to become famous, taking part in auditions previously to the making of *Popstars*, etc. The auditioning process, although manufactured for the programme, is in fact a reality of their everyday lives as they strive to be ‘the next big thing’. Every audition contains the element of elimination and therefore this ingredient should not be seen as merely representing a reality game-doc, as it is the ultimate purpose of an audition.

I refer to *Popstars* as an event orientated docuseries, where the audition represents the event. This may appear a precarious choice because of the way *Popstars* appears to be hybrid- a cross between a docuseries and a reality game-doc. The event could be considered to be a pseudo event because it is staged but nonetheless it is an event that is akin to a real event, i.e. an audition, unlike for example *Shipwrecked* or *Big Brother* which does not resemble a normal event in a person’s life.

I would also like to take time to comment on the highly emotional content of *Popstars*, something which set itself aside from the other two docuseries that I chose to investigate. Although *Soldiers To Be* and *The Clammers*, as stated previously, thrive on emotion, *Popstars* would be meaningless if it did not contain a constant flow of highly emotional scenes. It lives for “...the reactions/interactions between characters” (Kilborn, 2003: 101) in a way that surpasses *Soldiers To Be* and *The..."
Clampers. This has to do with the fact that it is set in the entertainment industry where emotional outbursts are accepted and expected. Thus it remains a valid choice because the high emotional content is authentic and hence of interest to the audience.

"Thus while the docusoaps audience has come to expect characters will be filmed in their day-to-day working environment, the actual docusoap setting is always subsidiary to the primary business of docusoaps, which is to produce a diverting entertainment package in which dialogue and character interaction are always privileged over any attempt to reveal more about the working of the respective institutions" (Kilborn, 2003: 100).

Representations of Gender and Emotionality in Soldiers To Be, The Clammers and Popstars

As we have noted, while watching the three docusoaps, Soldiers To Be, The Clammers and Popstars, the audience is continuously provided with information through the voice-over commentary. The presence of the unseen narrator is particularly evident at crucial moments. They always open and close each episode, immediately taking on the role of the all-knowing link in the programme. For example we hear the narrator open the series Popstars by simply saying:

"From a series of open auditions Popstars will bring together five undiscovered talents to create a new, and exciting band and from the first audition to the release of their first album, cameras will follow them every step of the way" (15th January) - visually the audience is confronted with images of hordes of young and old hopefuls, anxious to become the next S Club or Westlife.

In Popstars we are immediately aware that this will be an emotionally charged series, one that takes on the ethos of the Romantic period because of the way in which it is immersed in the popular music industry, an industry in which the expression of emotion plays a central role.

Soldiers To Be always opens with a declaration of the day, time and which barracks the audience is looking at, while The Clammers starts with a short description of what
is going to be happening in that particular episode. It is an informative voice that keeps the audience up to date with exactly what is happening so that they never have the feeling of being lost.

"The narrative most often has one or two main-stories and several sub stories in each episode and the crosscutting follows the same patterns as in fictional soaps, although the dramatic potential is not as powerful and cannot be controlled since the stories came out of everyday life" (Bondebjerg, 2000: 171).

In all three cases the voice-over commentary is supported by visuals. For example, in *Soldiers To Be* when we are told what time it is and which barracks we are about to see inside, the camera will pan across the building, giving the audience the opportunity to become accustomed to the location. These establishing shots, which are borrowed from documentary conventions, interrupt storylines from time to time, as if to provide the audience with a break, some pause time. Immediately afterwards we are drawn into the hustle and bustle of the recruits lives bringing us back to the soap opera side of the genre. This splicing together of conventions from both soap opera and documentary at the outset of the programme appears as yet another demonstration of the way in which docusoaps construct a new hybrid form.

It is important to note that the all-knowing role of the voice-over commentator is male in each of the docusoaps: in *Soldiers To Be* it is the voice of Billy Bragg, in *The Clamper's* we hear the familiar voice of Ross Kemp and in *Popstars* it is Daniel Hill. The use of voice-over commentary is taken from the well-established documentary format where again, the speaker is usually male. Docusoaps, however, try and make the narrative voice more accessible to the audience, by using popular entertainers rather than stage actors or journalists. Although the male voices used are more down-
to-earth than the ones that define the documentary format, this is only a minor alteration in a role, which reinforces the privileged position of men. Therefore docusoaps are still upholding a representation of the male as possessing superior knowledge and analytical ability together with the capacity to leave emotions to one side and speak objectively. This demonstrates the extremely conservative nature and thus the essentialist nature of the docusoap.

In all three programmes considered here the narrator asserts his authority through rationality, never conveying emotion. Instead we hear the three men describe the feelings and emotions of the people that the audience can see on the screen. In one of the episodes of Popstars we hear the narrative voice tell us how one of the contestants, Jessica, will be feeling when she discovers that she will be going through to the next phase: "her emotional yo-yo ride was about to take a turn for the better" (5th February) - visually the audience sees a nervous Jessica, surrounded by other hopefuls and we are aware that we too are waiting expectantly for her to find out the good news. In Soldiers To Be, it is the description of the new recruits emotions, by the narrator, which allows the audience to 'get to know' individuals on the programme, to empathize with them or in some cases be disgusted by their attitudes. In The Clambers the voice-over allows us to understand why Sandy and Miguel felt it necessary to resign. These privileged insights into the emotions and motivations of those on screen identify the male voice-over commentator as the all-knowing, distant, informative voice. As a consequence, the traditional association between rationality and maleness is written into the basic narrative of each of these programmes. Likewise the narrator has the power to cue the audience's responses by structuring the
emotional rendez-vous between what is shown on screen and how it will engage the viewer.

In both *The Clampsers* and *Soldiers To Be* the narrative is punctuated by emotional outbursts. In *Popstars* they suffuse it with emotional displays being displayed as a permanent feature. One could suggest that this is because *Popstars* is based in the entertainment industry where continuous emotional display is an expected dimension of performative presentation. In contrast, in the other two docusoaps, emotional outbursts are not as common. *The Clampsers* provides an excellent example of this;

[We hear the narrator telling us about Keith Brown's next job where he will have to remove a car because fines have not been paid; on the screen we see him driving to his next job - as a viewer I think nothing of this as I have seen him do this several times before]

![Image of a car door being closed]

_Keith_: [Keith knocks on the door and then begins talking when a man and a woman answer the door] _Court bailiffs sir._ We've got a court order that's been issued sir for non-payment of fines on this vehicle. Harrow Council have authorized the removal of the vehicle for non-payment of fines. You've now a sum payable of £321.25 and the vehicle will now be going into court storage. Once you've paid the fines you can go and collect the vehicle from the court storage facility. Alright?

_Woman_: [The woman barges out the door past Keith] _Excuse me._

_Man_: [Talking to his wife] _What are you fucking doing? What are you fucking doing?_ [Woman starts to hit Keith]

_Keith_: _The cars going._ [Keith continues to talk as she hits him] _We have a court order._

_Woman_: _REALLY?_ [Continues hitting Keith]

*Man:* [Comes over to talk to Keith] *All you have to do is ask for the fucking money!*  

*Woman:* Yeah, all you have to do is ask for the fucking money! You don’t have to take our car!

*Man:* [As woman moves to go back after Keith] *JACKIE COME HERE!*  

*Keith:* [She hits the phone out of Keith’s hand and he turns to her] *All you’re going to do is get yourself arrested, aren’t you?*  

*Woman:* We’re going to get you the money so just put the phone down!  

*Keith:* [Keith continues to talk on the phone] *Yeah, hello can I have the police again please?*  

*Man:* *The money’s here alright?!!*  

*Keith:* [still on the phone to the police] *Yep that’s Harrow...*  

*Woman: HERE’S THE MONEY! JUST LEAVE THE CAR OK!*  

[It continues with the police arriving, Keith has a broken tooth and is charging the woman for assault and the narrator tells us that she will be arrested] *(The Clampers-February 6th)*

The narrative holds our attention as we wait to find out whether Keith’s attempt to remove the car will be an occasion for an emotional outburst and we are not disappointed. This is also a moment that goes against what we expect, as we see the woman becoming violent and the man needing to restrain her (a switch in roles that renews our interest in what we are seeing- something that will be discussed further later on in the chapter).

The three docusoaps all contain interview sequences, with the questions asked rarely being audible to the audience, leaving only the participants’ comments on certain situations or scenes (which the audience has previously observed). Often these interview sequences follow an explanation by the narrative voice of the situation or feelings of the ‘characters’.

In *Popstars* the audience is continuously faced with images of both male and female contestants crying and comforting each other, reactions that are framed as being both appropriate and positive.
*Commentator: During the audition process the hopefuls have grown close to Darius, news that he is leaving has left them devastated.

[We see Darius cuddling one of the female hopefuls who is sitting crying. The camera jumps to another woman who is sitting looking on, she too is crying and is being comforted by another male contestant. Camera jumps back to Darius cuddling the woman]

Female Hopeful: I can't believe it. I seriously can't believe it.
Darius: Oh babe, don't cry. (February 29th)

However on a few occasions this acceptance of the expression of emotion is called into question when the audience witnesses' rationality is being presented as the better response. “I didn’t want to get all emotional because for me personally if I do that I won’t be able to do anything” states one female contestant (Myleene from Popstars-29th January) - visually we see Myleene sitting in a room by herself talking to the camera. Another contestant, Kevin says;
*"You know when people are hysterical because someone's gone out, you know, it's pathetic. I'm not a hard man but I just feel that some people are being over the top about people going out and getting upset and everything" (Popstars - 5th February) - visually the audience sees Kevin standing in the rehearsal room talking one-to-one to the camera, while to the right of him and in the background we see other contestants hugging each other, crying, laughing and consoling, which once again reinforces his comment about how it is 'pathetic' to get so upset.

It is interesting to note that unlike many of the other participants these two contestants are positively described in the programme as 'professional' and 'focused'. This emphasis on stoicism and demonstrating a stiff upper lip stands in a direct line of descent from the ethos of the Enlightenment which viewed male expression of emotions as a weakness.

Both Myleene and Kevin are presented through intimate interviews. In Myleene's case before her one-on-one with the camera we see and hear the judges talking about how focused she has been throughout, demonstrating how commentary can be used to anchor the meanings carried by the visuals. In the case of Kevin it is the commentary that comes first and images are used to illustrate what he is saying, with the audience being encouraged to take in the images in the background of 'hysterical' and 'pathetic' displays of emotion.
Another example of this positive reinforcement of a ‘rational’ response can be seen in an argument between Ray (a parking attendant) and a member of the public in *The Clampsers*:

*Man: Why don’t you have the decency to come and knock on the door and say ‘can ya please move your motor’?*

*Ray: Because our job is to make sure cars aren’t illegally parked.*

*Man: YOU’RE A FLAMING ASSHOLE YOU ARE! THAT’S ALL YOU ARE! FUCK OFF!*

*Ray: That’s not the case at all.*

*Man: YES IT IS! WANKER!*

*Ray: Yeah, you’ve said your piece and that’s fine. You’ve said what you think.*

*Man: WANKER! FUCK OFF!*

*Ray: (to the camera as the man walks away) Still calm and composed... didn’t lose my rag... (5th February)*

[Visually we see Ray standing beside the illegally parked car, as a man comes out of a garage close by to confront him about clamping his car. Ray remains calm and simply talks to the man while he shouts and curses at him. This image reinforces Ray’s comment about being ‘calm and composed’ and demonstrates how this is the better response].

In contrast, in *Soldiers To Be*, emotionality is clearly defined as a female response, and one that hinders the proper performance of duties. This is partly to do with the different expectations associated with the two work places. We expect singers and actors to be able to convey the emotions of the characters they are playing or the songs they are singing convincingly and we expect this familiarity with intensity of
feeling to spill over into their off-stage lives. In contrast, we expect soldiers to
discharge their duties (including killing) professionally and without emotion. It is
precisely because of this that many military commentators still argue that women are
unsuited for combat duties. Reinforcing this view, as noted earlier, we hear one
commanding officer in Soldiers to Be, tell the camera that they have to treat the
female recruits more lightly because they get upset more easily:

* [We see two female recruits on exercise in the forest. They are attempting to
build a tent for themselves and are being overlooked and encouraged by one of
the male commanding officers]
Female Recruit: That'll have to do I'm afraid.
Commanding Officer: Never say that'll do, always say that's the best we can
do.
Female Recruit: That is the best we can do.
Commanding Officer: No it isn't.
[Camera jumps to interview with another commanding officer]
Commanding Officer: Everything is a gentler approach with the females (28th
January).

This comment reinforces a culture of essentialism in which we have the rational man
and the irrational woman. It is reinforced immediately afterwards by an image of one
of the female recruits crying because a small branch hits her head, demonstrating how
docu soaps use visuals and discourse to reinforce each other.
Throughout each episode the male recruits are shouted at and verbally abused, while the females relate to the commanding officers as father figures.

*[We see one of the Corporals inspecting the male dorm rooms. At one of the recruits beds he picks up a boot and stands in front of the recruit who is standing to attention at the end of his bed]
Corporal: Why have you not polished the end of these?
Recruit: I couldn't get into those bits.
Corporal: What about that?
Recruit: I polished that.
Corporal: You polished that did ya!
Recruit: Yes Corporal.
Corporal: FUCKING BOLLOCKS! Get me your boot brush and a fucking toothbrush now!
[Recruit hands them to him and the Corporal proceeds to show him how to properly polish them]
Corporal: How long did that take?
Recruit: Five seconds Corporal.
[Corporal then takes the boots and flings them out the window] (January 30th)
In one episode we see the contrasting reactions of several male and female recruits who fail their timed two-mile run. There is obvious disappointment on the faces of the male recruits as they describe how they are ‘gutted’ but the reaction for many of the female recruits is very different with one finding it difficult to talk because she is so upset;

*Camera Woman: I’m sorry.*
*Recruit: I know.*
*Camera Woman: Do you know what’s going to happen now?*
*Recruit: I’ll be given another three weeks to do it so I should do it. It was only a minute...so [finds it difficult to talk through her tears]...so just got to keep my training up [puts her hands to her face and cries into them] (28th January) - [The camera faces the recruit as she explains the situation. As she talks in the background the audience is able to see other female recruits hugging, congratulating, consoling and crying about the results of the run].

In another sequence we see the girls on exercise in the forest worrying about getting dirty and being reprimanded by a commanding officer for being concerned about how they look;

All the girls are lined up standing beside their kits, which are sprawled out in front of them. The commanding officer walks around them and picks up certain items as he speaks to them;

*Officer: What’s in this toiletry kit? Doesn’t happen! We are not in barracks, just does not happen! All this Gucci fancy kit, it does not happen! What in the hell, on exercise, have you got hairspray? Two different types of deodorant belonging to the same person! Why the hell do you have two different types?
All this is kit that you people have to carry around! All this is kit that you need or you think you need, well you don’t! (28th January)

In contrast, we see the male recruits getting into trouble for violence, as one recruit describes one fight; “We all went in there, Harrison got a cut eye, blood everywhere and he’s just going mad” (30th January)- we see three lads looking at the camera and backing up the one recruit who describes what happened. These sorts of images all reinforce the impression of the tough, strong, hard man image of the male in comparison with the weak, sensitive, female that is most concerned with being aesthetically pleasing. It is also interesting to note that images and commentary work together with particular scenes and reinforce each other across scenes. For example in Soldiers To Be very often when we see images of the female barracks the audience is immediately shown images of the male barracks, as if to reinforce the differences between the two.

It is however important to note that Soldiers To Be could also be seen to challenge society’s representations of gender by demonstrating that the army should no longer be viewed as simply a male arena. Women are entering into the army in increasing
numbers and are willing to die if need be for their country. As one commanding officer pointed out, although they have to treat the female recruits more lightly, "...they still have to do what the blokes have to do because at the end of the day they’re all going into the army" (28th January). The camera zooms in on the officer but in the background we see the girls training, reinforcing the statement that they too must learn the art of war.

The Clampers is also conventional in its representations of gender and emotion, with anger being presented as an acceptable male response and tears as an expected female response. Consequently, when a man cries he appears as weak, something that is demonstrated most obviously by one of the main stars of the programme who simply says;

*I can actually remember going home and crying on some days and that’s quite bad for a man to have to do that. There’s only a certain amount of times in a day that you can be called what they call you and I can’t repeat that. You can be called everything, vile names and vile words...vile." (5th February). Prior to this comment we see Ray placing a ticket on a car and we hear a man shout at Ray and his fellow clamer, calling them “nutters”. Visually we see Ray standing beside the clamping van talking to the camera in an intimate, confessional manner.
This demonstrates two things; firstly that crying is something that men should not do and secondly that it is a weak reaction to a situation; two beliefs that were sewn into the fabric of society during the Enlightenment.

We are frequently shown differences in the way the male and female parking attendants react to abuse by the public. The women seem very uncomfortable with the public shouting and arguing with them. For example Sandy, one of the parking attendants, seems out of her depth as an angry member of the public confronts her. At first we are faced with the image of Sandy walking alone at night on the streets of London in her uniform, putting tickets on illegally parked cars, then the confrontation occurs:

*Sandy:* If you just go there you'll be able to stay no problems at all yeah?
*Man:* LOOK WE'RE GOING NOW, YEAH SO...
*Sandy:* Yeah that's fine, so what are you shouting at?
*Man:* YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME RUNNING OVER LIKE A FUCKING DICK!
*Sandy:* I didn't run I walked over. (12th February)

This is an excellent demonstration of the relations between images and discourse because the first thing the audience sees is Sandy at her most vulnerable and this fact is then reinforced by her being confronted. In the end it all becomes too much for her and she resigns. In contrast the male parking attendants seem to enjoy what they do...
and take pleasure in arguing with the public over tickets and clamps. For example in one episode we see Ray, one of the clampers clearly relishing arguing with a passer-by who sees him putting a clamp on a car;

The audience sees the image of Miguel putting a clamp on a car and Ray talking to the camera, then a car drives by and the man in it winds down his window and shouts abuse at Ray.

Passer by: YOU NUTTER! They're at it all the time that lot! They take right liberties that lot! People are ill in hospital and they're clamping their cars up and everything. THEY WANT STRANGLING! CHARLIE WALKER, CAMBERWELL GREEN!

Ray: I'd rather get called 'a nutter' than some of the things we get called in a day sir. I can accept 'nutter' from Charlie Walker who lives on Camberwell Green. Let's just hope we don't come by Charlie's car on Camberwell Green or it'll be 'Charlie no more', TWAT! (5th February)

Afterwards we see an image of Ray laughing at the man before he gets back into the clamping van.

It is interesting to note that in The Clampers it is the male members of the public who, the majority of the time, become angry, shouting, cursing and some times even violent, whereas on the whole the female members of the public remain calm, say their piece and usually let it go. It could be suggested that by portraying images like this, the docusoap is challenging conventional representations by showing the female
in the rational role and the male in the irrational role. This is true in a sense but one could also argue that the goal posts change depending on the situation because the emotion ‘anger’ is seen as natural for men, accepted as such and therefore demonstrates strength. For example at Parking Appeals Service one wonders which reaction, of a married couple, to the decision of Mr.Crabbe to reject their appeal, would be viewed as the better response;

We see the image of Mr.Crabbe sitting behind his desk and Mr. and Mrs. Culp sitting in front of him listening to his verdict.

Mr.Crabbe: Well, look I’ll draw this to a close. I’ve listened to you very carefully and I do understand entirely what your point is but I can’t allow your appeal I’m afraid.
Mr.Culp: Well, why not?
Mr.Crabbe: I can’t say that the ticket has been incorrectly issued because it has been correctly issued...
Mrs.Culp: But it hasn’t been correctly issued.
Mr.Crabbe: In my opinion it has.
Mr.Culp: WELL WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A SIGN’S CHANGED OVERNIGHT? WHAT THEN IS THE SITUATION?
Mr.Crabbe: I’m sorry Mr.Culp but I’m not here to discuss...
Mr.Culp: NO WHAT IS THE SITUATION? I’M NOT FINISHED YET [getting increasingly angry]!
Mr.Crabbe: Well, I have and I’m running this trial.
Mr.Culp: BUT WHAT IS THE SITUATION?!?!
Mr.Crabbe: I’m not answering any more questions, would you like me to press the buzzer?
Mrs.Culp: That’s just babyish.
Mr.Crabbe: Will you please leave the room?
Mr.Culp: FOR WHAT REASON ARE YOU...
Mr.Crabbe: I’ve finished, I’ve finished, I’ve finished the hearing.
Mr.Culp: I’M FURIOUS!
Mr.Crabbe: I understand...people do get cross.
Mr.Culp: THERE’S NO COMPASSION AT ALL...
Mr.Crabbe: Mr.Culp, thank you Mr.Culp.
Mr.Culp: I DON’T THANK YOU AT ALL!
Mr.Crabbe: Good day
Mr and Mrs.Culp leave and Mr.Culp slams the door behind him. (5th February)

It is interesting to also note that we are not surprised to see an emotional outburst by this couple because of where they are. They are having a hearing at the Parking
Appeals Office and therefore immediately it is a charged location because it involves this couple defending themselves against a fine.

**Social Settings**
The context specific nature of emotional outbursts is a general feature of all three of the texts considered here. The more frequent displays of emotion on *Popstars* for example is clearly related to dominant perceptions of the entertainment industry. We expect emotional outbursts by participants in this arena because it is seen as a sector where emotional expression is a central professional resource, both on and off stage. Added to which, the programme focuses on the auditioning process (a particularly stressful time) and on a situation where the contestants are cut off from the rest of the world to a certain extent.

Although in *Soldiers To Be* the recruits are also cut off from the rest of the world as they live and work on the army base, they are in a disciplined space, very different from that of the *Popstars* contestants. Displays of emotion do not appear to be constantly promoted, as in *Popstars*, but instead are only likely to occur during certain situations and in certain social settings; for example in the dormitories were feelings can be expressed openly.

In *The Clampers* the social setting of the programme appears to promote emotional outbursts; it is set in London, a busy city, which is filled with the rich, and the poor. It is interesting to note that most of the emotional outbursts seem to come from the less well off members of London society. I suggest that it is during interactions with these citizens that emotional outbursts are rifer because of the stress and expense that
a fine or clamp will bring to their lives (more so than it would to a well off individual). However, there are always instances that surprise the audience.

Moments that go against the expected
In all three docusoaps there are moments that go against what we, as the audience, expect and it is important to point these out because they demonstrate that the unexpected can still happen within the expected. Let us begin with an example from Soldiers To Be in which we see the female recruits being told off for not cleaning their pots and pans properly while on an exercise in the forest.

“We’ve been out for 24hours! That’s all we’ve been out for... 24hours! You have had 90 litres of water. You get one water bottle in reality to go with your ration pack. You people have had 90 litres and you’ve not even bothered, some of you, cleaning your mess tins! Pick up your mess tins now and hold them in your left and right hand. People look...YOU WILL GIVE YOURSELVES FOOD POISONING! If you get food poisoning then that’s it! You get yourselves carted off the area and you’re no good to man nor beast!” (28TH January).

The image that follows is one where we see the girls having to do push ups as a punishment for their lack of hygiene.

This is a moment that goes against our preconceived ideas of gender roles. Women have historically taken on the role of the housewife who keeps everything clean and tidy, while the man is seen to be unconcerned with such distractions, instead being the
breadwinner. Here roles appear to be reversed, making the audience sit up and take note of this change. In comparison later on in the same episode the male recruits are commended for being so clean.

In one episode of *The Clammers* we are shocked when we suddenly see racial comments introduced into a confrontational situation. We see two black men arguing with a black female parking attendant because she has just given a car (that does not even belong to them) a ticket; “WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU’RE WHITE OR SOMETHING, YOU BITCH!” (13th February).

Likewise we do not expect to see those in power get upset because we have an expectation that they are ‘in control’. However on two occasions we see *Popstars* go against this expectation. On one occasion we see the judges become upset after they listen to one of the contestants, Jessica, talk about how she felt during the mock press conference;

*Jessica: The press conference was a learning experience.*
*Nigel (judge): Were you upset by that?*
*Jessica: Yeah, it was a shock, you know, to have someone...just snatch on what you say and let you [starts crying]...I felt like I made a fool out of myself after that.*

The judges go on to tell Jessica that she is through to the next stage. They hear Jessica say that she cannot believe that she’s through and that her bags are packed because she thought she would be leaving. When she has left the room Nicki and Nigel (two of the judges) start to cry. (29th January).

Another example of this open display of emotion by the judges is:

*[The three judges are sitting at a desk with Raymond, one of the hopefuls, sitting in front of them]*
*Nigel (judge): We’re not going to ask you back tomorrow.*
*[Camera jumps to Raymond who nods and then camera goes back to Nigel]*
*Nigel: We think you’ve a great talent, otherwise you wouldn’t have been here this week.*
Paul (judge): Please just think that you're not right for this project.
Raymond: Well, I had a great time and thanks for the opportunity that you gave me.
[We see tears rolling down Raymond's face. The camera jumps to the judges who all have tears in their eyes]
Raymond: And emmm if I do decide to pursue a music career it'll all be down to this and down to you so I just want to say thanks.
Paul: Please do, please keep on going.
Raymond: Thanks.
[Raymond shakes their hands and the camera follows him as he leaves the room. Camera then skips back to the three judges who are all crying]. (February 5th)

In the entertainment industry, displaying feelings is part and parcel of the job in a way that it is not in other industries. Because of this we are not as shocked by the judges shedding tears as we would be if it were, for example, the commanding officers in Soldiers To Be who were crying or the man in charge of parking ticket appeals in The Clampers.

The Relegitimizing of Experience over Expertise
So how are those in power and the so-called everyday person in these programmes usually viewed? Let us first look at research that Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt (1994) have done into chat shows. They place a great deal of importance on the value of chat shows as a medium where experts are given the opportunity to communicate with ordinary people, in this way re-establishing contact between two spheres which
have been separated. Originally, the views of the ‘ordinary’ person were seen as irrelevant but chat shows supposedly place expert and experiential testimony on an equal footing. What we see is “the new televisual populism which celebrates personal testimony and common sense...steadily eating away at the foundations of paternalism” (Haslam, 1994: 114). It has been argued that in several other genres, most notably documentary, ‘experience’ is looked on as being of less importance then certified expertise.

“Compared to expert, scientific knowledge, ordinary or common sense knowledge has long been derogated...The opinions of the multitude are degraded to common knowledge” (Livingstone, 1994: 92).

Livingstone (1994) goes on to say that the ‘expert’ view is usually seen as ‘masculine science’ and ‘experience’ as ‘old wives tale’.

From our textual analysis of docusoaps it is obvious that, as with chat shows, it is experience that is celebrated. In all three examples looked at, the programme is not only built around the participants’ experiences but these experiences foreground emotional reactions. Although the non participants’ perspectives (as relayed by the unseen voice-over) are also an integral part of these docusoaps, it is the experiential standpoint that the audience relates to and empathises with. It is almost as if we are ready to, if necessary, disregard the expert view. It is always grounded experience that the docusoap sets out to make us feel sympathy for and to connect with. This is arguably why, when those in power (who ‘should know better’) become upset we are unsure how to react.
In *Soldiers To Be* we are encouraged to feel more empathy for the new recruit (representing raw experience) than for the commanding officer (speaking from a base of professional expertise):

We see recruit Colin Mutch being called into one of the commanding officers office.

**Office**: You are here because you have not made the standard required. You are lucky in a large number of areas and you are aware of those. You have not made the effort to make them change. There has been no improvement what so ever in the four weeks. What we are doing with you is that we are classing you as unfit for army service. You will be given the option to return at a later date. Use that time, if you want it, to motivate yourself and work out where you’re going in life. At present you’re nothing, nothing is happening. Do you understand what I’m saying? Have you got anything you want to say?

**Mutch**: Yes Sir. No Sir.

Camera skips to Mutch outside the office talking to the camera.

**Mutch**: Well I’ll go back home but there’s nothing really there for me. Just go back to nothing really. Just go back to my Mom and Dad and family. Just look for a job, which I’ll probably never find for another three years. I’ve wasted a lot of time training to get here and that’s what’s getting at me. It just feels as if it’s been a waste of time.

Camera pauses on his face. (Friday 25th January)

We immediately feel sympathy for the experiential viewpoint and dislike the professional expert for his harsh words and all knowing manner.

Similarly, in *Popstars* the audience listens to the contestants talk about how much they have dreamed of becoming popstars and how hard they have worked. Thus when we see the judges (experts) shatter their hopes, tell them that they do not have what it takes to make it, we immediately feel empathy for them. In the image below we watch as one such hopeful is rejected.
In summary while experience is celebrated in docusoaps, the analytical stance of the expert is downgraded. This celebration of experience is seen by many commentators to feminize discussion; a stance that supports the idea that the expert belongs in the political public sphere while experience is an ingredient of the cultural public sphere. This in turn points to how conservative docusoaps really are and how they are not doing what some commentators would have us believe that they are.

**Conclusion**

Docusoaps bring together two very different traditions, combining elements of each to create a new genre but instead of challenging old overlapping dichotomies of fact/fiction, male/female, public/private, they appear to be reinforcing them. In common with soap operas docusoaps mobilize everyday emotional reactions to engage audiences but they follow the established convention of the classical documentary forms by developing authorial lines that are strongly coded as both masculine and able to transcend emotion. The organisation of docusoaps then is more conservative than a simple reading of hybridity and boundary breaking would suggest.
Moreover, the textual analysis presented here demonstrates that this conservatism presents itself as disappointingly essentialist in nature.

_The Journey of Discovery_

The reality of the situation was never clearer to me as it was when I finished carrying out my textual analysis. Although I had, previous to this chapter, started to play with the idea that I would be disappointed by what I discovered about docusoaps, I think I was still clutching to the last shred of hope that my initial excitement might not have been in vain. This however was shattered piece by piece as I worked through my textual analysis, leaving me with a despondent feeling with regard to what I would discover when I carried out my focus groups.
Chapter 7-Interpreting Docusoaps: Reception analysis

Bondebjerg has argued that docusoaps seek “…the spectacular and melodramatic aspects of everyday life or at least that which can be proliferated in a dramatized discourse” (Bondebjerg, 2000: 164). He goes on to say that he believes that as a genre they are “…first and foremost commercial entertainment” (Bondebjerg, 2000: 167). But is this how audiences see them? If docusoaps have been conceived primarily as entertainment and are perceived as such by the audience how does this frame the meanings that are taken from them? To answer these questions this chapter examines how audience members interpret docusoaps focusing in particular on perceptions of emotion and gender.

Six focus groups stratified by age and gender, with four to six people in each group, were conducted. The groups comprised; younger females (18-25 years), mid-age females (26-39 years), older females (40+ years), younger males (18-25 years), mid-age males (26-39 years) and older males (40+ years). The groups were stratified by gender in order to explore possible differences in responses between males and females. Age was added as a second stratifying dimension in order to examine possible links between respondents’ interpretations and reactions and their differential familiarity with both the subject matter (Popstars trading very much on contemporary youth culture for example) and with programme genres (with older viewers being more likely to have a wide experience of documentary forms). Throughout the analysis, which follows, participants of the focus groups are represented by a number followed by the abbreviation of the focus group they
attended. For example '#3YF' describes participant number three in the young female group and '#1OM' describes participant number one in the older male group.

Kreuger (1994) believes that the data gathered from focus group sessions can be examined and reported on three levels: raw data, descriptive statements and interpretation. All three levels are employed in this study. The research was oriented to exploring four main questions:

(1) How do people watching these docusoaps deal with the hybridity of the genre?
(2) How does it impact on the meaning-making process?
(3) Is the audience comfortable with it or not?
(4) Are traditional gendered characteristics challenged or reinforced?

**The Methodology of Focus Groups**

Participants in the focus groups were gathered through family and friends. I have included a more detailed portrait of each participant in the Appendix. An initial pilot focus group was conducted to establish whether the questions being employed to prompt conversation were likely to lead to the accumulation of relevant responses. Each of the six-group session used as the basis for the analysis reported here were recorded on audio and anonymity was guaranteed. Every session began with questions that introduced the group to the subject and encouraged them to articulate their general views on documentaries, soap operas and finally docusoaps. Each group was then shown seven short clips from the three docusoaps analysed in the previous chapter; *Soldiers To Be*, *The Clampers* and finally *Popstars*, and asked to comment on them with the aim of
eliciting their views on gender and emotion and the blurring of dichotomies in these
docusoaps and to examine whether they viewed the genre as informative, entertaining or
faction. All of the clips shown to the focus groups have been previously discussed in
Chapter 6 where each was highlighted by a *. Because of time restrictions within the
focus group sessions however, I was unable to show all the clips discussed in Chapter 6
to the participants.

Before presenting the analysis and interpretation of the results of the focus groups
however it is important to note the advantages and disadvantages of focus groups as a
methodology for exploring audience reception.

Disadvantages of Focus Groups

The first and often the most difficult problem with carrying out focus group research is
constructing representative groups (Berger, 1991: 91). As Susan Hornig Priest notes;

"Recruiting subjects for focus groups is a special problem... Most people who are
asked to participate in a focus group are going to refuse because they must disrupt
their normal, daily routine... Even when research funding permits paying focus
group participants for their cooperation, many will not find any reasonable amount
of pay sufficient incentive, and many others will simply not have time" (Hornig

The second major problem is ensuring balanced discussion within the group. Some
participants may attempt to monopolise the discussion while others become increasingly
reticent, finding the whole situation quite daunting (Gibbs, 1997,
www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU19.html, 15 November 2002). It is the responsibility of
the moderator to prevent this from happening. Unfortunately, because of the dynamic
nature of focus groups there is less possibility of exercising control over what is said than
in single interviews (Gibbs, 1997, www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU19.html, 15 November 2002). The moderator may also face problems in trying to keep the discussion going and developing it “…without directing the discussion in ways that will contaminate the information the research is designed to uncover” (Hornig Priest, 1996: 111). The moderator’s tone of voice and facial expressions play an important role in this facilitation process. There are problems too with generalising the results of the sessions (Marczak, no date, http://ag.arizona.edu/fcr/fs/cyfar.focus.htm, 27 August 2002). As Gibbs points out, focus group studies are

“limited in terms of their ability to generalize findings to a whole population, mainly because of the small numbers of people participating and the likelihood that the participants will not be a representative sample” (Gibbs, 1997, www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/sru19.html, 15th November 2002).

Although thirty-one people took part in this present research, which is more than many studies of television reception, this is still not enough to guarantee representativeness. The only way to get around this problem would be to carry out a large number of focus groups but this is extremely time consuming, leading Sonia Livingstone to conclude that;

“While the focus group...provides a rich and detailed analysis of audience reception for a particular genre, the question arises concerning the generality of these findings with respect to the general viewing population” (Livingstone, 1994: 361).

The use of group discussion means that individual confidentiality and anonymity cannot be guaranteed (Gibbs, 1997, www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU19.html, 15 November 2002). The need to express views in public may deter some participants, making them less likely to express their true feelings. Also it is important to be aware of another major limitation of focus groups;
“It should not be assumed that the individual in a focus group are expressing their own definitive individual view. They are speaking in a specific context, within a specific culture, and so sometimes it may be difficult for the researcher to clearly identify an individual message” (Gibbs, 1997, www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/sru19.html, 15 November 2002).

Often it can be difficult to distinguish the individuals’ viewpoint from the group’s emerging consensus. Even with these difficulties however, as a method of research, focus groups have several positive characteristics.

**Advantages of Focus Groups**

Focus groups are relatively inexpensive, can usually be assembled quickly and results are accessible immediately (Berger, 1991). In addition, they are an “excellent technique for obtaining detailed, in-depth information” going “...beyond the superficial” (Paulson, 2001, www.asaenet.org/article/0,52238,00.html, 27 August 2002). They also offer a flexible format that allows answers to be expanded on and investigated (Gearin, 2001, http://www.usc.edu/dept/geography/gislab/projects/haynes/publications/Focus_w1.pdf, 15 November 2002).

However, arguably the most important advantage of focus groups is that, by promoting interaction, they enable “participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences” (Gibbs, 1997, www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/sru19.html, 15 November 2002). This dynamic process of interchange often brings to light issues and viewpoints that would not have been discovered using either quantitative techniques, such as standardized questionnaires, or one-to-one interviews. “Focus group participants enrich the quality of the data, by
questioning each other, and providing reality checks on each other's responses" (Gearin, 2001, http://www.usc.edu/dept/geography/gislab/projects/haynes/publications/Focus_w1.pdf, 15 November 2002). As a consequence;

“A richer picture of how information is processed and conclusions are drawn can be constructed in comparison to what can be understood from the narrower data produced in an interview situation. Participants may say things to one another that they would not bring up in a one-to-one conversation, such as arguments they consider persuasive and associations they make in response to others' comments. They may also more easily forget that the researcher is present, so their conversations and reactions more closely approximate normal conditions” (Hornig Priest, 1996: 66).

Gearin (2001) also notes that focus group's are “useful for soliciting the opinions and attitudes of traditional marginalized groups...” (Gearin, 2001, http://www.usc.edu/dept/geography/gislab/projects/haynes/publications/Focus_w1.pdf, 15 November 2002).

In sum then, although there are drawbacks to focus groups as a method of research (as seen above) these are, on balance, outweighed by the advantages. Most importantly, they allow us to dig beneath immediate responses and explore the criteria participants employ to interpret and evaluate both individual programmes and the genre of docusoaps as a whole.

**An Uninformative Playground**

Looking at the discussions generated across all the focus groups, it is clear that docusoaps were viewed as predominantly an entertainment genre whereas documentaries were overwhelmingly seen as informative. Moreover, allocating a particular programme to a
generic category acted as a cue to the level of attention it was likely to require. As one member of the younger female group (#1YF) noted, “you have to be more alert watching documentaries in order to take in the facts”. Similarly, a member of the mid-male group stated (#1MM), “well by default I would pay attention more so if I was watching a documentary than if I was watching, lets say, The Simpsons”.

In contrast, evaluations of docusoaps invariably emphasized the ‘soap’ component of the genre. “I don’t take them seriously because I don’t honestly expect to learn anything from a docusoap” (participant in younger male group-#1YM). However, this did not necessarily preclude all possibility of encountering new, and valued, information. As one participant in the older female group pointed out;

“If in some way though you might be learning things, like for example in Vets in Practice you learn about what it’s like to be a vet, illnesses that animals can have, treatments, etc...So I suppose subconsciously your brain could be taking in some new information” (#2OF).

Overall though, docusoaps were expected to be entertaining rather than informative. A participant in the older male group sums up this attitude,

“To me documentaries are generally informative...they’re usually well researched, well presented...Soap operas again it depends but that’s entertainment, even if you get wrapped up in the storyline, as you can do with some of them, it is pure entertainment and I see it as such. Docusoaps to me can be a combination of both, they are entertainment without a doubt but they can be slightly informative at times. But as a viewer I will view the whole thing as pure entertainment. Either because the way the subject matter is being dealt with is too trite and therefore you can only view it at an entertainment level. It is all sound bite situations that are edited so we can only see part of it. So you can only in my view, view that as entertainment” (#1OM).

As we can see from the transcript, no sooner has this participant conceded that docusoaps can be informative at times, than he hurriedly reasserts the long standing binary division
between serious, 'well researched' documentary programming and 'trite' entertainment. The participants also assumed that men were more likely to watch documentaries, whereas soap operas, were generally seen in the final analysis as a feminine genre. As one member of the mid-male group put it; “I suppose soap operas are more of a cross, they cross all the boundaries so they're much more balanced but if it had to swing one way it would probably be to more females” (#1MM). In contrast, docusoaps were seen to bridge gender divisions since “everyone watches them for light entertainment” (participant in mid-female group- #2MF).

These results can be interpreted both pessimistically and optimistically. On the one hand the fact that participants continued to see documentaries as a serious and predominantly masculine genre and soap operas as a mainly feminine playground suggests that men enjoy a mobility in crossing generic borders that is denied to women. They have the best of both worlds. They are seen as the primary inhabitants of the respected landscape of factual and informative programming while at the same time enjoying a licence to play happily in the denigrated world of popular serial fiction. It appears that women have not been accorded the same privilege. This repeats a pattern established during the Romantic period when, as we noted earlier, men were granted permission to have their cake and eat it, while women were not accorded the same freedom.

At the same time, although soap operas continue to be viewed as a predominantly female genre (Parney, 2000, www.csmonitor.com/durable/2000/07/07/p13s1.htm, 28 August 2002), the fact that the majority of all participants in the focus groups claimed to find
them enjoyable and relaxing to watch, suggests that their denigrated status is becoming uncoupled from gender divisions.

Representations of Gender and Emotionality in Soldiers To Be, The Clampers and Popstars

Although documentary programmes may deal with emotionally charged subjects, their mode of delivery was seen by participants to be firmly grounded in notions of objectivity and rational explication. As one participant in the older male group put it;

"Documentaries... it depends on the subject. I would think that what you’re seeing there would be a more balanced presentation of the subject matter... you’re looking at something where they are trying to present a story that is well investigated, is objective and will touch on all relevant material... I mean I can think of documentaries that were done on atrocities, they’re obviously going to be something that will be distressing so obviously emotional in that sense" (#1OM).

In contrast, soap operas were seen to trade in emotion in order to deliver entertainment.

"Documentaries... they are trying to be objective in what they are showing so there’s less emotion. Soap operas there is obviously a heightened emotion because it’s supposed to be entertainment... They tend to emphasize conflict and emotion because that’s what will interest people" (participant in the mid-male group-#3MM).

Indeed, shows of emotion were seen to be a defining characteristic of soap operas.

However only one participant believed that this was gender specific saying,

"Typically the emotion showing is about relationships so it’s by everyone, but if you take Eastenders as an example then the males tend to be typically stereotypical in that they’re all hard and don’t show emotion whereas the women are crying constantly. That may or may not be a reflection of real life, I don’t know but I suppose in a way it does tend to be quite stereotypical because the women tend more to be shown as emotional" (#1MF).

In all of the other group sessions participants regarded men and women to be equally emotional in soap operas and also they acknowledged strong gender differences in the
nature of the emotions expressed with male characters regularly displaying anger, grief and pain, but rarely crying.

Docusoaps were also viewed as an emotion based genre and seen to be very similar to soap operas in using emotion as a means to attract the audience.

"In Driving School with Maureen was it? Her and her husband were forever arguing, shouting and crying, if that’s not emotional I don’t know what is. It’s more interesting that way for us watching, makes it juicier viewing” (participant in the older female group-#4OF).

Once again we see docusoaps being viewed as a close relation of the soap opera, being described in the same way and being invested with the same basic characteristics.

Participants also recognised that emotional displays in soap operas and docusoaps satisfy the voyeur in each of us. “Docusoaps, again you go back to the voyeuristic appeal or the voyeuristic element of it. It is a little bit like walking by a neighbour’s house and seeing something’s happening…” (participant in the older male group-#2OM). It is interesting to note that immediately after each group were shown the selected video clips from the case study programmes they immediately reiterated their earlier, general, comments that docusoaps are trade in emotional displays. One participant in the mid-female group noted, “I noticed that they were trying to get emotion out of the people” (#3MF), and was supported by another woman saying,

"they really just show the emotion stuff for interest value. I mean obviously sometimes it just happens but I do think they also manipulate it as well. They edit it all before don’t they so they get the emotional bits in there to make it more interesting” (participant in mid-female group-#1MF).

Likewise one of the members of the younger male group simply said “it seemed like everyone was getting upset but I suppose that makes it interesting doesn’t it” (#1YM)?
Docusoaps’ tendency to revel in emotional outbursts was seen by a number of participants as gratuitous and intrusive.

"Docusoaps really play on emotion and use it to their own advantage. I think if it were a documentary, in my opinion, it would step back, like it might still show that emotion but would step back, would do it from afar rather than sort of zooming in on people crying and stuff. That’s purely trying to over emphasize and to gain audience interest for entertainment" (participant in the younger male group-#3YM).

Another participant in the older male group said,

"My view would be that the high interest in all of those (clips) was people who were having to inevitably deal with failure. Every one of them was about failure and disappointment. Like in the popstars one when that guy was told he wouldn’t be in the band... that was clearly emotionally charged. I suppose I would have to have seen the whole thing but clearly those judges, they’re probably very hard people...they’ve been through this, they’re dished out their fair share of disappointments but to see them upset, I suspect that that scene alone would have guaranteed that people would have watched the next weeks episode. I mean that’s the cynical element of it... and while that was genuine, and you’re looking at somebody who has gone through that, there’s the voyeuristic element, even though it’s really hard for that individual taking the failure. But you’re seeing two sides to it, that the people who had told him that he wouldn’t be getting into the band, clearly this had a huge impact on them. It would also guarantee that anyone watching that was not going to miss the next episode or whatever” (participant in the older male group-#2OM).

Here docusoaps are seen to play to our ‘cynical’ side, our voyeuristic side that finds other peoples obvious misfortunes and disappointments entertaining.

**The Emotional Ingredient**

From the focus group session it is apparent that all participants felt that docusoaps skilfully use emotion as a main ingredient of the genre. “They highlighted it. They made use of it as such...they played on it” (participant in mid-female group-#3MF).
"I think the element that gets the ratings is the emotions, there's no doubt about that. If you're going through just the day-to-day things about daily life, there isn't really anything exciting about that so emotions make it interesting. For example if I go back to Paddington Green, some of the scenes that you remember, that stand out are the scenes that were very emotional. Even though there were loads of episodes, it was the really emotional elements which got my attention and which I remember to this day. Confrontations and things like that. It's the confrontational and the emotional bits that tend to stick with you" (participant in the older male group-#4OM).

Consequently, although docusoaps also mobilize ingredients drawn from the respected tradition of documentary, they are not accorded the same respect. This is evident when listening to the reaction of one participant;

"My view would be that you don't expect a docusoap to, as such, rationalize or to draw conclusions from what you're seeing like a documentary would, you're seeing it and that's it. A documentary will have a start, middle and an end. A soap opera is structured, they're going to bring you through the story, they're going to try and raise the interest level and then bring it down but there's a set journey to it. To me a docusoap, while, the storyline yes is a journey, it doesn't attempt to interpret anything, the things happen and you see the consequences and that's it. People were rejected, they were upset, others were upset, we saw that so there was no attempt to draw conclusions from it. In that way I suppose if there is intent by the program maker beyond presenting something that has interest value it is to draw you into it. They don't try to fill in those moments with rationalization because you will probably try and rationalize it yourself" (participant in older female group-#1OF).

Participants did not learn much, or indeed anything, from docusoaps. Rather, they felt that their purpose was solely to entertain.

The Rational Ingredient

One of the most obvious characteristics that docusoaps have adopted from the documentary tradition is the use of voice-over commentary. It provides "...background information or information that you wouldn't usually get if you were watching it without
them” (participant in young female group-#1YF). All of the participants felt that this was a helpful device for filling in the gaps between events and episodes. “They keep you informed on what’s happening, just like they do in documentaries really” (participant in younger female group-#2YF).

“It acts as a bridge... the camera’s not going to be running 24 hours a day when other things are going on so usually it provides some perspective or linkage or fills in a gap as to where we are or what’s happened or sometimes ‘he doesn’t know it yet but...’” (participant in older male group- #1OM).

The use of voice-over commentary was also recognised by participants as a rhetorical device designed to underline the programmes claims to authenticity.

“Again it adds to the... well it takes from documentary so it tries to make it more authentic and more justifiable as in saying to the audience ‘this is real, this is happening’ or whatever” (participant in the mid-male group- #3MM).

Participants generally accepted that a male voice-over provides more gravitas to a programme. During the older male group session a discussion developed about who should be employed to read the voice-over commentary;

“2OM: It’s a voice that is mellow and unobtrusive. Voices to me that are absolute naturals at this would be people like John Nettles and Andrew Sax.
Moderator: They are both male, is that important?
2OM: Absolutely, absolutely. To me I suppose there is something about the male voice, it’s lower, it’s mellower. With Children’s Hospital Andrew Sax no longer does the voice-over commentary and there’s a female doing it and I found that difficult when I started watching it again. It just didn’t seem to gel.
Moderator: Is that just because it is what you’re used to, that you are used to a male voice filling that role?
2OM: It could be yes...It’s just more pleasing on the ear and to me in some situations the male voice just seems to be more mellow, whether it is the fact that that’s the way it’s always been so when it is different it tends to jar but if more women start taking that role then maybe I will stop noticing the difference”.

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This is something, which we may see happening more regularly. However it is not only the role of the voice over commentary in framing the action that should be noted but also how social settings serve to organize emotional displays in docusoaps.

**Social Settings**

Participants were quick to recognise the impact of contrasting social settings. One participant raised the point in the young female session;

3YF: Yeah I think where the docusoaps is set has something to do with it.

_Moderator:_ In what way do you mean?

3YF: Well, for example on an army base as opposed to an audition hall for wannabe popstars... I mean you just know that the way we see men and women displaying emotion is going to be totally different in the two places.

_Moderator:_ How exactly?

3YF: Well, in the army base, because of the nature of what they're doing, they are more restrained with their emotions if you know what I mean. Because it's somewhere that is strict and disciplined so it doesn't really leave much room for emotion does it?

4YF: That's true.

3YF: Yeah, so whereas with the artsy people who want to become famous and who are at auditions you expect emotion to be more abundant.

If we consider this participants comments from an historical perspective it is apparent that _Popstars_ borrows from the philosophy of the Romantic period, whereas the binary divisions articulated by _Soldiers To Be_ owes more to the Enlightenment valourisation of rationality. One participant in the older male group pointed out that the difference between London and the provinces;

“*In my opinion with the clamping one, it's set in London, and I lived there for many years, it's such a stressful environment that everyone is agitated and on edge. Living like that ones emotions are magnified so what you see is that reality. Whereas I'm not sure that you would see that so much if it was set in Stratford-Upon-Avon, for example. I think that is true for both men and women*” (participant in older male group- 3OM).
As these comments reveal, people are well aware that a range of factors other than gender may affect how and where emotion is displayed. However sometimes audience expectations can be subverted by docusoaps.

**Moments that go against the expected**

It was obvious that participants had a preconceived notion of how they expect the situations shown on camera to develop. For example some were surprised when the judges in *Popstars* became upset, feeling that since they were in such an influential position crying was inappropriate. As noted previously however, is this really such a surprise? Given that they work in the entertainment industry, are we really so shocked to see them become emotional since this is a sector that is firmly grounded in a Romantic ethos? Yet the fact still remains that this sort of display of emotion did surprise the audience. One participant responded to debate about moments of surprise by pointing out their importance;

"The thing with docusoaps is that they are based on everyday life and because of that, as in life, we are never really sure what to expect. For that reason there are probably many individuals who will not watch these types of programmes because of the fact of the difficulty of watching how random tragedies can be. But for most people it's those unexpected moments that will keep us watching. And I think it's those emotional unexpected moments that are of interest to us. So yes one could wonder do we have a very clever producer, unscrupulous producer, who says, 'this is the way to pull at people’s heart strings, they will watch this, boy they won't be able to resist this’. Even if the surprise is a negative or unsettling surprise we are aware that we are at a safe distance from it, looking in from the outside and therefore are detached and can appreciate what we see with that in mind” (participant in the older female group-4OF).
Do docusoaps challenge or reinforce established dichotomies/stereotypes?

The majority of participants in all the groups felt that docusoaps both challenged and reinforced established stereotypes and dichotomies. Responses to the sample clips from the three case study docusoaps demonstrated this:

"there was a lot of difference in the actual docusoaps themselves, like in the soldiers one you had the women really being shown as weak almost in comparison to the male soldiers who were treated much more harshly. They even said in one of the clips that the women have to be treated with a gentler approach didn't they? Then in The Clampers you had the typical show of masculinity i.e. angry men and then the male clampers enjoying arguing with them. But the female clampers really didn't like arguing, you could see that. Then in Popstars, it was kind of strange; there was a lot of cuddling and things like that between the men as well as the women. So docusoaps are a bit mixed up really" (participant in younger female group- #5YF).

Another participant in the mid-male group pointed out that by simply portraying, for example, women being treated with a 'gentler approach' and men crying openly, docusoaps “by the mere fact that it’s showing it...by default are challenging and reinforcing stereotypes” (#1MM)

The results from the focus group sessions suggest that whilst viewers see them as blurring boundaries between men/women, emotion/rationality, public/private and fact/fiction in certain respects, they also see them as supporting these dichotomies. When one male participant raised the issue of stereotypes, #4OM responded by saying;

“They do sometimes challenge stereotypes. The reason that I say that is, that what you see is the reality of life, the fact that males get upset too...if we go back to that panel in Popstars, the first one to break down was one of the male judges, not the second, the female didn’t break down first. Ones perception would be that a female would become far more emotional than a male but that wasn’t the case. There were two males on that panel, the guy on the left as you were looking at the TV looked to me like he was the head honcho and to me he looked like he was a hard individual, there would be a cutting edge to the comments that he would make. So his getting upset would not be what you would expect...the standard stereotype
would be that he might feel it inside but he certainly wouldn't show it on the outside, as he did. And when you looked outside at the groups themselves and both men and women were crying, so docusoaps can also show life the way it really is. Stereotypes don’t always reflect the fact of life” (participant in the older male group- #4OM).

Like documentaries, docusoaps, are showing real people but in a soap opera style. It is entertainment in instalments. The problem remains that if, overall, docusoaps are seen as nothing more than entertainment, will they ever truly challenge value judgments based on patriarchal gendered divisions? Is it enough that docusoaps show life as it is and deliberately emphasize the emotional, if the emotional is still gendered as female and therefore denigrated?

Conclusion?
On the whole the results from the focus groups suggest that the audience is comfortable with the blurring of boundaries in docusoaps, because the genre is seen as entertainment rather than information. As a consequence, the majority of the participants also felt comfortable with displays of emotion in the programmes providing they conformed to prevailing expectations. As two members of the older male group explained;

“#4OM: I felt comfortable with watching the anger being shown in Soldier’s To Be and in The Clammers and with the men and women crying in Popstars because I don’t have this view that men and women should only show certain emotions like men shouldn’t cry in public and women shouldn’t show negative emotions like anger.

#3OM: I think in the UK historically and culturally we have a much bigger divide between men showing emotion and women showing emotion then in other cultures. So I think we have a fascination with it which is probably why docusoaps are so popular”.

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The exception was when the portrayal was judged to be unduly obtrusive and invasive.

One individual in the mid-male group reacted to the emotionality shown in the clips from *Popstars*;

"I kind of felt weird with *Popstars*...I dunno maybe there was too much emotion in it or maybe it was the reaction of the men getting all hysterical made me feel uncomfortable. My reaction if I'd been watching that on TV would have been to just turn over the station and then I would probably go back to it afterwards. If I find something embarrassing or humiliating for someone else I can't watch it. There was too much...I'm not saying it wasn't real emotion but it just appeared humiliating for them. If that was me and I was looking at myself doing that I'd just think 'oh my God'. So in that sense I don't want to watch somebody else getting all emotional and being humiliated" (#6MM).

There were several participants who were all too aware of the make-up of the docusoaps and responded accordingly;

Participants were also well aware of the constructed nature docusoaps and the devices employed to heighten audience engagement. They do present it objectively and try and show it for what it is but I'm still automatically aware that this is a docusoap and to question what I'm seeing and what it is. Do you know what I mean? I mean I'll give you an example of the island one... *Castaway 2000*, a lot of what you see is not the order that it happens because the producers re-order it to make it more entertaining. So therefore is it a real show of emotion and all that...yes when it happened in the context of everything that had gone on around it but often it's packaged so one person can be made out to be a complete emotional freak in the sense that they're hyper sensitive about everything but that's just because of the way it's cut. Then someone else can be made out to be an emotional cripple just on the basis that that's the way the editors have decided to cut the programme to make it more interesting. It's just too easy to become attached and say 'yeah I really like that person because I can really relate to them'...I dunno maybe I'm jaundiced by the whole docusoaps thing and I'm more critical of what I see" (participant in mid-male group- #3MM).

Having opened by claiming that docusoaps aim to present an objective capture of whatever is front of the camera, participants immediately pointed out that producers edit and reorder events to assemble a convincing and engaging story. This demonstrates both
an awareness of media processes and a strong grasp of an authorial intention to entertain rather than to educate. The results of the focus groups suggest that in the end it is difficult for those watching to see docusoaps as anything more than entertainment; a mode of representation that is still considered essentially ‘trivial’ in comparison with the ‘serious’ business of public enlightenment at the core of the documentary project. If the blurred boundaries in docusoaps are part of their license to entertain, then we are reluctantly drawn to the conclusion that, far from subverting received dichotomies and prevailing assumptions, docusoaps sustain and reinforce them by confining them to the sanctioned disruptive space of entertainment. As a consequence ‘serious’ discussion and debate on contemporary issues remains confined to the political public sphere and its mediated forms. Like the inversions of carnival, docusoaps may play with established expectations and generic conventions and occasionally turn them upside down, but in the heartland of actuality television they remain resolutely the right way up.

**The Journey of Discovery**

The only way to describe this point in the journey was a resolute sense of disappointment and a feeling of naivety to have expected so much from docusoaps. All excitement had vanished.
Chapter 8- Conclusion

As we have seen, dominant notions of emotion and gender are bound up with many of the prevailing dichotomies of our time notably; fact/fiction, public/private sphere, political/cultural public sphere and, most obviously emotion/reason and male/female. Docusoaps are a new and increasingly popular format, which mixes elements from traditional documentary and soap opera, to create an innovative form that many commentators see as symbolising our fully fledged occupation of a ‘postmodern’ society, in which, established borders are transgressed and boundaries blurred.

The Journey of Discovery Concluded

When I embarked on researching this thesis I was attracted and excited by the possibility that docusoaps, as a new and hybrid genre, could help dismantle established binarisms and, in doing so, challenge long held assumptions about men and women’s roles with regard to displays of emotion. While researching I began to realise the enormous challenge that docusoaps faced if this was to be achieved. Historical research demonstrated how deeply conventional attitudes to gender and emotionality were carved into the patriarchal framework of our society. Even at times when I had assumed that the playing field had been equalised, for example, during the Romantic period, I was quickly corrected.

However, when I commenced my theoretical investigation my optimism had still not been entirely extinguished. I never considered the possibility that docusoaps could be strongly essentialist in nature, still hoping that my empirical research would justify my initial enthusiasm for the genre. Unfortunately, both the textual analysis and the focus group study demonstrated that, at root, docusoaps were culturally conservative,
a continuation of 'business as usual', which had not managed to significantly dent or change prevailing attitudes to gender and emotion. I was left asking myself how I could have assumed that this could have been the case when in the initial stages I was confronted with historical research that challenged such an assumption? How could I have thought that some entertainment programmes could cause so much change? Why is it that I, along with many others, expect long held assumptions to change overnight?

Although my research demonstrates that women's ties to emotion have historically remained static, this does not contradict the argument that emotion is socially constructed. Rather it confirms that western society remains at root a patriarchal formation. We have witnessed some shifts over time, with the primacy placed on rationality in men, by the Enlightenment, being countered by the Romantic valourisation of emotionality, but these changes, and the choices they have opened up, have benefited men not women. Throughout, women have been expected to be more emotional than men but have continually been criticized and denigrated for conforming to type (Seidler, 1991).

*Unpicking the Stitches*

History also gives witness to the changes that are taking place in the public sphere.

Habermas' public sphere is supposed to be open to all citizens and in a sense it is, but this is deceptive. The public sphere is not only dichotomised with relation to the private sphere, it is also divided within itself, with the political public sphere separated from the cultural (literary) public sphere. The first is still very much an arena that promotes 'rational agreement'. Habermas' main goal was to legitimise
"...political authority through rational discussion and reasoned agreement" (Barna, no date, www.baylor.edu/~Andrew_Barna/habermasbio.htm, November 28 2001). The cultural public sphere was from the beginning a feminised and proletarianised sphere, powerfully rooted in the emerging entertainment complex of cheap theatres and pleasure parks, positioned in opposition to the serious pursuits of reading respectable journals of opinion and taking part in coffee-house debate. As we have seen, viewers (as represented by the participants in our focus groups) saw docusoaps standing in direct line of descent to these early precursors.

At the same time, docusoaps have attempted to include fiction and so called 'women's genres' in an extended popular space for debating and negotiating across social boundaries. At a glance one would think that they have succeeded and what better a time to do this than in a postmodern society characterised by vanishing borders and new hybrids? The postmodern public sphere is widely associated with the blurring or dissolution of conventional categories and resistance to all attempts to re-impose established systems of classification. Thus in relation to the representation of gender and emotion, postmodern genres like docusoaps should be trying to provide men and women with the freedom to create a collage of expression. The greater visibility accorded to women, ethnic minorities and men displaying emotion in docusoaps appears to signal empowerment and change. Unfortunately this is not the case because entertainment/fiction is still denigrated and controlled by the primacy accorded to news and current affairs programming as the core of the contemporary mediated public sphere. Therefore what we are seeing is the control of patriarchy at its grandest, deluding us into thinking that things are changing for the better when in fact they are not. We may be witnessing a blurring of boundaries and dichotomies in
docusoaps but this is of little benefit when we recognise that as a genre it is subordinate.

I am not trying to suggest that this blurring of spheres is only being brought about by docusoaps but simply pointing out that by investigating this genre we have the ability to recognise that we are going through a time of exploration and in my opinion exploding dichotomies such as male/rational and female/emotional.

"Today, through certain television formats, from docusoaps...we can clearly see the transformation of the private domain into one which can be manipulated and incorporated as an essential element for the theatricalisation of the intimate experiences of anonymous people. All because the industrial dynamic of the mass media demands entertainment" (Terribas, no date, www.tua.upf.es/formats/formats3/ter_a.htm, 2 September 2002).

Now in order to make this time of discovery of benefit to both men and women in our society we must challenge the divide between fact and fiction.

It is essential to remember that Habermas' public sphere model was formed during the period that saw the initial emergence of modernity at the end of the 18th Century, at a time when social and political thought on public life was predominantly organised around two interlocking dichotomies; male/female and rationality/emotionality.

Postmodern society on the other hand is supposed to celebrate difference and try to prevent repression through 'consensus'. There are those who believe that postmodern culture, far from dismantling established stereotypes of men and women and their appropriate spheres of action, has reinforced them, something, which my research reinforces. Through genres like docusoaps we can see how

"everyday life has invaded the public domain, but it has not done so to offer society a repertory of examples which might help to foster a rational discussion of its structural functioning...but rather to fill the void left by the dialogue that should have constructed objective representation, interpretation and reflection..."
Separation of the private from the public sphere and the cultural from the political is not in itself problematic. The difficulty arises when this separation is mapped onto prevailing notions of gender differences and linked to a chain of mutually reinforcing dichotomies. The assumption that ‘to be rational is to be male’, has been carried over into postmodern culture. At the same time, entertainment is far from trivial in its potential impact. What may at first appear to have no real groundbreaking role other than to entertain can, by mixing opposing genres, help unpick the tightly sewn stitches that hold established dichotomies in place. Docusoaps

“...live side by side with other programmes where the borders of genres are more identifiable... those borders are increasingly blurred. Since the business goals of the communication industries demand levels of penetration in the receivers’ market that force the producers to create products which mix the maximum number of effective ingredients to anchor the audience’s interest. The tyranny of economic efficiency in a domain of cultural production like the communication media brings about that generic disorientation” (Terribas, no date, www.iua.upf.es/formats/formats3/tera.htm, 2 September 2002).

But this unpicking can only take affect when the genre is unsubordinated. Then and only then might docusoaps become a truly postmodern hybrid genre that can challenge, or least, de-centre, basic social constructs.

It is important to recognise that emotion can often be the most rational response to a situation (Domagalski, 1999). Unfortunately from my work it is obvious that docusoaps do not bring public and private together in a manner that accepts the role of emotion in cognition. Emotion is still subordinate.
Breaking the Chain of Dichotomies

Docusoaps follow a ‘tragic structure of feeling’ that emphasizes the fragility of human relationships. The soap element presents us with a personal world while the documentary element affirms to us that what we are witnessing is happening in ‘real’ life and unfolding in real time. By playing back to us the emotional ups and downs of everyday life, docusoaps have become increasingly popular and from watching television there appears to now be more docusoaps than traditional documentaries being produced.

"What all these docusoaps have in common is the combination of observational, documentary elements, casting and narrative forms and storylines normally dominating in fictional forms. Furthermore the soaps often swing between strong emotional and melodramatic moods and more trivial aspects of everyday routines. There is a common trait here which unites almost all reality-formats, namely the intention of lifting the ordinary and the trivial to a more intense and emotional level of experience, just as melodrama in classical films bring ordinary existence to extremes but always restores normalcy in the end" (Bondebjerg, 2000: 175).

Docusoaps represent an amalgamation of two genres into one and not, as some critiques assert, a corruption of the documentary genre. This development responds to the public demand for a repackaging of reality for maximum dramatic impact. The responses of the participants in the focus groups confirmed that viewers are interested and open to seeing other people play out their everyday lives. Docusoaps bring out the ‘nosey-parker’ in each of us, being

"...based on the voyeuristic nature of any human being and the exhibitionist nature of the people who volunteer to be observed in the most intimate situations of their private life" (Terribas, no date, www.iua.upf.es/formats/formats3/ter_a.htm, 2 September 2002).
We also see from my research that it is the emotional experiences of real people which provide the key to the enjoyment factor of this genre and intensify the pleasures of viewing. Both the textual analysis and the focus group results demonstrated that it is these emotional experiences/issues/states, which are "...the drive spring inside the narrative" (Dovey, 2000: 149). They provide the key turning points in all the docusoaps studied. At the same time rational commentary (and often judgement) provided by the male voice over or experts (such as the commanding officers, judges, and management), was frequently used to frame and explain these emotional moments. Until we see emotional experience being taken seriously in its own right the prevailing dichotomies will remain firmly in position.

My empirical work demonstrates that the emotion/rationality dichotomy remains central to the formal organisation of docusoaps and that audiences (or at least the participants in the focus groups) readily recognise this (see pages 116-123 and pages 149-151 for examples). This once again suggests that docusoaps are not as innovative or subversive, as some of their more committed supporters have claimed.

**Social Settings and the Expectation of those in Power**

Results from the focus groups suggest that the audience have an expectation of those in power (for an example see page 150). This expectation is linked, in turn, to recognition of how varying social locations can affect displays of emotion. The textual analysis showed that any location that consisted solely of those in power (authority locations) rarely saw emotional outbursts. The exceptions to this rule were both seen in the same docusoap, *Popstars*, which centred around an authority location, where the expertise being traded is set within a context – the popular music
industry- which grants more space to emotional expression than the two other locations examined, both of which hinge on the rationalised exercise of bureaucratic power (see pages 123-125 and pages 147-148 for examples).

The Unexpected

At the same time, docusoaps have the ability to surprise the audience, something that was apparent during my empirical research (see chapters 6 and 7). One could see the audience relaxing, becoming comfortable with the routine of the programme and then suddenly being jerked into attentiveness when the unexpected occurs. This was evident on several occasions, for example in *The Clampers* when a woman becomes violent when her car is about to be taken away (see page 115) due to unpaid fines. To witness this sudden surge of violence and to see that the source of the violence is a woman is unforeseen. It is her husband who is trying to calm her down. We hear and see him trying to get her to stop hitting Keith; “what are you fucking doing? What are you fucking doing?...JACKIE COME HERE!” (*The Clampers* - February 6th).

As this instance suggests, these unexpected moments were often to do with role reversals. For example the female recruits being scolded for being dirty in *Soldiers To Be* (see page 125) or in *Popstars* the judges becoming emotionally upset (page 125). These unexpected moments resemble unforeseen plot twists in soap operas and were something that the focus group participants felt totally comfortable with (see page 149).
Entertainment as a Trivilised Form

My research and audience reception analysis found that the public does appear to look down on docusoaps in comparison to documentary because they are seen to be entertainment and therefore trivial. As the respected documentary maker, Paul Watson, wrote in the Daily Mail:

"I despair of what's happening, for this rash of docusoaps sums up the very worst of programme-making. This is television at its cheapest and laziest, fobbing off the viewers with something not much better than moving wallpaper... What saddens me about such stuff is that it's pushing better programmes to the margins. Why pay a fortune to put on original drama, or invest in a serious, investigative documentary, when you can get away with a cheap series simply by pointing a camera at someone wanting self-promotion?" (Corner, 2002: 143).

It is time to start recognising that docusoaps are part of a post-documentary period in which to study docusoaps from the premise that they are either simply documentary or soap opera is unhelpful because both starting point carries "too many assumptions" and in the case of documentary's "...too many idealisations" (Corner, no date, www.lboro.ac.uk/research/changing.media/John%20Corner%20paper.htm, 29 August 2002).

The problem is that, whereas the public's resources for interpreting docusoaps rely on accepted and normalized conventions of what is and what is not informative television, much academic study approaches them as entertainment. Although "...docusoaps can combine narrative and rhetorical qualities, melodramatic and emotional intensity with factual authenticity" (Bondebjerg, 2000: 177) this unfortunately is not seen the majority of the time;

"often the melodramatic or sensational focus over-shadows both the documentary value and the informative dimensions of the program where spectacle and staging of reality for entertainment purposes dominates" (ibid).
Docusoaps come with a great deal of baggage, finding themselves “...under attack for being ‘bad’ documentary” while still defending “...itself by claiming it is better than ‘just’ entertainment” (Corner, no date, www.lboro.ac.uk/research/changing.media/John%20Corner%20paper.htm, 29 August 2002). The audience too come loaded down with baggage; over packed with the idealisation of fact over fiction and the association of facticity with maleness and reason, yet also having unpacked some old dichotomies, making space to acknowledge that men and women are simultaneously both emotional and rational and not feeling threatened by this recognition. Maybe this provides some cautious cause for optimism and suggests that because the docusoap genre “...breaks with the past and points to the direction television is heading these days” (Terribas, no date, www.iua.upf.es/formats/formats3/tera.htm, 2 September 2002) it is still in the process of development.

**Experience/Expertise**

From my empirical findings docusoaps appear to celebrate experience over expertise and often work with a dichotomous good (experience) versus bad (expert) structure. For example in *The Clampers* it was hard not to dislike the arrogance of Mr.Crabbe in the Parking Appeals Office, or the commanding officers in *Soldiers To Be* when they demean the new recruits, or even the judges in *Popstars* when they shatter a hopeful’s dream without a second thought or the courtesy of a more sympathetic approach.

With the mobilisation of sympathy on behalf of experience over expertise, emotion also wins over rationality. The expert’s rightful place is seen to be in the political
public sphere. By the same token however, docusoaps also suggest that emotional experience is only valuable and tradable within the cultural public sphere; an underlying message that demonstrates once again just how conservative docusoaps really are and how they are still corralled into a feminised zone.

**The Ambiguity of Docusoaps**

The open displays of emotion in some docusoaps by both men and women can be seen as a positive move towards dismantling dichotomies but the organisation of the form itself continues to pose problems. Docusoaps uphold the primacy of male narratives and suggest a male-rational response. What they have borrowed from documentary retains conventional gendered forms, what they have borrowed from fiction seeks to further the use of emotion for dramatic impact and to include men in this. The genre may have escaped a gendered identity because of its hybridity but it is still not taken seriously. Viewers acknowledge its media constructedness whilst enjoying the link to the real. Perhaps the most we can say is that docusoaps allow the acknowledgement of male and female public displays of emotion but continue to support traditional gendered dichotomies. Therefore, at the end of the day, they are still a conservative form.

The participants in the focus groups played with the idea of docusoaps also being informative; only to immediately disregard such a notion. Like Corner, I agree that more

"...research on viewing groups will enable us to understand what new blurrings, and what new differentiations, now inform the interpretative frameworks used by different segments of the audience" (Corner, no date, www.lboro.ac.uk/research/changing.media/John%20Corner%20paper.htm, 29 August 2002).
In conclusion it is time to recognise that docusoaps, and other formats that lie in the undefined space between fact and fiction, have come about because society has subconsciously demanded change and diversity.

"The ‘back story’ to this shift involves changes in the nature of the public and private life over the last two decades and the complex ways in which both the contours of social knowledge and emotional experience have been reconfigured" (Corner, no date, www.lboro.ac.uk/research/changing_media/John%20Corner%20paper.htm, 29 August 2002).

Docusoaps, like many other media genres, are dealing with changes in our society. We can take the example of another genre, the soap opera, and in particular Eastenders, where we see strong female characters appearing like Pauline Fowler and Kat Slater who have the ability to mix their toughness with displays of tears and fear. Then we have male characters like Phil Mitchell who portray the hard man image while still showing their so-called ‘emotional weaknesses’. I think that what we are seeing is a modernising, or maybe more accurately, the ‘postmodernising’ of the representation of emotion and gender.

Docusoaps however have the ability to interrogate and display these changes more thoroughly because they are showing the audience real people with real lives. As John Corner argues;

"I now think that the most hopeful progress will be achieved by those who are prepared to re-think their...practice in the light of the new range of scheduled factuality and the tastes this has encouraged. We are already seeing on British television a number of notable successes in this spirit...partly responding to existing if recently-formed cultural expectations and partly opening up new lines of viewer interest and engagement." (Corner, no date, www.lboro.ac.uk/research/changing_media/John%20Corner%20paper.htm, 29 August 2002).
The Future?

Docusoaps are ‘emblematic of this age’ (The Observer, 2002, www.observer.co.uk/screen/story/0,6903,679924,00.html, 2 September 2002) because they cross boundaries and assemble elements from previously separate domains. As a genre, their popularity remains high, the recent MTV docusoap, The Osbournes, being a perfect example. For six months cameras followed the lives of Ozzy Osbourne and his so-called ‘dysfunctional’ family. The programme has proved to be MTV’s biggest success, beating all other viewing figures in the history of the channel. It appears that with the age of postmodemism “everything the public used to own may have been privatised, but people now seem keen to nationalise their private lives, turning them into the new public property” (Aitkenhead, 1999, www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,5673,289204,00.html, 2 September 2002). However with this comes, what I have previously referred to as the postmodernisation of emotions, in which “the public obliges with an outward appearance of sincere emotions” (Aitkenhead, 1999; www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,5673,289204,00.html, 2 September 2002) and increasingly displays of emotion are demanded by and for both men and women.

Bringing men into the private sphere and allowing public displays of male emotion can be seen as positive but this has not yet gone in the opposite direction—allowing significantly more women to occupy central roles in the political public sphere. As a result, the denigration of women and emotion and the supremacy of male and rationality continues to prevail as a core principle of social organisation.
In Conclusion

The results of this study can be seen both negatively and positively. From a negative perspective men are still much more likely to be associated (as both producers and viewers) with the more respected arenas of factual programming and the political public sphere (focus groups participants all stating that documentaries would probably be watched more by men). Secondly, although there does appear to be a definite levelling, with more men being prepared to accept alignment with fiction, these genres continue to be mostly associated with women. Thirdly, in the presentational form of docusoap, men still act as the ‘expert’, holding the all-important position of the all-knowing authoritative voice-over. Lastly it appears that men have the choice to engage freely in both the public and private sphere and in the worlds of fact and fiction. They are praised for showing emotion and encouraged for demonstrating rationality. Women, although a significant improvement has occurred, still do not appear to have been afforded the same privilege.

In contrast, a more positive interpretation of my results would point to the fact that docusoap do challenge the core dichotomies male/rational and female/emotional both by including emotional males, and by demonstrating that “our emotions are sometimes more insightful than the detached and impersonal deliberations of reason” (Calhoun, 1984). Unfortunately we cannot really suggest that docusoap have the ability to re-educate the public about many of the enduring dichotomies of our time because they are still perceived primarily as entertainment, and therefore as a source of diversion rather than engagement.
Overall, my empirical work suggests that docusoaps have merely flirted with the idea of change. Yes on occasions we see dichotomies challenged, stereotypes mocked but what good is this really when they remained framed within dominant categories and dichotomies. This can be likened to teasing a child with a sweet, to then hide it from them. The child remembers how good the sweet tasted and that it exists but yet it is hidden, out of their reach. Likewise we too have had the prospect of change dangled in front of our eyes. On the other hand surely, this tease makes us more determined to strive and seek out change. We have seen the possibilities and therefore we can hunt for them. This deception could in the future work to our advantage but at present this does not appear to be the case.

Maybe we have reached the point when it is time to view docusoaps, as they really are, ‘popular factual entertainment’, that constructs drama out of reality, a fact readily accepted by the respondents in these focus groups but less readily acknowledged by many theorists. Docusoaps are about

"...snoopy sociability (as an amused bystander to the mixture of mess and routine in other people's working lives). Propagandist, expositional or analytic goals are exchanged for modes of intensive or relaxed diversion- the primary viewing activity is onlooking and overhearing, perhaps aligned to events by intermittent commentary. In seeking its new pact with the popular, documentary work (or post-documentary work!) has tended to 'shadow' previously established fictional formats... 'Docusoaps' have clearly learnt a lot from the more relaxed rhythms of Soap Opera... I would not want to underestimate the real degree of innovative adaptation and creativity that has gone into these developments. Questions of scopic appeal, forms of talk and narrative system have been vigorously re-addressed in all but the most dull and imitative of formats" (Corner, no date, www.lboro.ac.uk/research/changing.media/John%20Corner%20paper.htm, 29 August 2002).

Unfortunately if fact continues to be viewed as masculine and seen to be superior to entertainment then any challenging of dichotomies or blurring of boundaries is limited because they occupy a space defined by the negative pole of a dichotomy. Because
docusoaps are viewed as nothing more than entertainment they can never truly challenge value judgments based on patriarchal gendered divisions.

As mentioned earlier, like other commentators, initially I was excited by the hybrid nature of docusoaps. Doubts began to form as soon as I embarked on my literary research but my empirical research soon dispelled my initial excitement. My experience confirms the need to undertake research that goes beyond a 'reading' of texts, no matter how detailed. Without the exploration of everyday understandings opened up by the focus group sessions I would have been unable to reach the conclusion that docusoaps are disappointingly conservative and reinforce long held assumptions on gender and emotionality. It is not enough that docusoaps simply show life as it is and deliberately emphasize the emotional if ultimately the emotional is still gendered female and therefore denigrated.

Also carrying out this study has allowed me to appreciate just how easy it is to fall into the trap of binarisms even though this was the very thing which I hoped to question. As pointed out in this study, we need to find a new way of looking at hybrid forms like docusoaps; something which I would try to achieve if I were to do the study again i.e. I would, instead, look at these forms from outside the barriers of unbending dichotomies so that a more plural and de-centred approach could be employed (for example my interpretation of the audience material is constrained by dichotomies like information/entertainment and rational public versus cultural public spheres). Despite the current explosion of media channels and the flurry of new expressive forms we still have a long way to go before we can find our way out of the perilous path that our society has historically taken.
Appendix I – Programme Description

Soldiers To Be
- BBC production (Aired in Belgium where I recorded it from a Dutch channel called KETNET. Other than Dutch subtitles it was exactly the same).
- Producer: Olivia Lichtenstein

The Clamper’s
- BBC production (aired in Belgium where I recorded it from a Dutch channel called KETNET. Other than Dutch subtitles it was exactly the same).
- Producer: Kim Dunce

Popstars
- ITV production which I recorded in the UK.
- Producer: Tim Quiche
Appendix II - Portrait of Participants in the Focus Groups

Younger Male Group (18 – 25 years of age)
#1YM
- Age: 22
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Friend

#2YM
- Age: 24
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Friend

#3YM
- Age: 22
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Friend

#4YM
- Age: 19
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Through a friend

#5YM
- Age: 22
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Friend

#6YM
- Age: 20
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Friend

Mid-Age Male Group (26 – 39 years of age)
#1MM
- Age: 28
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Through my brother

#2MM
- Age: 27
• Social Background: Middle Class
• Recruited: Through my brother

#3MM
• Age: 32
• Social Background: Through my brother
• Recruited: Through my brother

#4MM
• Age: 30
• Social Background: Middle Class
• Recruited: Through my brother

#5MM
• Age: 35
• Social Background: Middle Class
• Recruited: Relative of family friends

#6MM
• Age: 27
• Social Background: Middle Class
• Recruited: Friend

*Older Male Group (40+ years of age)*

#1OM
• Age: 48
• Social Background: Middle Class
• Recruited: Family Friend

#2OM
• Age: 53
• Social Background: Middle Class
• Recruited: Family Friend

#3OM
• Age: 56
• Social Background: Upper Class
• Recruited: Family Friend

#4OM
• Age: 40
• Social Background: Middle Class
• Recruited: Family Friend
**Younger Female Group (18 – 25 years of age)**

#1YF  
- Age: 24  
- Social Background: Middle Class  
- Recruited: Friend

#2YF  
- Age: 22  
- Social Background: Middle Class  
- Recruited: Friend

#3YF  
- Age: 24  
- Social Background: Working Class  
- Recruited: Friend

#4YF  
- Age: 20  
- Social Background: Middle Class  
- Recruited: Friend

#5YF  
- Age: 24  
- Social Background: Middle Class  
- Recruited: Friend

#6YF  
- Age: 22  
- Social Background: Middle Class  
- Recruited: Friend

**Mid-Age Female Group (26 – 39 years of age)**

#1MF  
- Age: 26  
- Social Background: Middle Class  
- Recruited: Through a friend

#2MF  
- Age: 26  
- Social Background: Middle Class  
- Recruited: Friend

#3MF  
- Age: 27  
- Social Background: Middle Class  
- Recruited: Through a friend
#4MF
- Age: 28
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Through brother

Older Female Group (40+ years of age)

#1OF
- Age: 47
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Family Friend

#2OF
- Age: 52
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Family Friend

#3OF
- Age: 56
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Mother of a friend

#4OF
- Age: 54
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Family Friend

#5OF
- Age: 40
- Social Background: Middle Class
- Recruited: Family Friend
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**Radio Interview**

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