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MANAGING OURSELVES: YOUNG PEOPLE, SOAP OPERA AND TECHNOLOGIES OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

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Part 2
Chapter 5: Analysis of interviews

In this chapter a close analysis is made of the responses offered during the study’s interviews. The first three sections of the chapter indicate the major themes or tendencies which emerged from the interviews - realism, character and self-fashioning. These themes were closely related - sometimes indistinguishable - in the interviews, and chapter 5, like chapters 1 and 2, represents the development of an argument. It also extends and supports the arguments made in chapter 2 about the nature of Neighbours and Home and Away’s form and the ways with which the programmes are engaged. The chapter shows that viewers do indeed use the programmes as facilitators or resources; as exercises in understanding, and as a way in which they can practise expertise in self and relationship management.

This is shown throughout chapter 5, but most vividly in the latter part of section 3, where the responses of one interviewee are examined in detail. The responses of L (female, 16) illustrate three important points: that interviewees frequently negotiated and reproduced residual and emergent discourses; that gender more than anything held the identities that were being forged together; but that, as well as being highly gendered, interviewees often felt qualified to imagine themselves into different positions of knowledge and expertise - as mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, young men and women, as expert advisers in self and relationship management generally. The final section of the chapter reflects briefly on the interview process.
The framework I have used to analyse the interview transcripts is the one used broadly and consistently throughout the thesis. In chapter 3, I detail the researchers and theorists who have led this study most directly. More specifically, for the purposes of interpreting the interviews three levels of analysis are evident in chapter 5.

Firstly, after dividing the transcripts into the three broad themes that emerged (realism, character and self-fashioning), I then, in each of these areas, consider the analyses of researchers who have elicited similar findings; that is, for whom realism, character and self-fashioning have been central categories in their empirical findings. In some detail, I consider the extent to which the researchers' analyses can explain this study's findings. In all three areas, though, I move beyond previous analyses - of realism and character in particular. This is in order both to extend previous findings and in an effort to best explain the nature of my interviewees' responses; to move closer to the framework that is elaborated in the final section of chapter 5, and more extensively in chapter 6.

The second level of analysis is closely related to the first. That is, I draw upon the specific theorists who may not have conducted empirical studies, but whose ideas help to explain my findings. For example, I argue that Donald and Mercer (1981) and Williams' (1977a) understanding of realism helps to explain the way in which my interviewees have employed the category; and that Elspeth Probyn's (1993b) use of discursive positioning is close to the way in which Neighbours and Home and Away 'work', and how my respondentst engage with the programmes.
Finally, and closely related to Probyn’s work, chapter 5’s third level of analysis is the broad, interdiscursive one I detail in chapter 3. I employ discourse and cultural practice in a broad and specific way. My understanding of discourse is Foucauldian. However, as I indicate in chapter 3, Foucault’s understanding of discourse did not only change in the course of his work, but has been usefully refined by him, and, more extensively, others. As I note in chapter 3, specifically, I follow Foucault’s theories of government (Foucault, 1991) and technology (Foucault, 1988) - and the way they have been employed and extended by theorists like Stuart Hall (1988) and Colin Mercer (1986, 1988). Hall and others’ understanding of discourse and cultural practice explains how interviewees’ responses are simultaneously practices; practices by which respondents broadly place themselves within historical change and stability (the nature of which is examined in chapter 6), and specifically present themselves, for example, as a young woman with a very clear idea about how to be a good mother (contemporary gender practices and identities being given greater consideration in chapter 7).

1. Realism

It should not, perhaps, come as a surprise that concepts of realism organise a large number of interviewees’ responses. As Richard Kilborn has indicated, how realistic soap operas appear to be is one of the criteria most used when critics and viewers discuss the genre (Kilborn, 1992: 85). Kilborn also notes that soap operas characteristically move between the codes of fiction and the experiential worlds of viewers (ibid., p.88). An initial examination of Neighbours and Home and Away and of my interview transcripts might lead one to
the conclusion that the two programmes favour the codes of fiction to the neglect of attempts to connect with the experiential world of viewers. As I have already noted, Neighbours and Home and Away do not pursue so consistently the narrative and aesthetic realist strategies privileged by other, especially British, soap operas. Indeed at times they revel in what may be thought of as their comic-pantomime status. This may be one reason why my interviewees repeatedly claimed the two programmes were unreal and failed to connect with the world as they experienced it. However, there are, I think, various reasons why respondents considered the programmes to be unreal which are not to do with the texts' form alone.

What we should first recognise is that realism and the extent to which the texts were perceived to connect with reality would probably have guided the discussion of any popular media; and that this tendency is heightened by both television - with its historical orientation to naturalism - and soap opera, which has always to varying extents tried to construct a parallel world to that of its listeners and viewers. In this context, it is noteworthy that while David Buckingham's interviewees believed EastEnders to be more realistic than Dallas and Dynasty, they used the same framework and criteria to criticise the British soap as they did the American ones (Buckingham, 1987: 181). Like my own interviewees, those of Buckingham employ at least two types of aesthetic competency here. First, they recognise that EastEnders utilises the techniques of social realism in a way that Dallas doesn't. Second, their knowledge of soap opera means that they know the genre always and must always depart from the world as they experience it. Thus in the recurring findings of my individual interviews, under referential realism, we see R (female, 13) listing
Neighbours' typically soap operatic excesses, but simultaneously recognising that "I suppose they have to show it some way, don't they?..." (p.210).

In this response, R moves from what seems a naive, referential frame - comparing Neighbours to lived reality - to a more detached, critical one. At one level, Liebes and Katz describe this as a move from the hot to the cool (Liebes and Katz, 1990: 100). It is also a type of negotiation or interplay which a number of researchers have noted is typical of the interview responses of soap opera viewers. Interviewees move between a close involvement with the world of the soap and its characters, naturalising them as real, to a detached criticism of its generic form (as well as Liebes and Katz, see Buckingham, 1987: 172 and Kilborn, 1992: 89). This happens at various points in my interviews. As well as R, above, an example is this response from J (female, 16), who moves from an external, generic criticism to an apparent naturalising of and internal involvement with the world of Home and Away: "...it was obvious what was going to happen...I still reckon Adam's lying...he never said that Greg could move in." (individual interview 1B, under narrative and aesthetic realism in the recurring findings - p.208-209).

Liebes and Katz suggest that this type of negotiated response is not only usual, but that "the sophisticated viewer should be seen as a commuter between the referential and the critical" (Liebes and Katz, 1990: 117). This said, in Liebes and Katz' study of Dallas viewers, across cultural groupings most interviewees' responses were referential, comparing the programme to lived experience (ibid., p.101). As the recurring findings of my interviews show, all of my respondents made this comparison frequently. Whether in all
of these instances they employ a naturalising referential frame, though, is open to debate - and is less clear-cut than seems to be the case in the Israeli researchers' study. If we look, for example, at T's (male, 15) response, "There's only two places for people to go in Summer Bay - the diner and the surf club. Like, whoopy doo!" (group interview 4A, under setting and sets in the recurring findings - p.185), it is quite difficult to judge whether T is referring to lived experience - everyone/we have more than two places to go in their/our lives - or to Home and Away's highly restricted narrative space and comic strip aesthetic.

Part of the reason for this difficulty, I think, is that my interviewees' responses often operated within a broader frame of meaning, an overriding or metadiscourse. This discourse was playful, ironic and at times refused to take the two programmes seriously by any aesthetic or realist criteria. Liebes and Katz encountered this tendency to an extent. Their American interviewees rejected the notion that Dallas could communicate any deeper meanings or ideological messages. Dallas, they argued, was only entertainment, escapism (p.120).

My interviewees frequently assigned Neighbours and Home and Away the same status. Their comments, though, tended to operate within the broader discourses of cultural value and realism, rather than perceived messages. Examples of this are: "People know that they're rubbish, but they watch them anyway." and "...it's like reading a ninety nine pence paperback..." (M, group pilot interview 1, under narrative and aesthetic realism in the recurring findings - p.180); "It's sort of light entertainment (and so less real)." (T, individual interview 2B, under narrative and aesthetic
realism - p.208); and, "...silly teenage programmes...not regarded highly at all - and I don't think they should be." (D, individual interview 3B, under value in findings that did not recur - p.222).

At various stages, the viewers of Dallas whose letters Ien Ang analyses enter into a discourse very similar to this. Like M, above, one respondent describes Dallas as a penny dreadful, easy to understand, ideal after a day's work (Ang, 1985: 21). A number of Ang's respondents go considerably further than this, denigrating Dallas as culturally worthless and equating this with its distance from reality. This tendency is exhibited by a number of my interviewees. Ang explains it with reference to what she calls the ideology of mass culture (ibid., p.92). The ideology of mass culture, she says, provides respondents with an accessible and immediate frame of meaning by which they can legitimate their disparagement of Dallas. The language and criteria that respondents can make recourse to - stereotypical, commercial, American - circulate across a number of public discourses; artistic, journalistic, educational and intellectual discourses about specifically Dallas, and about something more broadly understood as mass culture.

The points at which my interviewees connect most directly with the ideology of mass culture as Ang understands it are under the headings Gender and Family in the recurring findings of the group interviews. One interviewee in particular seems more guided by the discourse than others. C (female, 15) gives this response under Gender, "It's just so...sheer stereotypes..." (p.198), and this one under Family, "Nobody's going to say, oh, I really liked Neighbours last night...Some people say, oh, I dinnae watch it, but I bet they do..." (p.202). And, under Family, a
number of the group respondents refer to their father’s disposition towards the programmes, which largely results from, I think, an adherence to the ideology of mass culture.

These connections to the ideology of mass culture, however, are slight. Interviewees, however critical of the programmes, generally distanced themselves from their father’s position. Further, from an examination of C’s responses in full, it is obvious that they emerge as much from entrenched discourses about gender and popular media as from the ideology of mass culture - however closely these may be linked at times (on this see Frith and Horne, 1987 and Huyssen, 1986). We should also note that after the first response (It’s just so...) C is pulled up by her female friend for being too sweeping and inaccurate, and that in the second one (Nobody’s going to...) C corrects herself for being swept away by the breadth of her (remarkable) analogy.

So, while my interviewees, like those of Ang, criticise Neighbours and Home and Away for their low cultural value and lack of realism, I want to argue that it is seldom and never entirely the ideology of mass culture that underpins such responses. Part of the reason for this, I think, is the breadth of the ideology of mass culture as an explanatory category. When, for example, M (male, 13) says that "people realise that the programmes aren’t that well made...People know that they’re rubbish, but they watch them anyway." (group pilot interview 1, under narrative and aesthetic realism in the recurring findings - pp.180-181), he is entering into at least two quite specific discourses.

Firstly he invokes a discourse about quality television. There are various reasons why, to the mind of this and other interviewees, Neighbours and Home and Away are not ‘well
made'. It is not simply, or even at all, that they are mass culture. It is rather that they fail to meet familiar realist criteria. The ways in which time, space, mise-en-scene et cetera are treated by the programmes means that they fail to be classically or socially real for all the respondents. The first three responses I list in the recurring findings of the individual interviews (D, T and L) illustrate this well.

Secondly, interviewee M draws upon a cultural discourse specific to Neighbours and Home and Away and the way in which they are generally received in Britain. For a variety of reasons, the two programmes are objects of derision and humour across public commentaries and private discussions. This is why M can confidently state that 'people know they're rubbish'. Neighbours especially is widely lampooned, and there are, I think, a number of interrelated reasons for this. Partly it is indeed because of the programme's own comic-strip aesthetic. Neighbours takes the social issues it deals with seriously, but is also happy to foreground its comic-pantomime status. It is usefully thought of as serious pantomime (James, 1980: 11). The signature tune explicitly signals and is humorously received as burlesque. The narratives are frequently serious by anyone's definition. This is why we get M's (male, 13) response, "One moment they're really serious... the next moment they're deliberately ridiculous!" (under generic realism in the recurring findings of the group interviews - p.188), and genuine confusion from one of my most cynical and critical interviewees, C (female, 15), "I don't know if it's supposed to be tongue in cheek, or what..." (p.183).
The British reception of *Home and Away* and especially *Neighbours*, though, goes beyond their form. It's also related to: broader discourses about soap opera and especially daytime soap opera - again a more theatrical aesthetic in these contemporary British discourses comes to mean less real, becomes low value; the particular status and popular media representations of key stars from both programmes - stars who characteristically migrate to musicals, comedy and pantomime; the enduring popular image of thousands of British students knowing more about *Neighbours* than their courses of study... More detail than this is not helpful here. I only wish to illustrate that Ien Ang's concept of the ideology of mass culture may in the first instance be accurate, but is too general to fully explain some of my interviewees' responses.

What is most interesting in this context, I think, is not that *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* are legitimated and mastered as bad cultural objects. Rather, that even in the most distanced and ironic of their responses, all my interviewees draw on familiar languages and criteria of value and realism. They repeatedly call on the discourses of classical or novelistic realism, of social realism, and of scientific or empiricist realism. In so doing, my respondents frequently locate soap opera discursively as anti-art and as scientifically suspect. Robert Allen's historical study of the genre shows that, even for the most sophisticated critic, a complete escape from such entrenched understandings is difficult (Allen, 1985: chapter 1).

One of the most critically cool responses, by the terms of Liebes and Katz (1990: 100), is provided by individual interviewee D (male, 16) under narrative and aesthetic realism in the recurring findings. At the end of
this response, when he reflects "Well, if I was being sort of more sophisticated..." (p.207), D effectively 'tries on' different discourses or versions of himself. Immediately prior to this, though, D does depend on conventional understandings of social and novelistic realism in his explanation of why Home and Away and Neighbours are less real than EastEnders.

D is certainly being critical, not referential, by Liebes and Katz' criteria. Neither the early nor later part of his response, though, falls fully into any one of the Israeli researchers' three critical categories - syntactic (criticism of genre, formula et cetera), semantic (themes, messages) and pragmatic (reflections on one's own position as viewer) (p.115ff). The first part of D’s response, "I think EastEnders tends to...real life...", is about realist-aesthetic difference rather than generic form. In the second part, D reflects on himself as a critic and interviewee rather than as an interpretive viewer, as Liebes and Katz describe. In this second reflective part, D moves between the ironic and populist positions analysed by Ien Ang (Ang, 1985: 96-116). He employs some irony in order to master not just the programmes, but the interview. He also veers towards a populist position - I know I should enjoy other, more worthy works, but, actually, I prefer Home and Away and Neighbours.

He doesn't fully take up Ang's populist position, though, for two reasons. Firstly and as I have argued above, in his preference for Neighbours and Home and Away D opposes himself to a televisual and aesthetic hierarchy, not the ideology of mass culture as Ang theorises it. Secondly, and importantly in keeping with most of my interviewees, in the course of the interview D refuses to immerse himself in the
pleasures of Home and Away and Neighbours. So, crudely, because he refuses to position himself in such a way as to say, I love the two programmes despite the conventional wisdom of the ideology of mass culture, he is not by Ang’s terms a populist.

This said, as sophisticated a respondent as D is, he, like all my interviewees, loses his cool detachment at points. His greatest emotional involvement is when he discusses the characters he dislikes (D, male, 16, under character dislikes in the recurring findings of the individual interviews - p.215). Even here, though, while his response is generally ‘hot’, he retains a certain distance, speculating on Home and Away’s authentic relation to lived experience, and distinguishing between the Neighbours character Julie Martin and the actress who plays her.

D is, by Liebes and Katz’ terms, a hyper-sophisticated respondent (Liebes and Katz, 1990: 117). He moves with ease between the referential and the critical, sometimes gets ‘hot’, but generally retains a critical distance from the programmes. Unlike Liebes and Katz’ interviewees, his framework is not predominantly a referential one, and his statements are not based on the perception that the programmes are real (ibid.). In fact the reverse is true. Like most of my interviewees, his statements are based on the perception that Neighbours and Home and Away are unreal.

Nonetheless, as I have argued, like all of my respondents, when he discusses realism and value D is dependent on familiar discourses. As further examples, if we look at the responses offered by individual interviewees T (female, 16) and L (female, 16) under narrative and aesthetic realism in the recurring findings, we can see, I think, established
notions of social and empiricist realism. For T, *EastEnders* is very true to life and newspapers tell us the truth (p.208) - in both cases unlike *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*. For L, *Coronation Street* is more realistic than the two Australian soap operas because it is in Britain and about 'things that are happening, you know, social issues' (p.208); and Fin and Blake’s (*Home and Away*) romantic negotiations seem real because they’ve happened to people she knows. The same type of response is given by individual interviewee J (male, 15) under referential realism in the recurring findings (p.209). And in the group interviews, a different J (male, 15) feels unqualified to say whether the programmes are especially Australian because he has never been to Australia (under settings and sets in the recurring findings - p.183).

My respondents touch upon a number of discourses here: what counts as knowledge, what counts as social and important, and the conventions of social realism. The framework they use predominantly, though, is an empiricist one. This is a mode of understanding and criticism which would appear in most if not all interviews of this type. It is used by some of Ien Ang's interviewees in their assessments of *Dallas* (Ang, 1985: 36). And as Ang indicates, empiricist criticism is always to some extent naive in as much as no text can directly and fully represent lived experiences and realities (ibid., p.37). In this sense it is arguable that some of my most 'critical' interviewees, by repeatedly using a referential-empiricist frame, unwittingly inflate any pretences to reflecting the real, physical world that *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* may have. By Bourdieu’s terms, and from the standpoint of the high aesthete, such
interviewees practise "barbarism par excellence". That is, they reduce the things of art to the things of life, bracketing out questions of form (Bourdieu, 1984: 44).

None of my interviewees, however, entirely fall into the social and cultural category as that to which Bourdieu makes reference here. First of all, Home and Away and Neighbours are by nobody's definition legitimate works of art. And secondly and more importantly, as I have indicated all of my respondents to some degree move between a referential and generic mode of criticism. In fact the distinction between referential-empiricist assessments and generic criticism is by no means absolute. The relation between how we imagine the world and art/mediated culture is always an historically important one. My interviewees' claims are not only about Neighbours and Home and Away's lack of realism; they are simultaneously claims about the nature of reality.

When my respondents make references to what I am calling empiricist realism, they privilege individual experience and what they consider to be objective observations of known environments. This, as Ian Watt indicates, when referring to formal realism, is what distinguishes the modern novel (Watt in Donald and Mercer, 1981: 86). Radical in its secular project, the novel's emergence, Watt argues, was importantly linked to developments in the social sciences and philosophy in the modern period. Its assertion of the primacy of individual experience was no less defiant than Descartes' cogito ergo sum (ibid.).

As Donald and Mercer argue, what was at issue when the novel emerged as a legitimate and then popular form was not simply a question of stylistic change, but much broader questions regarding the social production and construction of reality.
(Donald and Mercer, 1981: 86). Especially the novel and science, but also a related range of modern popular genres and social practices became co-ordinates by which objective realities were measured and subjectivities were formed: "the transformation of the reader's subjective attitudes...is at one and the same time the production of a new kind of objectivity." (Jameson in Donald and Mercer, 1981: 88).

In my interviews it seems obvious that the positivist modes of measuring reality analysed by Donald and Mercer and special to the modern period remain as privileged sites of meaning. What Donald and Mercer show is that when my interviewees make empiricist assessments, these are perceptions of particular 'contents' - of the contents of the texts, and of the contents of respondents' lived experiences (ibid., p.91). This is broadly the same point made by David Buckingham when he argues that the empiricist judgements made by his interviewees, and by television viewers generally, are inevitably ideological (Buckingham, 1987: 191).

This is illustrated well, I think, when J (male, 15) refers to 'yer average teenager', under referential realism in the recurring findings of the group interviews (p.186). Yer average teenager, he says, smokes and takes drugs. This can be observed in his school's playground - where everybody smokes - and its absence is why Neighbours and Home and Away are so unreal. J's perception of the average teenager is not guided solely by something we might think of as his subjective experience. Neither, obviously, is it arrived at after exhaustive observations of teenagers in his school's playground. It is shaped by both his subjectivity and his observation of the real world. It is also inseparably shaped by his perception of teenagers in Neighbours and Home and
Away, against which he measures his concept of real teenagers. And his perception is also, I would argue, lent form by broader discourses and representations of teenagers in contemporary Britain.

Empiricist judgements, then, I would argue, are never as naive and one-dimensional as they might first appear. In this respect, I agree with David Buckingham when he suggests that Ian Ang dismisses the category of empiricist realism too hastily in the analysis of her Dallas-viewing letter writers (ibid., pp.191-192). Ang's argument - simultaneously about the letters she receives and Dallas' effectivity - suggests that the truth, or the form of realism her study privileges, lies at another, deeper level of meaning. The respondents who deny that Dallas is in any way real, argues Ang, fail to engage with its deeper structures - Dallas' connotative level (Ang, 1985: 42). A number of points can be made about this argument, and I want to raise some of them, briefly, here.

As I suggested earlier, Ang's argument seems very close here to earlier Marxist ones. As Donald and Mercer indicate, when Lukacs argues that 'reality as it truly is' lies below that which is accessible to 'ordinary' observation, he connects with a tradition of Marxist literary criticism aimed at recovering the progressive from the ideological (Donald and Mercer, 1981: 93). Raymond Williams shows, too, that in debates about the difference between realism and naturalism, similar arguments emerge. Recent and common conceptualizations locate naturalism as relatively static external appearance. Realism, in the Marxist tradition, is that "which went below the surface to the essential historical movements, to the dynamic reality." (Williams, 1977a: 65). Usefully, Williams indicates that this latter
concept has also been used to describe what is special to naturalism. The two terms, he argues, have not only been historically confused, but have both at times been employed in efforts after scientific and artistic credibility (ibid.).

In the analysis of Dallas and her respondents' letters, I would argue that Ang not only makes a false distinction between what she terms the denotative and connotative levels, she also conflates the latter level with what she considers to be the text's progressive, political essence—that is, the tragic nature of women's existence. This seems most obvious when Ang presents a respondent's letter which she argues operates only at the naive levels of empiricism and denotation (Ang, 1985: 41-42). The respondent, like my own, compares Dallas to her own experiences and sense of reality in order to argue that the programme is unreal. Ang argues that this respondent cannot engage with what is Dallas' mode of realism because she reads it only at the denotative level.

The respondent's letter, I would argue, is every bit an engagement with Dallas' representations and discourses as those writers who can see in Dallas something real. Like my interviewees, this respondent's rejection of truth is simultaneously a claim to truth; a claim about the nature of contemporary, as well as Dallas' realities. Her response moves well beyond the level of denotation, being an evaluative assessment of familial and kinship behaviour.

What we need to consider, I think, is not where the deeper truths of Neighbours and Home and Away and my interviewees' responses might lie. Rather, we must ask how and why particular discourses compete in the interviews as well as
the texts. If empiricist concepts of reality nevertheless remain persuasive in my interviews, then we must also consider which new discourses and realities operate alongside and sometimes in tension with them. There is evidence of such discourses, I think, in my interviewees' comments on Neighbours and Home and Away's realisms; but also and especially in the ways in which they discuss the programmes' characters.

2. Characters

I have argued, then, that one of the responses of Ien Ang's letter-writer 41 is simultaneously a normative judgement of familial and intimate behaviour and a referential-realist comparison (see above and Ang, 1985: 41-42). This happens at various points in my own interviews. In fact, frequently, what is ostensibly or begins as a discussion of other parts of Neighbours and Home and Away - narratives, realism, settings, or the programmes generally - turns into or is more accurately an assessment of characters and their behaviour. Examples of this are: group interviewee R (female, 14) who turns my question about the programmes' settings into an opportunity to judge the way the families live and how the young characters are disciplined (under referential realism in the recurring findings - p.186); individual interviewee M (male, 13) who when asked which, if any, of the programme's narratives he had enjoyed (of the ones we had just watched together), responded that he didn't like 'the Jack one' because of the way in which the character conducted himself (under character dislikes in the recurring findings - p.216); and individual interviewee T (female, 16) who begins discussing one of her favourite Home and Away stories in narrative and aesthetic terms - "...it wasn't overdone..." - but shifts quickly to an assessment of
first acting and then the characters generally - "...they were excellent." (under findings which did not recur in the recurring findings - p.223).

This tendency is evident in other researchers' studies. David Buckingham notes that at times in his interviews judgements on a narrative’s plausibility are simultaneously moral judgements about a character’s behaviour (Buckingham, 1987: 188). Although unlike my interviewees those of Buckingham tended to accept the authenticity of EastEnders' characters and their behaviour, Buckingham notes that this type of judgement was common in his discussions (ibid., pp.188-189). In fact, at this point in his analysis Buckingham presents a discussion from his interviews which he says concerns itself with the authenticity of locale, when quite clearly, I think, its focus is the authenticity of character and how East Enders live (p.189).

Ien Ang also indicates that in her study of Dallas' viewers the personalities of characters were so important for some respondents that, uninvited, they included lists of character critiques in the letters they sent to her (Ang, 1985: 31). The broad criterion that is applied to assess the value and reality of a character, says Ang, is genuineness. Only if this is met can viewers connect with and take pleasure from the world of Dallas (ibid., p.34).

Ang does not pursue this notion of the genuineness of characters, but broadly connects it with her more central theory of emotional realism. As I have indicated, this theory is premised on the effectivity of Dallas' narrative structure. In keeping with this, Ang argues that "identification with a character only becomes possible within the framework of the whole structure of the
narrative...it is not so much the personalities ascribed to the characters in the story, as their formal narrative status that matters." (p.29).

Leaving aside for now the question of character identification as the effect of narrative structure, two contradictions appear here in Ang’s general argument which seem salient to my own interviews. Firstly, Ang notes that some of her letter-writers appear wilfully to blur distinctions between Dallas' characters, the actors who play them, and the character traits familiar to everyday experience. Characters become real people, apparently autonomous to the text’s narratives. They are judged, says Ang, not so much for their position in the narrative as for "how they are" (Ang, 1985: 30). Though my interviewees are generally aware of the distinction between characters and actors, this mode of character judgement is common to the way in which they discuss Neighbours and Home and Away’s characters. Under character likes in the individual interviews especially, characters are referred to as generally nice guys, nice personalities, someone who is easy to understand and get on with; and, here, when R (female, 13) says that she likes one of Home and Away’s actors because she has her own problem page in a magazine (p.214), it is important to note that this response emerged out of a discussion of characters. R, I would argue, is referring here to actor and character simultaneously, combining them under the concepts of personality and good self.

The second contradiction or difficulty with Ang’s argument here, I think, is her notion of genuineness. Her tendency to use it broadly and as a support for her argument regarding Dallas’ emotional realism means that she overlooks important features of her letter-writers’ character critiques. In
Ang's letter 12 especially, characters are not only referred to as real or unreal people, but as a real mother (Miss Ellie), a real woman (Sue Ellen), a real adolescent (Lucy), and a Barbie doll (Pam) (ibid., p.32). Again, the same modes of judgement repeat themselves in my interviews. For individual interviewee M (male, 13), Julie Martin (Neighbours) is "nothing like a mum" (under character dislikes in the recurring findings - p.215); individual interviewee T (female, 16) believes that Sophie (Home and Away) doesn't act "like a young mother would act", and that Pippa (Home and Away) is "a really good mother" (under do the right thing in the recurring findings - p.219); group interviewee J (male, 15) doesn't think that "any woman" would throw herself, romantically/sexually, on a man (under do the right thing in the recurring findings - p.196); and, under gender in the recurring findings of the group interviews, S (female, 15) categorizes Marilyn (Home and Away) as a bimbo (though retaining, here, her critical distance from the text's construction - p.199).

My interviewees, then, like those of Ang, are certainly mobilizing notions of genuineness and authenticity. They are very specific and very broad notions, though, about the nature of mothering and the nature of 'being' a woman which Ang's theory of emotional realism only begins to address. They are also concepts which emerge from and are reproduced by a range of related cultural practices and discourses - of which Ang's letters and my interviews are a constituitive part. As such, the extent to which my interviewees' tendency to animate these notions of gendered behaviour results from their engagement with Neighbours and Home and Away and their characteristic structures is a difficult question which we
shall have to consider. And it is a question, I would argue, which is foreclosed by Ang’s structural theory of emotional realism.

In their study of *Dallas* viewers, Liebes and Katz also found judgements of kinship roles and norms to be one of the most repeated areas of discussion across interview groups (Liebes and Katz, 1990: 102). And while I would question the premises on which they base their general and central arguments, Liebes and Katz make suggestions regarding their interviewees’ relation to *Dallas* which are useful and pertinent to current analyses.

Liebes and Katz note that some of their interviewees effectively ‘tried on’ *Dallas* characters. In what the researchers term subjunctive and ludic keyings, their respondents imagined themselves into the situations in which characters found themselves (ibid., p.103). They asked themselves, and then asserted to the interviewer and group what they would do in a given fictional situation. Because interviewees recognized *Dallas*’ kinship structures, say Liebes and Katz, they found them provocative and took up the invitation to engage with them. And, whether interviewees’ engagements are emotional or cognitive, Liebes and Katz argue that they should be thought of as investments of self (p.112).

This type of response is a common feature of my own interviews. Some of the most explicit examples are: group interviewee R (female, 13): "...I like the way she put the shoes on the desk...I would have done something like that." (under do the right thing in the recurring findings - p.197); individual interviewee L (female, 16): "In these sorts of situations you should really think about who you’re
better off with...if I’m watching it, and me and my mum have fallen out, I might think, mmm, yeah, that’s good." (under do the right thing in the recurring findings - p.218); and individual interviewee R (female, 13): "...I would think it was the right thing for him to do...to go and find out about his real family, 'cause that’s what I would have done." (under do the right thing in the recurring findings - p.220).

I say some of the most explicit examples because I would argue that my interviewees repeatedly make investments in notions of themselves and how they would behave in imagined situations, or more broadly in life. This occurs whether they explicitly introduce this idea, as above, or not. How frequently and implicitly this occurs may be debatable, but a good example is the response of individual interviewee J (female, 16): "...she’s a selfish cow; and she’s really naive; and she just thinks that she knows, basically, the score on life, when she doesn’t have a clue." (under character dislikes in the recurring findings - p.216).

What is obvious from these responses, too, is that as well as entering into the specific situations presented by Neighbours and Home and Away, interviewees use what is typical to the texts to go beyond them. They imagine themselves in related real life situations, and also refer to life generally. Further, respondents do not only position themselves as the primary actors in imagined situations, they also take up the part of expert advisers. This, I think, is the role taken up by L, above, when she says, "In these sorts of situations you should really think about who you’re better off with...". And the same tendency or practice is exhibited immediately below this response in the recurring findings of the individual interviews: "They
didn't think about...what it meant, at first. They just sort of, oh, that's wrong." (D, male, 16, under do the right thing - p.219).

These types of response are a central, indeed critical part of my interview findings. They seem more important than is the case in Liebes and Katz' study of Dallas' viewers. The Israeli researchers raise the notion of self-investment, but do not pursue it. There are, I am sure, various reasons for this - not least that the subject and aims of Liebes and Katz' research are far from identical to my own. Part of this difference, as I have noted, concerns the theoretical framework they apply to their research. In contradistinction to Ien Ang, Liebes and Katz emphasise interviewees' cultural context over textual structures in theorising the relation between Dallas and its viewers. That Dallas can apparently provoke similar responses from diverse groups of viewers should not be explained with reference to the programme's characteristic form, Liebes and Katz argue. Rather, "(i)t seems a better bet...that the social agenda proposed by the program coincides with pervasive and pre-existing concerns over primordial human motivations and interpersonal relations, particularly within the family." (Liebes and Katz, 1990: 102). Liebes and Katz nonetheless retain the notion that Dallas communicates a dominant ideological message which some of their interviewees are better at resisting than others (ibid., p.113).

At this point, I want to argue only that both Neighbours and Home and Away's structures and my interviewees' contexts are important regarding the ways with which the texts are engaged. To explain the repetition of self-investment as a mode of response we must go beyond notions of either texts' structures or viewers' contexts (as Liebes and Katz define
them) as the primary causes of particular effects. We must also, though, be more specific than to theorize that interviewees' relation to the texts results mainly from primordiality.

In fairness to Liebes and Katz, their study does highlight important differences - between rather than within groups. The distinction they make between modern and traditional interviewees may be usefully applied, albeit differently, to my findings. The groups which Liebes and Katz define as traditional (Arabs and Morrocan Jews) involve themselves much more closely than the 'moderns' (especially Americans, by Liebes and Katz' terms) with what the researchers argue is Dallas' premodern dynastic-kinship structure (Liebes and Katz, 1990: 111-112, and for more detail on this argument see Liebes, 1988). Their interest lies in the progression of the Dallas dynasty at the level of its, linear-traditional, narrative. This, Liebes and Katz argue, can be explained with reference to the traditional groups' cultural experiences and familial practices. The moderns, conversely, are not only more able to distance themselves from Dallas' generic structures (though not, the researchers argue, from its dominant ideology), they take a special interest in the dynamics of interpersonal relations, character psychology, and modern media personalities (Liebes, 1988: 290). Again, Liebes and Katz argue that this mode of response results from the modern groups' social and cultural context. They possess a security (the nature of which is not elaborated upon by the researchers) not available to the other groups which affords them the luxury of an interest in the individual. This luxury permits the modern groups "a playful subjunctivity in their negotiations with the program, with fellow viewers, and with the discussion leaders." (ibid.).
It is arguable that by the terms employed by Liebes and Katz my interviewees are generally hyper-modern. They negotiate with apparent ease Neighbours and Home and Away's generic form, and take a special interest in the ways in which the characters conduct themselves - as narrative characters and as modern selves - and manage their intimate relations. How to explain this is more complicated, I think, than Liebes and Katz' study might suggest. It may be partly because of the specific nature of my interviewees' cultural location - late-twentieth century residents of urban and suburban Scotland. However, that position must at least be combined with broader historical discourses and practices. Neighbours and Home and Away and my interviews, I would argue, are parts of such practices in that they actively reproduce them. Following Foucault (1988), we might call these practices technologies of self-government. A detailed consideration of them will be given in the following chapter.

I would also argue that while my interviewees are certainly moderns by Liebes and Katz' terms, they also at stages negotiate and move between what may be thought of as traditional and modern discourses. Again, I would argue that this is a response to and engagement with the multiple discourses of which Neighbours and Home and Away are parts - residual and emergent discourses by the terms of Raymond Williams (1977b: 122ff). More specifically and in distinction to Liebes and Katz' study, it may also be to do with not only my interviewees' Scottishness, but with their age, class and gender. Let us consider some examples of this type of negotiation.
3. Negotiating discourses, forging identities

In this section of analysis I will use the terms modern and traditional quite broadly. In their responses, to varying degrees, all of my interviewees combined old and new ideas and values. Exactly how old and new is difficult to determine, and will be part of the next chapter's task. Here I will use modern to signal the degree to which respondents were keen to position themselves as liberal and independent; as experts in contemporary discourses and practices - in particular discourses about how young men and women should be and behave. I use traditional to indicate when interviewees privilege conservative discourses - in particular discourses which uphold the importance of the private family unit and restrict the behaviour of especially women - and especially women's sexual conduct - to a limited terrain. My interviewees do not only forge identities; they draw up charters, lay out contracts. Modern and traditional, liberal and conservative - we might say that some interviewees deal in the new currency of self and domestic and social relations, some in the old. Like Home and Away and Neighbours, and like contemporary discourses, they mix new money with old.

(i) Assertive moderns

It is noteworthy that the interviewees who cast themselves as what I am calling assertive moderns are mostly female. The extent to which gendered identities were heightened by the constitution of the group and/or my presence will be considered. What we can safely argue for now, though, is that historically women have had considerably more at stake than men regarding the ways in which they are represented in popular culture. This may be one reason why the criticisms
of my assertive moderns at times go beyond the representations of women and girls in Neighbours and Home and Away.

Group interviewee C (female, 15) asserts that Neighbours and Home and Away are outdated and do not deal with the real problems faced by young people (under referential realism in the recurring findings). Following Donald and Mercer, the programmes do not meet the criteria of modern realism for this interviewee because they are not contemporary (Donald and Mercer, 1981: 90). As well as a particular, aesthetic concept of realism, C measures Neighbours and Home and Away against a modern notion of young people and how they live - the two conceptualisations, as I have argued, are far from divorced. These concepts are so heightened during this response that not only would few popular representations meet them, they function to obscure the straightforward, empirical contents of the two programmes. In fact the texts make transparent efforts to connect with the problems faced by young people in the late-twentieth century. From their first transmissions, both programmes have addressed drug abuse, pregnancy and drinking (young and older characters), all of which C argues are absent. Partly it is the way in which these problems are addressed which C rejects; and she is right that they are generally absent from Neighbours and Home and Away - in the same way that major parts of contemporary life are absent from all generic texts.

The same interviewee is also highly critical of the way in which women are represented in Neighbours and Home and Away. She argues that the programmes depend on predictable gender stereotypes (C, female, 15, under gender in the recurring findings of the group interviews - p.198). Again, C works here with a concept considerably more conservative than the
one mobilized by the texts, and is in fact criticised, policed as it were by her female friend at this point for doing so. She simultaneously, I would argue, uses her engagement with the text, and the interview, to privilege an idea and an ideal of a modern autonomous woman. This arguably is the self she asserts at this point and throughout the interview. Another good example of this is how cynical she is of the texts' notion that sex should be dependent on love (under generic realism in the recurring findings of the group findings - p.190).

There are numerous other examples in my findings of interviewees investing in and asserting themselves as modern autonomous women. Another good example is the one I referred to earlier - J (female, 16), who is vehement that Sophie (Home and Away) doesn't know how to conduct herself, is clueless regarding 'the score on life', and that Pippa (Home and Away), in her government of others, is too 'goddamn nosey' (under character dislikes in the recurring findings of the individual interviews - p.216). As I have noted, though generally superior in their attitude toward the programmes, the male respondents do not take up this particular modern, autonomous position so frequently. Perhaps the closest a male respondent comes to this, though less assertive than C and J above, is group interviewee S (15): "That guy's supposed to be bright. He should have worn something...If you were pregnant, if you got a lassie pregnant, your life would be over. He never thought to use condoms, did he?" (under do the right thing in the recurring findings - p.197).

It is debatable whether it is the masculinity or modernity-contemporaneity of this response which is most important. In popular culture and historically, one of
masculinity's ideals has entailed the avoidance of particular types of responsibility (children, family) in order to preserve a mystical autonomy. And, in Freud's analysis, if "higher social units" were to be established, then young men could not afford to be "swallowed up by the family" (Freud in Thompson, 1984: 356). Arguably, this is one discourse that S animates when he argues that a young man's life would be over if he got a woman pregnant. The fact, though, that he refers to condoms - made common currency in relatively recent times - is one possible indicator that he reproduces here a modern normative discourse about young people and their sexual and cultural practices. It is, I would argue, broadly the same discourse that the autonomous women, above, reproduce. These interviewees want to assert that they are expert managers of themselves and their intimate relations.

This, as I have argued, is the general and central project of Neighbours and Home and Away. As in the texts, though, important distinctions are evident in my findings. One which we must consider is why it is that my female respondents seem more compelled to assert their autonomy. We must be wary, though, of making absolute gender distinctions. For example, if I am to describe male interviewee S, above, as a modern, we must recognise that other male interviewees cast themselves as moderns in quite different ways. I am thinking of the less assertive, more sensitive responses from males which we shall consider shortly. The knowledge which I have of my interviewees suggests that class plays an important part here. The male interviewees who reflected most on their positions as critics and as gendered selves were middle-class in their immediate social and cultural origins. This is an important difference which we might be able to make more of when comparing my group to my individual
interviews. Again, though, it is a complicated one. Interviewee S, above, in the way in which he discusses a particular type of contraception as a male responsibility and common-sense practice, is arguably articulating and asserting a highly gendered, modern sense of himself. The extent to which a middle-class sensibility and discourse is being expressed here is troubled by the fact that S is working-class - leaving aside the bluntness of that category for now, and S's use of Scots being the primary but not only indicator here. It may be arguable, though, that S negotiates here a sexual self as much as a gendered self, and that he may privilege the former over the latter in distinction to my more 'sensitive' middle-class interviewees. It is difficult to know whether S's response connects more with a discourse about sexual protection, health and perhaps masculine conquest, or with one about idealized life narratives and the delay of familial duties.

In this context, a clearer class distinction seems to be evident in an exchange between two younger interviewees. Under do the right thing in the recurring findings, group interviewee R (female, 13) argues that Sophie (Home and Away) has 'ruined the rest of her life' by becoming pregnant at seventeen (p.197). R, I know (having interviewed her individually at home), is, loosely, middle-class, and decidedly more middle-class than S (male, 13). S, initially siding with R, shifts his position to argue that Sophie has not ruined the rest of her life, apparently naturalizing the widening gap between middle and working-class familial practices. J (female, 13) sides with R, privileging, we might speculate, female autonomy. Even here, though, the extent to which their discursive positions are matched is debatable. J introduces a legal and social discourse about
sexual rules, and may be entering less into a discourse about life narratives and possibilities than R - who does so at various points beyond just this response.

The broad distinction, though, between R as modern middle-class female and S as traditional working-class male seems to be lent strength by another response and exchange. Under gender in the recurring findings of the group interviews (p.198), R articulates a modern notion of familial practice. Women should not be enslaved to domesticity, she argues, using *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* as foils and for this purpose casting them once again as more conservative than is in fact the case. S’s counter is forceful, "That’s (housework) the women’s job, so get on with it", and he is supported by M (male, 13). This seems a very straightforward clash of discursive positions, the lines of history, class and gender being laid bare. Indeed the oppositions are so obvious and heightened, we must again ask what part the immediate interview context plays in this respect. I will dedicate a separate section to this question. Here I want only to note that I would argue that the immediate context is never entirely divorceable from broader ones. One example of this is that the style and degree of S and M’s assertions here may be peculiarly modern or contemporary - working in tandem with the established, very familiar masculine positions they take up. Discourses concerning the 'liberalisation' of sexual and gendered practices, it is arguable, have afforded S and M the 'right' to assert their masculinity in this way.

Interviewees S and M, then, are not simply or singularly traditional or modern. They participate in entrenched discourses in what may be significantly new ways. In this context, S (male, 15), to whom I made reference earlier,
connects with broad and very specific discourses when he asserts that bright young men wear condoms. Further, his repeated and overt lechery throughout my interview with his group (see his response, for example, under character desire in the recurring findings - p.194) indicates that he is keen to take up a modern position or sense of himself. In so doing, though, he appears simultaneously to hold onto something dear - his familiar relation to women. We might ask whether by taking up this position he necessarily opposes himself to or eschews other modern versions of masculinity. Let us now consider some of these versions.

(ii) Sensitive moderns

In the first instance, by sensitive I mean sensitive to the politics of gender and to notions of a gendered self; sensitive to the fact that the negotiations central to the projects of both texts are difficult, painful, real, and about power. I would argue that most of my interviewees are sensitive to these politics and consider themselves to be expert negotiators of themselves and their intimate relations. Some, though, are more expert than others. I am particularly interested here in those respondents who position themselves as highly sensitive - rather than assertive - and highly gendered selves. It may be important that some male responses stand out in this respect.

One example is group interviewee D (male, 15) who thinks that the programmes should give greater attention to women's rights (under gender in the recurring findings - p.199). When I suggest here that this is a feature of the programmes, D agrees, but says that there is not enough, that "(t)hey've never had any, or not much discrimination".
Again, like the response regarding the representations of teenagers to which I made reference earlier, here D is right and wrong. He is right that narratives which are explicitly about discrimination against women are rare in both programmes. They are, though, a consistent if relatively rare feature, and when they occur are given serious and extended treatment. In the narratives which I have analysed, Beth (*Neighbours*) is now a qualified builder, but to achieve this had to endure and overcome sex discrimination from her male colleagues. Sophie (*Home and Away*), a single mother, is in the process of trying to find part-time work which will give her a decent wage and won't consume all her time. In coming episodes she finds a job, only to abandon it in order to escape her male boss's sexual harassment.

At a broader level it is also arguable that D is wrong. A large part of both texts' project is to negotiate, in an attempt to resolve, gender inequalities. I would argue that women's challenges to the norms of masculine behaviour play a central part in at least seven of the twenty narratives I have examined. And as I have already noted, both texts give emphasis to - if no longer revolve around - strong female characters. This is not to suggest of course that D has failed to recognise that the texts are feminist in their orientations. They clearly are not, and I oversimplify when saying that D is wrong. What is more interesting and important, I think, is the way in which D positions himself, going again beyond the texts' representations in doing so. He seems to want to locate himself as a sensitive, modern man, and uses the programmes as a resource in this process.

Though he discusses the programmes' representation of males, a similar process is engaged in, I think, by another male respondent. Individual interviewee D (male, 16) thinks that,
compared with the female characters, the male characters in the programmes are shallow and lack sensitivity. Their role is to be good-looking and little else. The males, he says, also have fewer problems and seem to worry less about them (under referential realism in the recurring findings - p.211). Perhaps even more than D (15), above, D (16) moves beyond the texts' empirical contents in positioning himself here. As I have argued, both programmes ensure that every character faces problems that are in some ways gender-specific, but are always significantly similar. A number of the male characters in the narratives I have analysed are wrestling with problems about self-management, intimate relations and gendered identities. D makes particular reference to teenage male characters, citing Brad and Rick as examples. Brad is at the centre of two of the Neighbours narratives I have examined. In both of these he tortures himself over his poor relationship-management skills. In the Home and Away narratives I have analysed, Blake, the programme’s central male teenager, is agonising over his relationships with his biological and foster fathers; over his familial-masculine identity. This, further, is this character’s typical mode, sharing as it does more than just James Dean’s name. Again here, then, D is working with or against a concept of Neighbours and Home and Away shaped at least as much by other parts of his cultural experience as by the texts themselves. In so doing, like D (15) he also simultaneously constructs himself as a particularly modern, sensitive young man.

This is how D generally positioned himself throughout my interview with him. However, it is important to note that in forging this identity, and in using the programmes as tools in this process, D does not entirely or categorically place himself as a modern in opposition to what he (over) reads as
the texts' traditional gender representations. If we look at the responses D gives under do the right thing in the recurring findings of the individual interviews (pp.218-219), we can see important shifts within the broad position that he takes up. Throughout these responses he confidently presents himself as an expert critic of the texts' form, and as an expert adviser in the management of self and intimate relations. In doing this, at points he praises one of the texts/its characters for its/their sensitive management of familial and intimate relations. If the text can loosely be thought of as liberal and modern here, then D would seem to be in accord with it. At other points, though, the texts seem too liberal for D in their treatment of relationships: Alf and Ailsa have been too lenient in their parental government of Karen (Home and Away); that a young woman (Beth, Neighbours) should ask a male friend (Brad) to take her virginity so that she loses it to someone she knows and likes and negates the symbolic over-investment in the event is 'stupid' and beyond the bounds of reality.

D's position, then, regarding the texts' realism and ethics shifts depending on the scenario presented to him. Importantly, too, realism and ethics in these responses are not easily separated. Further, he both rises above the text as its expert critic - "They didn't think about..." - and enters into it, 'trying on' characters and situations - "If adults were shouting at me...". In this instance, he doesn't identify with any particular character, but recognises and judges what seem familiar structures - what I have called structures of relations. Though in this process he privileges particular discourses - about the norms of sexual and gendered behaviour and parenting - I would argue that he cannot be thought of as taking up any one ideological
position. What remains constant is his will to position himself as an expert in self and relations management - to be what I am calling a sensitive, modern young man.

As I have noted, this process, whereby a respondent negotiates discourses and representations in order to fashion themselves in a modern, contemporary way, is entered into by a number of my respondents. Female respondents generally appear to be more assertive in the identities they project. Some, though, like the two males above, are highly sensitive critics.

Under do the right thing in the recurring findings of the group interviews (p.196), S (female, 15) says that she is unimpressed by the way in which Feye (Neighbours) conducts herself. Again, her critique is simultaneously one of realist representations and of how people, in this case women, should manage themselves. The programme is sexist, and Feye does not know how to conduct herself in intimate/sexual relations. In an interesting shift, though, S moves away from Neighbours' representations to reflect on the management of oneself in romantic relations generally. In principle, she considers, a woman asserting her love for a man, being forward and open about it to that man, is a good thing, a move to be admired. Feye might meet this strategy in principle, though, but for S she has executed it in the wrong way and at the wrong time. S positions herself as an expert to argue that Feye lacks relationship skills. In this shifting response, what S retains is her position, her identity as a modern young woman. And one reason why she and the group can confidently hold onto the argument that Feye represents a bad image of women/romantic skills is that in this instance, I would argue, they are right. Not only is Feye figured transparently and excessively as a bad
self-manager, but thus far in its history the programme would not represent a male character in the way in which it represents Feye. Feye is neurotic, unstable, irrational, narcissistic... and these traits, this representation is associated by the text with femininity and female sexuality. Other, male characters in Neighbours may assert their desires and sexuality and be bad managers of themselves, but not in this particular way.

Another good example of a respondent who moves across perspectives and discourses to position herself as a modern, sensitive young woman is R (13) under do the right thing in the recurring findings of the individual interviews (pp.219-220). R begins her response by imagining herself into Blake's (Home and Away) situation. In doing so she privileges a discourse about the primacy of 'real' families and the importance of tracing one's biological genealogy. Having praised one character's behaviour, she then censures that of another - Alf, Blake's foster father. In this move, R retains her belief in the superior status of biological parents, but leaves her position as actor in the scenario to become an expert, omniscient adviser-therapist. She's sensitive to Alf's feelings about losing Blake, but explains that "he's got to understand that that's his (real-biological) father". In the second part of her response (later in the interview), in censuring Sophie's (Home and Away) behaviour R again exhibits the sensitivity and skills of a therapist. She knows that as a young, single mother Sophie has a lot to cope with, but that's no excuse for the way she treated Pippa. Rather than the biological, nuclear family, R privileges here, caring, selflessness, and modern women's autonomy - Pippa has as much right to a career as Sophie. In what I would argue is a very modern way of responding to a text and recorded interview, R
privileges, broadly, both traditional-conservative and more contemporary, liberal discourses. Some interviewees were more rigid regarding the positions they took up and conservative discourses in which they participated.

(iii) Traditionals

I have already referred to two male interviewees who locate women in unfortunately familiar ways - S (13), who asserts that women's place is to serve men in the home, and S (15), who believes that all the two programmes are good for is the opportunity to leer at women (see above and the recurring findings of the group interviews). It is noteworthy, though, that some of the most conservative and apparently unforgiving attacks on female characters came from female respondents.

If we look at the character dislikes sections in the recurring findings of the group and individual interviews, almost all of the disliked characters are female. Further, most of the animosity, frequently apparent hatred, comes from female interviewees. Fin is a selfish cow, Karen is not a real person, Sally is miss goody two-shoes, Lucy is a tart, fat and a dog, and in the most singular and vicious of responses, Brenda and Sophie are, amongst other things, sluts and slags (under character dislikes (p.193) and do the right thing (p.195) in the recurring findings of the group interviews).

As I have noted, some of Neighbours and Home and Away's characters are painted more thickly and excessively as popular cultural archetypes than others. Karen (Home and Away), especially in her relationship with the lawless,
greasy biker, "Revhead", is teen rebel with permanent sneer, against whom the adult world conspires. Lucy (Neighbours) owes her various excesses to countless post-war melodramatic characters. And Brenda (Neighbours) is the comic and highly familiar 'woman with little glamour but lots of heart, desperate for a man'. It may be coincidence that Brenda shares her name with the sister of situation comedy's Rhoda, who is a woman with little glamour... It is less of a coincidence, I think, that Lucy shares her name with Dallas' highly-sexed, blond, young, excessive, dangerous...Lucy.

In attacking these characters, my female respondents seem oblivious to these archetypes. It is the characters' status as women who cannot manage themselves and their intimate, especially sexual relations that matters. The point at which the texts' constructedness seems to get most lost is the attack on Brenda under character dislikes in the recurring findings of the group interviews. Despite my less than subtle attempt to point up the comic status of Brenda and one episode in particular, Brenda is responded to as a real woman, a real scarlet woman.

As I have argued, the two programmes do not represent men in the way in which they represent characters like Brenda and Feye (both Neighbours). This is important regarding the way in which some of my female interviewees respond to these characters. Not only, though, is Brenda significantly different to Feye - Brenda is a comic and strong female character in a way that Feye is not - but I would argue that it is the female status of Brenda that is more important regarding the way in which she is attacked. That is, even if Neighbours were, by a very long stretch of the imagination, to present a male character in exactly the way in which it shows Brenda, he would not, I think, be responded to in the
same way by these interviewees. The fact, too, that this particular response comes from an all-female group is also, I am sure, important. In what may seem a remarkably conservative response, woman characters are able to be categorized as sexually-errant and so bad in a way that male ones are not; and the apparently harshest and most explicit policing of women's sexuality is carried out by women.

We should also note that these female respondents, here (under character dislikes in the recurring findings of the group interviews - p.192), tend to blur appearance and behaviour. Lucy and Sophie's clothes, Brenda's body - 'fat' - are integral to their status as bad women. Again, I would argue that these criticisms are gender-specific. History and culture have made women sensitive to women's appearance in a way that is not the case for men. Just as scarlet man is not in our language, so it is that a woman, but not a man, can dress like a slut, be a slut. This said, it may also be important that male characters can be disliked and that appearance plays a part in this - see for example the response of L (female, 15) under character dislikes in the recurring findings of the group interviews (p.192). These female interviewees' responses, I would argue, are simultaneously gender-specific and part of the broader practice of judging characters as modern selves - a practice undertaken by all my interviewees in which senses of interiority and exteriority, ethics and aesthetics are blurred.

Importantly, the group attack on Brenda is unusual. It is one of the very few times in all of my interviews when no reflecting or shifting of perspectives occurs. It is also one short moment in an interview where there was plenty of critical reflection. If we look under do the right thing in
the recurring findings of the group interviews (p.195), we can see that one member of the same group, C (female, 15), begins to attack Sophie (Home and Away). She argues that Sophie is a slut and dirty, apparently because she is single, young and pregnant. S (female, 15) and R (female, 15), participants in the Brenda attack, censure or police C for making what they consider to be a wrong judgement. Importantly, S and R don't defend Sophie as such. Rather, they explain to C the nature of the situation and how it should be managed. S privileges a pragmatic, coping discourse: history's meaningless when the present must be dealt with; one has to get on with one's life et cetera. R explains to C that there are good reasons why Michael and Pippa (Sophie's foster parents) didn't discipline Sophie in the way she thought they should. R positions herself not only in alignment with the text, on this occasion, but as a superior manager of intimate relations to C - a superior parent, even.

As the recurring findings of the interviews show, most of my interviewees enjoyed entering into and reflecting upon such relationship-management scenarios in order to exhibit their expertise as managers and critics. In the following chapter I will consider some historical and theoretical analyses which help to explain this tendency. More specifically, the differences between the all-female group's response to Brenda and Sophie seem interesting. None of my female respondents said that they liked Sophie as a character, but in the response I have referred to above Sophie's personality is secondary to the ethical situation in which she finds herself. It is this that S and R are keenest to engage with. C tries to engage with it to justify what seems a broader hatred for Sophie's character, but her inability to do so skilfully by S and R's terms is what loses her the
argument on this occasion. It may be arguable that if the
group or I had placed Brenda as a player in a particular
ethical scenario (rather than the comic launderette scene to
which I make reference), then the attack on her sexual-self
might not have been quite so one-dimensional. It might also
be the case that Sophie's status as a teenage woman still in
the care of guardians/parents is important regarding the
ways in which these interviewees negotiate this character
and its trials - though most of my respondents, like R,
above ("If they shout at her she'll just run away...you
shouldn't call her a slag...") , moved across characters and
positions, in and out of the texts, in their judgements.

One of the most remarkable responses in this respect, and
one of the most remarkable responses I was offered
generally, is that of L (female, 16) under do the right
thing in the recurring findings of the individual interviews
(p.217). L moves across discourses and positions in what is
a highly sensitive and sophisticated response. She is
certainly a modern young woman, but does not assert a
gendered self in the same way as other female respondents.
She takes up a traditional-conservative position in the
discourses about femininity she animates, but the meaning
and importance of her response go beyond that positioning
alone.

In her first, earlier, response, L begins by equating value
and realism with a mature management of self and intimate
relations. Quite typically, she's simultaneously a textual
critic and a self and relationships expert. As a
relationship expert, she then considers that Blake and Fin
(Home and Away) "don't seem right as a couple". Here she may
or may not have relinquished her critique of the text's
realism - we might imagine L advising Home and Away's
producers that if the programme’s authenticity is to be retained, then Fin and Blake is an unwise pairing. L takes up two of the text’s invitations here. She enjoys playing ‘what sort of a person is this?’ (cf. Brunsdon, 1981), and ‘who’s right for whom?’. Variously, these invitations are offered to viewers in at least nine of the twenty narratives I have examined; and they are important and characteristic parts of both programmes. They are also invitations, I would argue, which are issued increasingly and by various parts of popular culture - problem pages and programmes like *Blind Date* being only the most obvious of starting points.

In the process of playing this game, making this judgement, L positions herself not only as relations expert, but as a modern autonomous young woman. Fin, by choosing to leave Blake and Summer Bay to ‘pursue an academic career’ has made the right move in her self-development and life narrative. By leaving school, Blake has made a bad move, and revealed his immaturity. L places this move not only in the context of the programme, but in the context of her belief that teenage males are less mature and sensible than teenage females. So again, L’s judgement is about ethics or life choices - yes, Fin has done the right thing - and realism - yes, this is accurate, authentic because it’s true to life.

L’s mode of response is typical, but, typically, the position she takes up here is by no means absolute. At the start of L’s response it is Blake who has made the right move and proven his self-maturity. Again the particular scenario seems to be the important point of engagement rather than gender *per se*. Further, while L seems to privilege career and female autonomy in her earlier response, in the later one which I have presented below this in the recurring findings she favours stability, family and
true monogamous, heterosexual love. It would be difficult to argue that either of these positions or ideals takes precedence in L's responses here, or in the interview I recorded with her generally.

In the later response, L again judges what type of a person is this?, who is right for whom?. After a direct prompt from me (evident in the full transcript of this interview), L introduces the fact that this negotiation doesn't always occur between just herself and the text and its players and scenarios, but sometimes involves a friend. L then positions herself as a more expert reader of character and self than her friend - Frank (Home and Away) has used Bobby before, and if she lets him he will use her again. While L privileges family and true love, then, she also asserts the need for Bobby and women to reject a familiar type of man and scenario. Her earlier response, and others, indicates that she doesn't necessarily reject altogether or in principle her friend's belief that women's first responsibility is to themselves - "Jenny wanted her to have an adventure". Rather, and again, L believes that her friend has favoured the wrong move for Bobby in this particular scenario. L positions herself as ethically superior to her friend in this respect, and more skilful in the game of life choices. Adventure or not, for L Frank cannot and will not transform to become an equal partner. This as well as family is a legitimate ideal for L, and it is, she believes, what Bobby already has.

In a remarkable passage, L then details very accurately, I would argue, one of the primary ways in which Neighbours and Home and Away work. Certainly L naturalizes the texts' function in a common sense fashion. However, this is not, though, I would argue, a straightforward case of
interpellation in the way in which Althusser theorizes it (Althusser, 1969: 160ff). L neither takes up nor directly opposes an illusory subject position. Her response here veers between conservatism and liberalism, involvement and distance, the specific and the general, first and third person, actor and agony aunt. If ‘naive’, it is also a highly sophisticated and modern understanding of the texts’ effectivity.

L is right, I think, that the texts’ primary project is to teach us how to live, via the negotiation of ethical scenarios - "these sorts of situations" - that are both fantastic and mundane; and that in this sense the programmes do not adhere to a coherent, overarching moral schema - are "not really setting morals...or what some people would class as morals". L then places others and herself into imaginary domestic situations and into an imaginary relationship with Home and Away. In doing so, she’s explaining to me how the programme works as a resource, a tool - as others might define it, something that is ‘good to think with’ (Mercer, 1988: 57), a technology of the self (Foucault, 1988). Crudely, L is saying, this is the manual - how to live - this is how to use it, and this is how various people, including myself, might use it. And importantly, at the end of her response she notes that it is a good resource, but like any it cannot show or teach its users everything.

Having earlier privileged careers for young women as well as true love and a stable family, in explaining to me how Home and Away works, L now, as a life therapist, advises a ‘stubborn old man’ to learn from the programme - to go and see the world, live life to the full. In this way, the text is aimed at anyone who can recognise and engage with its domestic and everyday scenarios. L is also accurate when she
indicates that one of Home and Away’s primary invitations is to self-transformation. Consistently and in various ways both texts insist that everyone needs advice, everyone can benefit by changing, everyone is in need of repair.

If we look at L’s other responses, what is cohering is an emergent gendered and class-specific identity. As a member of a Scottish working-class household, she clearly shares some of her parents’ values, but is also fashioning herself as a modern, relatively autonomous young woman, skilled in analysing popular entertainments and in self and relationship-management techniques. In this process, the discourses L negotiates are various, as are the ways in which she engages with Home and Away (L did not watch Neighbours). L identifies the text’s general function with ease and accurately. She also finds the programme and some of its excessive characterisations funny (see her response to Alf Stewart under character likes in the recurring findings of the individual interviews - p.214), but when asked to think of them from another perspective can be critical of these same excesses (see L’s thoughts on Alf and Home and Away’s music under findings which did not recur - p.220). In offering these different responses, she does not, I would argue, lose sight of a quite stable sense of herself, or sweepingly give me the response that she thinks I want. Like most of my interviewees, too (if to varying degrees), L notes that if Home and Away is good to learn from, good to laugh at, and good to criticise, it is also good to fantasize with.

If we look under narrative and aesthetic realism in the recurring findings of the individual interviews (p.208), L notes that when she watches Home and Away, "sometimes I feel like I’m there". It is important that L discusses this
fantastic possibility in the context of realism. As various theorists have argued, fantasy and escape are never absolutely distinct from, indeed arguably are a form of realism. They are about real desires, and are sometimes when texts get most real for their readers. (1). However, while **Home and Away** is real here for L because of its fantasy potential, at other points in the interview she uses different criteria to assess its realism. Under referential realism, for example she seems more guided by empiricism. It is arguable, though, that in discussing both the fantastic and the referential, L uses personal experience and broader concepts she has about how to be and how to live. Under referential realism, going to the beach seems real because it is something that I do, something that people here (in L’s home town) do. And under narrative and aesthetic realism (p.208), while **Home and Away**’s fantastic setting may be one of the reasons why L wants to feel like she’s there, she seems to equate the text’s ability to transport her with its realism which in this instance she defines by the recognizability of its characters’ behaviour - "I know people that act like that".

I argued earlier, then, that there is a tendency across my interviews and interviewees to discuss realism in terms of the assessment of characters and their conduct. Frequently, the texts are judged to be real if a character-personality-self is liked and is deemed to have acted/behaved well or appropriately. L exhibits this tendency here, and in other parts of her interview and the recurring findings. She is also here, in her will to transportation, equating realism with desire. And again, because of the various and specific ways in which L responds it would be misguided, I think, to theorise this as interpellation. Indeed, in a characteristically reflexive
move, L at one point in her interview notes that, as one of the ways in which she engages with *Home and Away*, her will to fantasy and desire will only be animated under the right conditions - a romantic scene will only be real if she happens to fancy the male character! (under findings of interest which did not recur in the recurring findings of the individual interviews).

Conclusions

What is obvious from the interviews is that *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* are not only watched and interpreted, they are used. The programmes should be considered as practical and imaginative resources. My interviewees consistently used the programmes to fashion themselves in various ways - as critics of culture and of personal conduct, as young men and women. In their responses, interviewees took up multiple positions; they did indeed, as Bernard Sharratt suggests "think both within and above the flow of the game" (Sharratt, 1980: 290). The positions interviewees adopted, however, must be understood as situated and finite. To use Pierre Bourdieu's acute terms, there was something very original and inevitable about the responses offered to me (Bourdieu, 1990: 57). As I have indicated, frequently the force of respondents' assertions is both remarkable and revealing. It points to the emergence of new and fragile identities, to contradiction and genuine uncertainty, and to the endurance of some familiar senses of self and right behaviour.

Following the arguments I make in chapter 3, *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* and the interviews do seem to function as 'relay points'. Interpreting the texts and the shape of the
moment of the interview, interviewees move across perceptions and experiences of media and culture and of real life. In order to criticize, sometimes destroy the texts, they invoke both heightened versions of life as it really is and ideals of how men and women should be and act. The outdated and irresponsible sexual practices of young men ("he should have known to have worn something") are derided in the same moment that women are objectified ("that's all I watch them for, the cleavage"); women's autonomy is asserted ("that's what I would have done") in the same moment that female sexuality is censured and traditional romance and family life are idealized. Generally, but in the forging of gendered selves more than any, history and social and cultural realities are indeed reconstructed in the moment of their destruction (Gramsci, 1971: 168).

As I note, the selves that interviewees practise frequently are idealized. However, they should not be thought of as in some way false. The choices and possibilities available to respondents in their lived experiences and in their future lives may be considerably more restricted and painful than might be suggested by the positions and selves they confidently took up in the course of the interviews. Such practices are nonetheless part of historical and contemporary realities. The nature of these realities and some of their historical and theoretical contexts will be considered in the following two chapters. Now, though, I want to conclude the analysis of the interviews by referring to Elspeth Probyn's understanding of popular television programmes as technologies of self-government. Probyn's ideas both accurately explain the nature of Home and Away and Neighbours' invitations and anticipate the consideration of Foucauldian theory in the following chapter.
So much of contemporary media and culture, notes Probyn, is concerned with the production and reproduction of the discourses of choice. Such discourses, she argues, are technologies of self, techniques by which we know and govern ourselves, re-imagine ourselves, and within boundaries change ourselves (Probyn, 1993b: 281). These boundaries, says Probyn, are always ideological. At the level of the material and for the majority of people the degree of choice presented by contemporary discourses and representations (Probyn's examples are Murphy Brown, LA Law and Nike advertisements) remains fantastic. However, "we cannot afford to dismiss them as so many chimeras." (ibid., p.282). Programmes like Murphy Brown position and - however minimally or imaginatively - invite viewers to re-position themselves:

"(W)hen I watch a television program like Murphy Brown...I am offered a place in discourse. This position may be quite comfortable, and it allows me to view other discourses...This representation of 'baby without man' can...allow me as I watch to think, or to represent myself, in a number of possible positions: it may allow me to place myself outside of the normalized vision of the institution of the family, or it may reaffirm the discursive strength of that institution. While the representation of Murphy's choice probably does not match up with the structures of most women's lives...it nonetheless potentially has the power to effect changes in the 'feeling' of the lived...(W)hile some of the choices on offer may seem frivolous, they are bound up with larger questions that directly effect the lives of women." (Probyn, 1993b: 282-284).

However much Probyn speaks personally here, and however much her appeal is to women and feminist academics, this, I think, is a useful and accurate way to theorize how it is that Home and Away and Neighbours are engaged with - and is close to how I have theorized this engagement above. It is
how I have suggested my interviewees use the programmes as limited resources; how they weave between popular knowledges and discourses and their actual, lived experiences; how they move in and out of the texts, rejecting some of their representations, reproducing some of their discourses, and wilfully fashioning some small parts of their ideals into broader fantasies.

4. The interview context

Some of the specificities of this study's interviews are worthy of reflection. I will consider these now briefly after some initial qualifications.

I want to look only at those points of interest which can usefully be made separately from a consideration of my research methods, and from the analysis of the interviews 'proper'. If my interviewees responded to me, to the interview context, and (in the case of the group interviews) to each other in particular ways, then these responses neither emerged from single, new origins, nor can be made absolutely distinct from their other responses. All of my interviewees' responses should be considered as discursive and cultural practices with a particular historical genesis. To paraphrase Maurice Bloch, my interviewees' conversations began a long time before I arrived and turned on my tape-recorder (Bloch in Silverstone et al, 1991: 204). The parts of our discussions and exchanges which are important to this study will also, I would argue, be practised, consolidated and renewed after my departure from interviewees' classrooms and homes.
Considerable attention has been paid in recent years to the status of qualitative interview transcripts and to the role of the researcher. The authenticity or truth-value of transcripts has been questioned, as has the power-relation between researcher and researched. As Moores has indicated, while frequently timely and valuable, such criticism can sometimes present its own problems (Moores, 1993: 64ff). There is a danger that critiques highlighting transcripts' illusions will neglect both the partial and discursive nature of all representations, and what may be the more important substantial findings of a given study. As various researchers have argued, while we must be sure of our methods and able to distinguish between substantial and incidental findings, the search in studies of this nature for unmotivated methods and unmediated responses is misguided as well as doomed (McRobbie, 1982: 51; Frazer, 1987: 412; Buckingham, 1991: 229).

The questions I asked and my behaviour, and my interviewees' responses and the positions they took up were always to be "informed by the historical moment we inhabit(ed)" (McRobbie, 1982: 48). In each interview, I introduced the broad parts of Home and Away and Neighbours' representations and discourses which I considered to be of greatest interest to the study in as open a fashion as possible. Unprovable as it is, I would argue that if the same broad practice had been conducted by virtually any researcher, then similar patterns of response would have emerged.

This said, of course my interviewees responded to me in particular ways. When and whether this was to do with my class, gender, age, accent, dress et cetera is difficult to untangle. Further, while I was always in a privileged position as the interviewer, the precise nature of the power
dynamic shifted within and especially across interviews. In group pilot interview 2, for example, interviewees quickly 'read' me and the project as something that could be responded to in an assertive and informal manner. In group interview 1A, though, I was responded to more as an adult teacher-figure (one interviewee going so far as to put his hand up inadvertently). Both of these groups were of mixed gender and broadly the same age and class.

With hindsight, I am aware that to get my interviewees to express as much of their thoughts and ideas as possible I had to exhibit a range of competencies. This range was more important than, singularly, my class, age, ethnicity or gender. In none of these was I guaranteed a 'oneness', as Angela McRobbie puts it, with my respondents (ibid., p.52). That is, just because, for instance, I was a man in an all-male group, this did not guarantee a high degree of cultural sharing. The range of competency extended across: knowledge of the two programmes in question; knowledge of British television and popular media; knowledge of life and thought in urban and suburban Scotland; knowledge of family life for teenagers in urban and suburban Scotland; knowledge of Edinburgh; knowledge of school life for Scottish teenagers. Not only are these areas not mutually exclusive, but each is complex in its own right. To know Neighbours and Home and Away is to know, amongst other things, their narratives as well as the discourses surrounding them. Some of these knowledges are immediate and first-hand, others are dependent on memory and second-hand experience. If I could broadly exhibit these knowledges, though, then I could signal at least some degree of sharing with all of my interviewees.
As I have indicated, though, this ability to signal sharing is not, I would argue, what produced the important patterns that emerge in my interview findings. What it more probably did was speed up most of my interviewees' willingness to open up and offer their own opinions and tell their own stories. For the more confident interviewees, it gave them the opportunity to heighten their criticisms, lengthen and embellish their stories, and assert more forcefully particular versions of themselves. Again, I would argue, this was a question of degree rather than qualitative difference. Further, and as I have already noted at stages in the interview analysis, when interviewees in the group interviews strayed too far from what was understood to be true or real they were more often censured and questioned by each other or themselves than by me.

One reason why me as an interviewer or the immediate nature of power relations were not such big questions as is the case in other researchers' studies may be the nature of this project. Sharon Thompson notes that teenage interviewees were the most reluctant subjects that she had ever encountered (Thompson, 1984: 350). Her study's focus, though, was puberty and sexuality, not popular television. Like Thompson, David Buckingham found that his young male interviewees had difficulty discussing topics that shed light on their gendered or sexual selves (Buckingham, 1993: 103ff). Buckingham's respondents, however, were only eight years old. And, Valerie Walkerdine's study of one family's interaction with a video tape of the film Rocky II is permeated with questions of class and power (Walkerdine, 1986). There are a host of factors which make Walkerdine's research different from mine. Not least of these is the special interest she takes in her own, shifting class position and the similarities and differences between this,
the representation of class in *Rocky II*, and her understanding of Mr Cole, Walkerdine's primary interviewee's father.

Questions of class, of course, are important to all empirical studies. As Angela McRobbie has indicated, what may change is the nature of those questions (McRobbie, 1982: 48). Walkerdine asks general and very specific questions, about her own history, about a particular text, and about a particular family. Class - as well as gender - is the most pertinent question in all of these, and so is rightly the study's focus. Class is of course not absent from *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*. And, my status as a middle-class academic is important to every part of this research. However, the fact that my interviews focus less (less ostensibly, that is) on class and more on self-management and gendered identities is because of *Neighbours* and *Home and Away's* specific projects and invitations - and because this is an interest that is not coincidentally, but historically shared by my teenage interviewees, and by me.

Indeed, as well as the different nature of our studies, history - the ten years between her study and mine - may be one of the reasons why my interviewees were generally more open or 'skilled' than those of Thompson (1984) regarding questions of gender, self and relationships. Such questions are not only now more central to the projects of *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*. Even in ten years, I would argue, they have come to occupy a larger part, generally, of popular culture and contemporary life. History and the special nature of the texts in question and of this study are also why my respondents defined and fashioned themselves consistently and often explicitly in the course of interviews. This might not have occurred to such an extent
in interviews about... teenagers' use of public transport, but it would still, I think, have been one of these respondents' central practices. As I noted earlier, other researchers have referred to the ways in which interviewees fashion themselves in their discussions of television and in the interview process generally (Leibes and Katz, 1990: 112; and see Buckingham, 1991: 238 and 1993b: 109ff, and Thompson, 1984: 351). As Thompson and Buckingham indicate, this is never a secondary finding or the result only of a particular method (illustrated well by Hogg and Abrams when they pursue this point specifically and in greater detail: Hogg and Abrams, 1988: chapter 6). In this study, though, it is frequently the primary way in which respondents engage with the two programmes and with the interview. This is both because interviewees are in their teenage years - where identity formulation is in a greater state of flux - and because of the study's historical specificities.

In this respect, the self-fashioning practices of my interviewees are historically overdetermined. The same argument is made by McRobbie and Buckingham regarding the gendered nature of their interviewees' responses (McRobbie, 1982: 48; Buckingham, 1991: 242). My interviewees, though, constructed themselves not only in particular gendered ways, but, as I have argued, as experts of particular types - experts in popular aesthetics and experts in the management of self and intimate relations. To use Sharon Thompson's terms, we might think of these knowledges and competencies as the primary organizing principles of my interviewees' discourses (Thompson, 1984: 354). Let us now consider some of the most specific shifts and turns taken during the interviews.

(i) Interviewer as tutor

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David Buckingham has noted how easy it is for young interviewees to identify and respond to adult interviewers as teacher-figures (Buckingham, 1993b: 95). Gladly, though, I did not find myself slipping into the role of tutor or being responded to as a teacher-figure too often. Generally interviewees had plenty to say and were sure of their responses - which does not mean they didn't at times proceed to contradict themselves. It was mostly toward the end of the group interviews that I veered to tutor mode - especially when we discussed broader issues like advertisements and their relation to the programmes, and interviewees' cultural consumption generally. Interviewees here seemed more keen to impress me than at other stages in the interview. When we talked about advertisements and broader issues, rather than asking respondents to expand on an answer I found myself prompting them to think harder. Perversely, it was at these points that respondents gave me some of their least-considered, most received answers. These were brief periods in the group interviews when I wanted to shift power back to the respondents as quickly as I could.

Interviewees' more general cultural consumption was a difficult area to pursue. Partly this was because we had run out of time after exhausting Neighbours and Home and Away. It was also, though, because interviewees seemed unwilling to elaborate upon their other consumption beyond the television and films that made them laugh. A number of interviewees were keen to impress me with their reading habits. They turned me into a teacher, telling me that they liked books that make them think and use their imagination. When I pressed them for specific examples, though, they seemed unwilling or unable to provide me with many or any. I cannot be sure when or whether this was because interviewees
had overshot themselves in their attempts to impress me, or because they felt the presence and policing of their friends (see Moss for examples of this latter tendency: Moss, 1993: 123ff).

As I have said, I do not think that my tutoring role was a particular problem or threat to my main findings; and it did not occur very often. The interview where I found myself taking up the role most stands out as unusual. The respondents in group interview 1A were perhaps the least confident ones I encountered. It is a mixed group of 14 year olds. All of this group's respondents are working-class and from poorer parts of Edinburgh; but so were the interviewees who gave me some of the most sophisticated and reflexive of responses. I had requested a mix of interviewees from the teacher who organised the sessions for me, and I knew that the members of group 1A did not find academic work easy (though, again, the same applies to a number of my group interviewees). This may be one reason why group 1A seemed to heighten what it perceived to be the academic nature of me and the interview.

As I have already noted, at an early point in this interview one of the interviewees put his hand up to answer a question, then remarked on the fact he had done so, embarrassed. In a more interesting twist, one of the respondents turns power back on me, shortly followed by the group deciding to organise its own discussion. Toward the end of the interview, I pursue again what the interviewees might think is the relation between Neighbours and Home and Away and other television programmes/products. I had no particular answer in mind, but was using the question again to try and open up broader themes and relationships. Rather
than encouraging respondents to think hard in an attempt to impress me (one teacherly scenario) though, the strategy led only to frustration (another teacherly scene).

Having asked the question too often after receiving negative replies, interviewee R responds, "But obviously you think there is (a relation between Neighbours and Home and Away and other television), so aren't you going to tell us? 'Cause you've asked us that twice.". R effectively brings me back on course here. Though I then tell the group that it must not think of the interview in that way, I might as well/truthfully have said, you're right, I'm sorry, I have been turning the interview too far toward a lesson.

Having got the group and the interview back on course, though, I then have to respond to the schedule that the group decides to set - explicit at this point, but in fact a tendency throughout this interview (and not of course uncommon to qualitative interviewing generally - see Gray in Moores, 1993: 66). I pursue the question of gender difference in the texts - at a critical distance, implicitly inviting the respondents to do the same. R rejects this question, though, in favour of what she considers to be Neighbours' lack of naturalism (Sky only appears when there is a narrative about her). D then responds to my question, but indirectly. He discusses not how the relationships of the text's characters are organised critically or structurally, but what he thinks will happen (to Alf and Ailsa's relationship) in future narratives - a naive response, from the perspective of Bourdieu (1984). Another member of the group agrees with D's prediction (that Alf and Ailsa will split up), and at this stage he is able to take the discussion in the direction he wants. My question about the similarity of characters across the two programmes is
ignored, and D asks the group to fill him in on the events of the previous night's episode of Home and Away. This gives me an opportunity to enter into the respondents' story - to make some effort after symbolic interaction - and to broaden and to some extent steer the discussion again.

(ii) Dominant interviewees and obvious posturing

Again I am glad to note that it was unusual that any particular interviewee should dominate any of the group interviews. Further, the fact that a very few (I would argue four in all of my group and individual interviews) of my respondents seemed to take up particularly heightened and transparent positions or attitudes is neither surprising nor an incidence of invalid/untrue findings. I will not dwell on these tendencies, but should at least note them.

In group pilot interview 2 (again, the full transcript is available to the reader on request), it is obvious that C (female, 15) is easily the most outspoken, critical and cynical group member. She is also at times very funny, enjoying playing to me and her friends, and is the interviewee who contradicts herself most in this interview. If I had had no knowledge of the programmes, their wider cultural reception, or of C's modus operandi, this interview would have been very short and probably quite painful. My greatest ally in this interview, the person who repeatedly revealed C's sides and made this a more productive interview than it might have been, was C's obviously close friend, L (female, 15). There are numerous points in this interview where L challenges C over the bluntness and inaccuracy of her response. C is clearly bright, but she is too keen, too quick to impress upon me and her friends that she is a sharp
and experienced critic, a strong, autonomous young woman. As I have already noted, she frequently goes well beyond the texts' representations in her efforts to exhibit this.

In this respect, C, in her exchanges with L as much as me, is a valuable informant. As I have argued, she heightens and makes more clear tendencies that are evident across my interviews. My only regret - though it is more of a finding than a regret - is the effect C seemed to have on the two male interviewees in this group. Though I repeatedly tried to bring them into the discussion, they, R (male, 15) in particular, seemed to lack confidence in the presence of the very confident C. At the risk of sounding like a pastoral researcher, R retained a greater critical distance and introduced interesting points and useful counterpoints to C only to be overwhelmed. S (male, 15) would also, I think, have had more to say outwith the company of C, and tended to take the opportunity to play off her in the brand of humour and masculinity he practised.

In only one other interview is there evidence of a dominant respondent. In fact I should say respondents, because in group interview 1B I witnessed a battle for domination between R (female, 13) and S (male, 13). To normalize, S is clearly a 'difficult' pupil. He was one of two interviewees for whom I had to sign a form sheet. From the outset of the interview he sought to gain attention, shock and disrupt. He also, too rarely, gave intelligent, considered responses. S's irreverence was also at times very funny - for example his, "Dae ken whit yi want a beach fir. Yiv already goat one. Granton harbour! It's nice and sunny!". (Needless to say, Granton harbour, near where S lives, is small, cold and very unglamorous.)
What S does here he practised throughout the interview. He deflates what he considers to be the pretension of especially R's fantasies and beliefs. (Immediately prior to S's Dae ken whit..., R fantasises about living near a beach like the one in Summer Bay.) Sometimes this practice was representative of a class clash (S being working to R's middle-class), sometimes a gender clash, sometimes both. I have already referred to examples of these clashes in the analysis above. One of the remarkable features of these contests is how oblivious R seems to S's interruptions. Repeatedly, R continued with her story or explanation in the face of S's shouting and screeching. This she had learned or believed was the best tactic, and all the interviewees were obviously familiar with S's behaviour. Both the female interviewees at stages reprimanded S, told him to be quiet and apologised to me for his conduct. At one quite uncomfortable moment all of the interviewees rounded on S and told him that he too would be going to a "little home", which is how he had just described the detention centre to which Karen (Home and Away) had been sent.

Clearly, then, S's classmates marked him out as special, in need of regulation, disciplining. This, I do not doubt, S was used to, and simultaneously played to/naturalized and resented. On more than one occasion S began to give an intelligent and thoughtful response only either to have the floor taken from him by R (who would gladly have talked about the programmes all day) or to revert to the 'wild' self with which he seemed to feel more comfortable.

In the individual interviews, only two respondents seemed to feel the need to adopt somewhat awkward positions - positions that were frequently contradictory, and which I felt threatened to obscure their otherwise interesting
responses. In interview 4B, M (male, 13) repeatedly was keen to indicate to me his penchant for death, murder and gore and his desire for the violent elimination of particular characters (especially Hannah, Neighbours). M also had a curious attitude toward alcohol. He repeatedly censured most of Neighbours' adult characters for drinking too much, but felt that if the programme was to be realistic then it should show the younger characters drinking more. M also frequently took up positions or views only to remove himself from them when asked by me to elaborate. M was my youngest male individual interviewee and seemed keenest to impress upon me that he had escaped childhood, was worldly-wise. Childhood and naivety were displaced onto others - Neighbours' young characters, others at school or youth club.

If M was at pains to show me his world wisdom, J's (female, 16, individual interview 1B) predominant tone was of someone weary with the world. It may be the case that in this interview more than any that I conducted my age, gender and appearance invited the respondent to adopt or heighten a particular version of themselves. On this I can only speculate. J might have been more willing to drop her street-cred guard had I been female, or older, or more formally dressed. Perhaps not. In any case, I tried hard in this interview to invite J to go beyond her general 'they're so goddamn boring and predictable' posture. My success was limited, and I didn't want to alienate J or guide her toward particular responses. Like all of my interviewees and despite herself, J revealed involvement with the programmes' characters and narratives. And, like all of my interviewees, J was a generous and valuable informant.
Almost all of my interviewees were comedians and storytellers. Some, though, took greater advantage than others of what they saw as an opportunity to tell stories, crack jokes and play to an audience. The programmes and the interviews, again, were used as resources in this respect.

One interviewee stands out in this respect - C (male, 16), in group interview 2B. This was a long and very funny interview that was only stopped by the breaktime bell sounding. It is arguable that C dominated this interview. More accurately, I think, he set the tone in a quite positive fashion. The transcript reveals, too, that not only did all of this group's interviewees make a good contribution, but that as well as being entertaining C was a remarkably open and candid respondent. From the outset, C openly admitted to being a fan of the programmes. He loved them, their comic and romantic narratives, their settings, their romantic and melodramatic music. He said that he loved to sing Home and Away's signature tune, and on more than one occasion sang it and Neighbours' music to the group - to its delight. C also loved to tell funny and embellished stories about his home life.

We could describe C as open, warm and animated; at a stretch, camp and feminine. He succeeded in putting everyone at ease immediately, and in encouraging them to open up. I am not sure whether this leans toward contradiction or essentialism, but we should also note that C is an Italian-Scot; if C looks very Italian, I am not sure what this means; he looks very feminine; he looks very masculine; his parents are Italian; he lives in a poor part of Edinburgh; he rushes from school either to train as a boxer,
or to work in a fish and chip shop; in the chip shop, he works with other large, male Italian-Scots, some of whom box; the chip shop's boss won't let C watch *Home and Away* when he's working; he tries to anyway.

C is working-class and boxes. His masculinity, though, seems to stand in distinction to the male interviewees in group 4A - an all-male, all-working class group. We can only speculate as to whether C would have responded differently if he had been in an all-male group. He seemed unaffected by one other male's presence. Perhaps the interviewees in 4A would have responded differently apart, or in the company of C. Perhaps C's Italiananness is important; perhaps it is not. Anyway, for the members of 4A, *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* are 'for lassies', 'something that lassies are intae', despite the fact they all watch the programmes most days.

One of the members of 4A, M (male, 15), also prefers a displaced type of folktale, compared to C's more personalised versions. Advertisements fascinate M. He loves watching them and would rather go to the toilet when the programme is on than the advertisement. And...he kens this lassie. "She doesnae watch any telly, but she watches the adverts. Her dad went and taped all the adverts for her. She just sat and watched adverts all day on this video tape.". M loves to tell a story. Everyone knows the adverts are better then the programmes, don't they? And it's always someone else's relation to television which is abnormal.

In all-female group 3A, S (15), like C, tells a story about her home life. Her point, though, is a political one. After I broaden the discussion to one about interviewees' own lives, S and the group decide that gender relations are changing, but that the programmes' producers and their own
parents still have something to learn: "My brother's only twelve years old, and he comes home about half an hour late, or something, and it's all, 'Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry', et cetera, et cetera. And he gives these totally weak excuses that you can see through, and my dad's like, 'Oh, it's alright'. I really get annoyed. I mean, I try and say anything about it, and it's just, 'Things are changing', et cetera, et cetera."

S here is a storyteller and a critic. Her story strengthened group 3A's female solidarity. To a similar effect, later in the interview the group came together as comedians. All the members said that they enjoyed reading the problem pages of Just Seventeen, Ms, et cetera because they were so funny. To much hilarity, they all mimicked the style and content of the problem pages. The pages were so predictable in this respect, the group said, that they obviously couldn't be sent in by real people.

In her study of teenage girls' consumption of Jackie, Elizabeth Frazer received a similar response. Her interviewees said that Jackie's problem pages didn't feature real problems, and that the answers offered were pathetic and of no use (Frazer, 1987: 419). Interestingly, however, Frazer's respondents didn't mimic the problem pages' style and content orally. Instead, and unwittingly, says Frazer, her interviewees aped the pages' form when she asked them to write what they considered to be more serious and useful problems and answers. Frazer argues that this is because of the persuasiveness or power of what she calls a discourse register, in this case the conventional form of the problem page. Despite their desire to discuss 'serious' problems, her interviewees "couldn't think 'writing problems' outside
I cannot tell whether the members of group 3A, despite their mockery, would have been seduced by problem pages' conventional form had I asked them to write out some problems and answers. I strongly suspect not. The main reason for this suspicion is the consistent surety of 3A's (and most of my female interviewees') expertise as autonomous young women. Frazer notes that her interviewees switched in and out of a 'feminist' discourse register. Depending on what was being discussed, they moved from asserting themselves as right (feminist)-thinking young women, to reproducing the sexist or reductionary values of the tabloid press (Frazer, 1987: 423). With the exception of one interviewee's attack on Sophie (Home and Away - which in fact occurred in group interview 3A; see my analysis of the attack, above), I would argue that my female interviewees were generally consistent in their retention of what Frazer understands to be a feminist discourse or position. They moved across discourses, frequently discussing aspects of the programmes in familiar ways. As I have noted, however, they were also at points quite conservative in the positions they took up. Most of my female interviewees, though, consistently were keen both to exhibit their ability to spot a media convention and to be critical of any perceived gender inequality - even, as I have argued, when empirically or ostensibly there was none.
Footnotes

1. I have already referred to Richard Dyer's theory of entertainment and utopia (Dyer, 1981), which is certainly applicable to L's desire for transportation here. Donald and Mercer usefully argue, I think, that for a full historical and theoretical understanding of realism, escapism and realism might best be conceived of together, not apart (Donald and Mercer, 1981: 70). And, Valerie Walkerdine provides what I think are some of the most interesting and sophisticated ideas regarding the relation between fantasy and reality, and how this relation is expressed in media consumption and in the empirical research process generally (see Walkerdine, 1986 and 1993).
Chapter 6: The genesis of contemporary practices of self-government

This chapter is a selective genealogy of contemporary practices in self-government. The chapter maps out historical developments in a generally chronological fashion, but resists the construction of a linear narrative. The important continuities identified are thematic and theoretical. The theorists to whom reference is made generally share an understanding of how self-government has become a normalized practice in the modern period. The chapter supports and extends the arguments of the previous ones that the practices exhibited by Home and Away and Neighbours and interviewees must be understood as part of a broad, interrelated network of meaning. In mapping out important historical parts of this network, the chapter shows some of the conditions which have made the common-sense practices of the programmes and interviewees possible.

The chapter begins with a consideration of Foucauldian history and theory. This is an introduction to a distinctive way of theorizing modernity and the way in which government, power and knowledge are legitimated in modern societies. The examples of entertainment, consumerism and science which follow and constitute the major part of chapter 6 are specific illustrations of the broad process identified by Foucault. Section 1 of the chapter also considers some specific ancient examples of self-government. Although practised to different social and cultural effect, in basis the techniques considered have been remarkably enduring; and it is argued that they are renewed by programmes like Home and Away and Neighbours.
Chapter 6 is as much illustrative as the extension of an argument. It also consolidates some of the important theoretical points made earlier: that particular, mundane practices are a constitutive part of, not the result of, broader social relations; and the importance of the interrelation between scientific and entertainment, formal and informal, public and private spheres. In its latter stages, the chapter also points to the increase in what is a broadly modern tendency. This anticipates arguments about and examples of recent practices in self-government which are considered in chapter 7.

By way of an introduction to Foucauldian history, I want to make a brief return to the problem page and the work of Angela McRobbie. In a revisionary move, McRobbie draws briefly on the ideas of Michel Foucault. She refers to Janice Winship's analysis of problem pages. Winship argues that problem pages are ahistorical, anti-feminist and highly individualistic (McRobbie, 1991: 162). These are, says McRobbie, similar conclusions to the ones she reached in her own, earlier analysis of Jackie. Such arguments, McRobbie now believes, tend to detach problem pages from the context of their reception, as well as from the broader historical processes of which they are a part. As a consequence, they are afforded a function too singularly repressive.

Instead, says McRobbie, following Foucault's work on the history of sexuality and Stephen Heath's study The Sexual Fix (Heath, 1982), we should understand problem pages as one element of the great proliferation of discourses about sexuality occurring towards the end of the nineteenth century. Such discourses made previously private intimacies
and modes of behaviour part of the public domain. As such they functioned as powerful regulative, normative mechanisms for social relations and new forms of popular imagining. A part of culture appeared more open to participation, a site of possibility:

"Witness, confession, testimony...We should all narrate, recount, tell ourselves...(T)he individual learns his or her individuality precisely through this ceaseless telling and re-telling of personal failings and anxieties and dilemmas cast in the form of a series of never-ending stories. The person who seeks a way out of his or her problem has already learnt how to express it in such a way as to conform to the requirements of the genre." (McRobbie, 1991: 164, drawing here on Heath's The Sexual Fix: Heath, 1982).

Here, I think, McRobbie is beginning to map out some useful ways of conceiving of problem pages. Firstly, problem pages are not part of a network of discourses which explains, which is about separate phenomena - sexuality, intimate relations. Rather, following Foucault, those discourses are actually constitutive of new social realities; realities invented and reinvented in the very processes of their organisation and articulation. And, as I have noted, in distinction to Winship and some other critics of problem pages, rather than monolithic or one-way, McRobbie understands institutional power here to be multiple; to be continually reproducing social relations at a number of levels. To use Anthony Giddens' terms, power is understood not as a singularly constraining force, but as a more generally mobilising phenomenon (Giddens, 1992: 18).

Also in distinction to Winship, McRobbie argues that the discursive apparatus of which problem pages are a part does not oppose itself to feminism, but does indeed - at a common
sense level at least - mobilise feminism, recruit it (continuing the military metaphor) to its cultural project (McRobbie, 1991: 165). This mobilisation, I think, is also highly evident in *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*. So, although McRobbie examines the specific genre of the problem page (and Heath the letters/confession pages of soft porn magazines), she understands this as being one of a number of cultural sites where variously originated discourses about sexuality, femininity and identity meet; meet to affirm and regenerate, reinscribe quite specific modes of thinking and acting.

McRobbie concludes the section of her study of greatest interest to us here by arguing that in the 1980s problem pages provided the strongest definitions of teenage femininity: "It is here, rather than in the realm of romance that female identity is given shape." (ibid.). Having begun to articulate the importance of the combined force of multiple related discourses, McRobbie here, I think, affords the problem page too great and singular an influence. In fairness, it is specifically with *Jackie* and *Just Seventeen* that her interest lies. I want now to consider a number of historical discourses which I believe surface in *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*, giving these texts their characteristic forms.

(i) Foucault's lead

I referred earlier to Christine Gledhill's suggestion that as textual critics we must ask what are "the conditions and possibilities of reading"? (Gledhill, 1988: 74). This, Foucault argues, is the question we must ask ourselves when analysing modern forms of self-government - under which
conditions has it been possible for them to emerge and operate? (Foucault, 1978: 95). Gledhill's understanding - which I follow - of texts and their consumption as cultural practices is also Foucauldian. It is the practices of government which are of greatest interest to Foucault in his later work - the practices of what are conventionally understood as public institutions and the practices of individuals.

Foucault's emphasis on the interrelation between macro and micro forms of government and power is indicative of refinements, if not changes, in his thinking. Foucault himself makes this admission:

"Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how the individual acts upon himself, in the technology of the self." (Foucault, 1988: 19).

Following Discipline and Punish (1977), Foucault is as interested in how it is that whole populations are governed as in the specific apparatus of individual domination. For Foucault the modern state is peculiar in its synthesis of "individualising and totalising forms of power" (Foucault, in Dean, 1994: 180, and see Gordon, 1987: 297ff). The development of the politically rational state and the increasing reflection on the secular art of government, Dean argues (following Foucault),

"is consequent upon two fundamental processes: first, the crisis of feudalism in the sixteenth century and the long devolution of authority away from the estates onto territorial, administrative states of absolutism; secondly, the dynamics of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, that put into question notions of pastorship and salvation by
what might be called the politics of the confessional. The former provides a context for a problematising of the political obligation of individuals freed from traditional dependencies, hierarchies and loyalties; the latter, the problematisation of the government of the soul, of the individual. The art of secular government is thus raised in the context of a revival of neo-Stoicism, and Foucault can remark that never before nor since, has government been so associated with the government of the self and others, of rulers and ruled." (Dean, 1994: 184).

According to Gordon, Foucault's major historical thesis is the distinctiveness of modern societies and the modern state's attempt to combine two specific forms of power:

"the mode of the polis, structured according to principles of universality, law, citizenship and the public life, and the mode of what Foucault calls 'pastoral power', which instead accords an absolute priority to the exhaustive and individualized guidance of singular existences." (Gordon, 1987: 297).

For Foucault, neo-liberal, secular societies' successful achievement of this synthesis makes them both distinct from traditional or Orthodox Eastern societies - which integrate church and state and uphold the image of the Christly emperor (ibid., p.307) - and the exercisers of a particularly potent, 'demonic' form of government: "Our societies proved to be really demonic since they happened to combine those two games - the city-citizen game and the shepherd-flock game - in what we call the modern state." (Foucault, in Dean, 1994: 185). (1).

As Colin Gordon indicates, in the modern nation state and political economy, government as husbandry and householding is combined with entrepreneurship, shepherdry with
stock-rearing (Gordon, 1987: 309). As Foucault shows, though, pastoral care - however colonized by Christianity and shifting in its aims - has been an enduring and relatively constant practice of government (Foucault, in Dean, 1994: 208-209). Ostensibly, pastoral care is the primary project of Neighbours and especially Home and Away (with Pippa being the emblematic shepherdess of wayward souls). Foucault's work indicates, however, that the programmes' ideal practices and settings are not exclusive from but exist alongside and in relation to broader forms of state and economic government.

The state, argues Foucault, is no more than "the mobile effect of a multiple regime of governmentality" (Foucault, in Gordon, 1987: 304). Mobility and dispersion, I want to argue, are crucial to an understanding of how government is effected in modern societies - of how we are directed to, not coerced into, particular forms of conduct (Dean, 1994: 177). The modern welfare state and liberal economies disperse power by opening up what are understood as spaces of freedom and choice:

"Neoliberalism is a peculiar art of political invention that at once problematises the state by an invocation of choice as it multiplies the domains of life restructured according to the norms of a market." (Dean, 1994: 193).

In welfare states, Foucault notes, the tension between pastoral care and civic government becomes especially acute (Foucault, in Dean, 1994: 209). Efforts after resolution frequently revolve around the notion of individuals free to choose. Arguably, the notion of a self-determining, active citizen has become increasingly central to welfare and
consumerist discourses, and we shall examine the contemporary speeding-up of this process in following sections.

Clearly, one of the most effective ways of mobilizing modern forms of government is through the articulation of the new modes of subjectivity on which they are dependent. The notion of how to be, how to live - the ethics of self-government - is of increasing interest to Foucault in his latter writings. Self-determination as a mode of government, Foucault indicates, is by no means unique to modern societies. While in Plato and classical Greece care of the self and the exhibition of a beautiful existence/life was directly linked to one's ability to be ruler, in late Stoicism self-government was tied for the first time to ontology and the idea of one's rational choice as a human (Foucault, 1984b: 348ff). In fact, Foucault's research reveals that the techniques by which we govern ourselves are historically remarkably constant. His aim, though, is not to catalogue the longevity of moral prescriptions; this, he says, would only show "the poverty and monotony of interdictions" (Foucault, in Dean, 1994: 196). Rather, Foucault wants to show how familiar techniques of self-government are renewed and put to new work, as it were, on contemporary projects. (2). That is to say, he wants to show the 'present-relevance' of ancient and historical practices (Dean, 1994: 199).

Given that Foucault's analyses of the history of sexuality and technologies of self-government focus on antiquity, we should perhaps ask, how relevant? This question, as Mitchell Dean indicates, remains open to debate (ibid., pp.199-203). (3). Generally, I want to follow Dean (and Foucault) in arguing that "there is no point at which the quest for
intelligibility ceases." (Dean, 1994: 203). Specifically, Dean and Foucault make some suggestive (not causal) links between the ancient and modern periods. Dean quotes Deleuze who sees in the renewal of ancient techniques something understandable if not entirely rational:

"(I)n moral matters we are still weighed down with old beliefs which we no longer even believe, and we continue to produce ourselves as a subject on the basis of old modes which do not correspond to our problems." (Deleuze, in Dean, 1994: 202).

More directly, Dean asks whether there might not be "a feint resonance" between the 'crises in subjectivation' in late-ancient and contemporary times (Dean, 1994: 202). Indeed, says Dean, the central relevance of Foucault's later work "may be a certain diagnosis of contemporary life, how to construct oneself ethically in the face of the failing assurance provided by moral codes, generalisable norms, or universal values." (ibid., p.199).

The same suggestion is made by Foucault:

"What strikes me is that in Greek ethics people were concerned with their moral conduct, their ethics, their relations to themselves and to others much more than with religious problems. For instance, what happens to us after death? What are the gods? Do they intervene or not? - these are very, very, very unimportant problems for them, and they are not directly related to ethics, to conduct. The second thing is that ethics was not related to any social - or at least to any legal - institutional system. For instance, the laws against sexual misbehavior were very few and not very compelling. The third thing is that what they were worried about, their theme, was to constitute a kind of ethics which was an aesthetics of existence.

"Well, I wonder if our problem nowadays is not, in a way, similar to this one, since most of us no longer believe that ethics is founded in religion, nor do we want a legal
system to intervene in our moral, personal, private life. Recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so on. I am struck by this similarity of problems." (Foucault, 1984b: 343).

With this in mind - rather than in any effort after scientific credibility or historical legitimacy - I want to consider two of the specific techniques discussed by Foucault. They are, I think, practices renewed and given new purpose by various parts of popular culture; by especially Home and Away and Neighbours; and by my interviewees.

The first technique or technology of self-government was known by the ancient Greeks as hypomnemata. Foucault notes that hypomnemata should not be mistaken for intimate diaries or for the accounts of spiritual experiences found in later Christian literature (Foucault, 1984b: 364). Neither is it a form of writing functioning only as an aid to memory. The practice's place in Greek culture, Foucault argues, is more important than this. He compares the introduction of hypomnemata into Greeks' lives, as a new technology, to the introduction of the computer into modern societies (ibid., p.363).

Literally, hypomnemata were public registers, account books, individual notebooks into which one entered quotations, fragments of works, examples and actions which one had witnessed or read about, and personal reflections on these events (p.364). Their important function, Foucault argues,
was not simply remembering. Rather, it was the access they gave to the truth and the way in which they administered and constantly reconstituted oneself:

"What seems remarkable to me is that these new instruments were immediately used for the constitution of a permanent relationship to oneself - one must manage oneself as a governor manages the governed, as a head of an enterprise manages his enterprise, a head of household manages his household. This new idea that virtue consists essentially in perfectly governing oneself...is something very important which we will find for centuries..." (Foucault, 1984b: 363).

Foucault considers hypomnemata to be techniques, practical exercises by which one learns the art of living. It does not matter, he says, whether they are written or oral texts. They constitute training in self-management, and in this respect are very similar to the Stoics' askesis. Askesis, Foucault notes, played a major part across Greek culture prior to the introduction of hypomnemata (Foucault, 1984b: 364, and Foucault, 1988: 35). Askesis took on various forms. In a number of these, the trainee, as it were, puts himself in a situation in which "he can verify whether he can confront events and use the discourses with which he is armed." (Foucault, 1988: 35). These situations may be imaginary or real. The imaginary exercises are meditative - melete. They entail the trainee imagining how he would react in a given situation - "How would I react?" (ibid., p.36). The real exercises are training in a real or artificially induced situation - gymnasia.
As Foucault notes, the substance of the exercises varied, sometimes contentiously, across Greek culture (p.37); but they remained consistent as techniques of self-government. There were also a variety of other techniques between the poles of melete and gymnasia:

"Epictetus provides the best example of the middle ground between these poles. He wants to watch perpetually over representations, a technique which culminates in Freud... (The second of the) two metaphors important from his point of view...(is) the money changer, who verifies the authenticity of currency, looks at it, weighs and verifies it. We have to be money changers of our own representations of our thoughts, vigilantly testing them, their metal, weight, effigy." (Foucault, 1988: 37-38).

While any attempt to plot a direct lineage between these techniques and the cultural practices of Home and Away and Neighbours and my interviewees would be misguided, the connections, I think, are obvious. The major difference or discontinuity between these ancient techniques and those of Home and Away and Neighbours and my interviewees is that the former are not integrated into a modern nation state and mode of government - they cannot be understood as playing a key part in the simultaneously individualising and totalising process I have described above.Crudely, they are not popular practices. While the Stoics in particular raised self-knowledge to a universal principle, it remained a principle realizable only to a small elite (Foucault, 1984b: 341).

In the modern period, and in the wake of religious doctrine and duty, Foucault regards the social sciences as key players in the broad process by which self-knowledge becomes a common sense practice of government; by which self-analysis becomes a popular art - a popular ars erotica
The direct impact of the social sciences and their relation to welfare state and familial practices is most productively examined by Nikolas Rose (Rose, 1989) - and we shall consider Rose's study shortly. Before doing so, though, I want to look at some early forms of modern popular entertainment. These forms' relation to *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* might seem deceptively clear. In examining them first, however, I am not suggesting that their impact on contemporary entertainments is more direct than the modern social sciences. Rather, it is science's close - sometimes indistinguishable - relationship with popular culture that I wish to emphasise. Following Foucault, and particularly with the help of Colin Mercer, I also want to argue that popular entertainments should be understood as modern forms of government - modes of government that work to normalize both broad and intimate social relations.

(ii) Popular entertainments

In his study of what was widely read before the emergence of the novel, Paul Hunter shows the importance of what he calls the Guide Tradition (Hunter, 1990: chapter 10). Cheap and popular guides, aimed first at young people and families but soon at all sections of the British populace, played a key part both in mapping out the norms for modern life and in establishing a cultural and imaginative foundation for the growth of the novel. The guides to an extent inherited a tradition of aristocratic courtesy books. However, by the turn of the seventeenth century their influences were more diverse and their impact much wider than this. The great proliferation of guides offering advice on all manner of social and domestic conduct at the start of the eighteenth
century, argues Hunter, is indicative of the large section of London's population - especially the young - which felt themselves dislocated from traditional systems of guidance:

"Here is graphic evidence that new practical needs were arising in a culture beset by previously unforeseen problems and populated by people who lacked the resources of traditional lore and crafts that had been passed from generation to generation. Print culture took over functions that the oral culture could no longer handle, becoming a vehicle for social change as well as a measure of it." (Hunter, 1990: 253).

The break up of rural communities and families, notes Hunter, was seen by moralists as a major threat to 'family religion' - "the fountainhead of personal ethical conduct" (ibid., p.266). The guides met both concerns for and the sense that individuals - even women - had greater choices and responsibilities. Though the guides, especially the most practical ones, frequently pretended to moral neutrality, their puritan didacticism was generally plain (p.253). However, the most popular writers - for example, Defoe and Steele - quickly learned that the same basic ethical advice and techniques were applicable across religious, economic and practical contexts and a variety of callings/occupations (Hunter, 1990: 254). They were frequently as much about how to be as what to do.

Hunter notes that most of the guides were aimed at the young, especially those still in parental care (ibid., p.261). They stressed the important life choices facing young people and the vital part parents had to play in guiding the vulnerable: "(Y)outh is for the most part flexible, and easily warps into a crookedness" (Hunter, 1990: 271, quoting The Ladies Calling, 1673). As this title
suggests, not only were youth guides generally indistinguishable from family guides (designed, like *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*, to be read by all), women were the target market and implied readers of both. Indeed young women were most often addressed directly by guides - femininity and youth being conflated, jointly understood as vulnerable (p. 270). As Hunter notes, while the guides reached out to a generation of women faced with a range of new circumstances and choices, generally this did not result from a sense of equality (Hunter, 1990: 269-270). Women, rather, were understood and appealed to as under-utilized resources and supports - for developing urban economies and for the vulnerable young.

Two related ways in which the guides tried to meet changing social and domestic patterns - and some loss of faith in 'family religion' - were through the mixing of generic forms and a growing interest in example over precept (Hunter, 1990: 267-268). Writers like Defoe, in anticipation of his novels, increasingly mixed ethical instruction with dramatic pleasure. This, argues Hunter, should not be understood simply as a logical process from the ethical instruction of guides to the narrative art of novels. The two forms' relation is closer and more complicated than that:

"(T)hey (the changing guides) are not experiments toward independent narrative; they exist, just as do early novels, within a governing ideological intention that subordinates fable - however interesting - to moral. It is not that there is an evolution toward independence on the part of narrative that had begun as ethical illustration, but rather an increasing anxiety that moral efficacy had to be engineered in ways that used every possible vehicle. Such updated didacticism reflects the desires of both readers and writers to find something beyond precept and discourse, something that acknowledged and challenged the full complexity and resonance of modern life." (ibid.)
The power of paradigm and example, notes Hunter, was one of the four consistent features of the guides which influenced the direction taken by the novel (the other three being: warnings about idleness, concerns about the ethics of contemporary leisure, and the need - for the benefit of individuals and society - to practise continual self-examination) (p.274). Emphasis on the merits of human example as a moral force, notes Hunter, is almost ubiquitous in the guides that preceeded the novel (Hunter, 1990: 284). And while the distinction between precept and example was frequently blurred, the guides' authors insisted that the latter provided the most persuasive medium (ibid., and see note 15, p.397). The guides' mundane examples had two functions (which I would argue remain two of the purposes of texts like *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*): "to suggest the significance of human examples in real life, and to dramatize how written materials could, in effect, substitute for human examples." (Hunter, 1990: 282).

Again, like the guides generally, examples were understood to be especially valuable in the tutoring of the young, and guides' authors sought to impress this upon parents and guardians (ibid.). Guides in fact succeeded in elevating the importance of mundane examples to a principle of human conduct. As Hunter notes, in so doing guides not only had a profound effect on the novel, but also worked in a complicated and sometimes very close relation with science. An established part of theology and philosophy, Hunter notes that Casuistry in the Interregnum - "when England had to confront what individuation had made of tradition and authority" (p.291) - became a potent and persuasive cultural
force; it began "its journey into the popular ken as a way of interpreting the ordinary and the everyday" (Hunter, 1990: 289).

Following the Puritan Interregnum, Casuistry became increasingly interested in the specifics of the individual case. Abhorred by purists, this turn to 'situational ethics', Hunter argues, played an important part in the formation of the cultural consciousness out of which the novel grew:

"The traditional purpose of casuistry was to examine how moral and ethical generalities apply to specific circumstances. When, in the mid-seventeenth century, it begins to apply its method to highly particular circumstances and specific situations within a context of changing assumptions about human nature, it becomes a version of the developing 'individualism' upon which novels are dependent. Casuistry's relationship to Guides is imprecise; both are manifestations of the intense cultural concern with behavioral decisions, and both are most often pointed toward the young. But if Guides are primarily horatory, intended to provide direction for a generality of circumstances, casuistical treatises wrestle with issues, focusing not on general rules or patterns of guidance but the ethical shading of a particular instance. The growing dependence of ethical theory upon a case-study method represents a crucial chapter in cultural change and helps explain innovations in the new literature that grows out of that change." (ibid., p.290).

Hunter notes that by the 1690s, and despite protests of abuse from purists, the place of a highly situationist version of casuistry in popular culture was secured. It became a staple of not only guides but the popular press. A key figure in this process was John Dunton. Dunton, we might say, initiated a modern form of the classical practice of askesis (see above, and Foucault, 1988: 35). The invitation he makes to the readers of his Athenian Mercury is similar
to those I have argued are made to viewers of Home and Away and Neighbours. As such the late-seventeenth century Athenian Mercury, I would argue, is a relatively direct antecedent of not only Neighbours and Home and Away, but of the nineteenth and twentieth century forms - especially problem pages - to which I referred in chapter 2 and at the beginning of this chapter. Dunton prepared the ground for what Hunter notes became an extraordinarily popular mode of interactive entertainment journalism in the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In his series, "Thought I'll not exchange for Fifty Guineas", he invited readers to send in their 'cases' - that is, accounts of their own particular ethical dilemmas and those of their friends (Hunter, 1990: 292). And importantly, in a consideration of the genesis of Home and Away and Neighbours' projects, Hunter indicates that the common perception that specific circumstances alter cases spread well beyond popular journalism and theological debate. Casuistry's changing and increasingly subjectivist principles were absorbed across seventeenth and eighteenth century culture, not least in educational theory:

"Guide books, for example, recognized that individual needs and circumstances had to be regarded in putting into practice the ethical advice they offered. More and more, Guides for Parents and Families emphasize how important it is to discover the particular constitutions and dispositions of children as they grow and develop." (ibid.).

This, I would argue, is an important part of the logic of Neighbours and Home and Away, and, we will consider, remains a central tenet of twentieth century social science and welfare discourses.
Popular guides, Hunter notes, also stressed the importance of daily, detailed self-examination (p. 287). In this they were directly influenced by seventeenth century theology. Again, though, with the help of the guides the practice became more secular and generalized. It also, I would argue, represents one version of the way in which the classical practice of hypomnemata is renewed (see above, and Foucault, 1984: 364). However easy it may be to caricature the guides' injunctions now, Hunter says, when properly practised self-examination entailed subtle and close scrutiny:

"(I)t had to involve a detailed 'reading' of moments and the positing of patterns they might represent. In its extension into diary keeping, the practice took on dimensions that profoundly affected the form and articulation of introspection in the novel." (Hunter, 1990: 287).

Prior to the growth of novels other kinds of writing met and reproduced modern, felt anxieties and recommended self-examination as a sensible practice. However,

"only novels used the cultural anxieties to full creative advantage, presenting themselves as exemplary instances of self-examination that turned their readers' leisure to account by becoming practical (and moral) guides for life. Their direct engagement with the reader, on the engagement of Guides which similarly began from a concern with the choices made by youths, enabled them to claim an affective relationship that fulfilled readers' needs exactly where Guides worried most about their vulnerability." (ibid., p. 288).

Hunter's study valuably introduces us not only to some of the novel's progenitors but to how particular knowledges and desires - a particular cultural consciousness - are formed with the help of popular literature in the modern period.
The novel and the guide are interrelated cultural practices and must be understood as part of a wider - scientific, religious, ethical and educational - network of knowledge and imagining. To this extent, Hunter opposes himself to dominant modes of literary and cultural analysis and asks that we revise the ways in which the study of literature and popular culture is approached. In this he is joined by Colin Mercer. In his study of eighteenth and nineteenth century melodrama and popular fiction Mercer shares Hunter's understanding of entertainment as one part of the way in which modernity is ushered in and made sense of. He extends Hunter's interest in the relationship between science and popular culture. Mercer also develops his ideas within the Foucauldian framework with which this chapter is introduced. That is, he theorizes entertainment as a key form of both private and public government and knowledge.

Mercer notes that a large part of the history of entertainment concerns itself with claims to address formative political entities such as 'the people' (Mercer, 1986: 180). For example, early newspapers, as much entertainments as news sources, played a crucial part in the modern conceptualizing of the 'public', its opinions and the new spheres in which it operated (ibid., p.181 - Mercer acknowledges the contributions of Richard Sennett and Jurgen Habermas in this regard). Newspapers, in this respect, Mercer argues, should be regarded as emergent, modern techniques of governmentality.

Newspapers began, in very particular ways, to delimit urban populations and the cities and domestic spaces in which they lived. Along with novels, they also worked as 'mechanisms' for imagining the modern nation (p.181 - Mercer drawing here on Benedict Anderson's influential *Imagined Communities*, 312
Indeed, popular entertainments were one way in which the 'problem' of the modern nation was solved. As Mercer notes (in a later essay, but in the same vein), the problem of national security presented itself at the same time that "the public became an object too extensive for the conception of men." (Mercer, 1988: 54). Public observers, the personae of eighteenth century literary journalism, and an emergent body of cultural entrepreneurs, Mercer notes, set in motion a train of new techniques for knowing and communicating that was to meet the imperatives of this modern, felt anxiety. A broad investment was made in 'the people' as something to be talked to and about; they were, as Mercer puts it (drawing on an essay by Peter Brooks), 'storied', endowed with narrative potential: "A true knowledge of the world is gained only by conversation, and the manners of every rank must be seen in order to be known." (Fielding in Tom Jones, quoted by Mercer, ibid.).

Accordingly, Mercer forcefully argues that our task should be to map out the ethnographic conditions of entertainment's emergence. We need "a cartography which is not determined either by the empirical contours of high culture or by the customary procedures of an aesthetic criticism grounded in the concept of representation." (Mercer, 1988: 53) The central concern, notes Mercer, of writers like Johnson and Addison in the eighteenth century was an ethnographic one. Their focus was on the minutiae of the relations and behaviour of diverse sections of the public; and on how it was that the gentleman of letters was to interpretively master modern urban conditions and forge a new relation, a particular 'contract' with his reading public (ibid.). The success of popular journalism, feuilleton, new forms of novel writing and melodrama was backed, notes Mercer, by 'an immense cultural hinterland' (a tutelary complex, by the
term of Rose, 1989 and Donzelot, 1979) of pamphlets, broadsheets and articles which drew variously on physiognomical, medico-moral, pathological, topographical, zoological and ethnographic practices and discourses (Mercer, 1988: 55). Important to melodrama and various forms of popular fiction, physiognomies, handbooks of gesture, action and conduct proved especially popular with new reading publics (ibid.).

Mercer argues that the dominant ways of analysing and historicising popular literature and artistic forms have provided their own, internal points of reference. The same aesthetico-moral questions are posed and criteria reproduced. Instead, he says, we need to think of the ways in which diverse cultural forms combine and act as 'relay points' in the construction of a 'mentality' - a particular way for thinking about social conditions in a given historical period (Mercer, 1988: 55ff). This, says Mercer, is the achievement of Louis Chevalier in his study Labouring Classes and Dangerous Classes (1973). Instead of an aesthetic evaluation, Chevalier produces a 'demographic' social history of popular culture in nineteenth century Paris. Mercer is especially interested in Chevalier's analysis of the way that medical topographies, statistical surveys, treatises on physiognomy, popular broadsheets, physiologies and the serialized roman feuilleton became "things that are good to think with - to think, that is, about problems related to the city and its inhabitants..." (Mercer, 1988: 56).

Particular ways of reading modern characters and locales became embedded as popular belief, argues Mercer, by dint of the sheer proliferation of new forms of entertainment and their critical relation to adjacent political, medical,
administrative, moral and educational spheres (Mercer, 1988: 57). In the reading of character, especially, a huge and broad investment was made. In France and England, the techniques of phrenology and physiognomy, following especially the work of J.K. Lavater, "emerged from the very heartland of Romanticism as the fundamental mode of individualization and recognition of characters." (ibid., p.56).

These new types of knowledge, however, were not only about recognition at its most naive. They were about imagination and possibility; about, as Mercer puts it, a new mentality; about a modern form of policing. Mercer argues that to learn how to recognise and classify characters was to learn new ways of communicating and relating; and that this, following Foucault, is how we should understand emergent forms of policing in nineteenth century towns and cities (Mercer, 1988: 54ff). Men of letters, scientists and reading publics were joined by administrators and reformers in their desire for knowledge of a 'public too extensive for the conceptions of men'. Mercer quotes one nineteenth century reformer who laments the absence in modern cities of "natural police or of that species of silent but very efficient control over their neighbours hitherto engendered by the proximity of rich and poor." (ibid., p.58, quoting here Hill, 1852).

In popular fiction and theatre, in Owen's New Lanark and later in Mayhew, in classrooms and penal colonies, in exhibitions and in portraiture, and crucially, argues Mercer, in the streets, the modern character became newly visible, newly known; and following Foucault (and more specifically here, Hunter, 1983), these sites were apparatus - where a new type, a 'moral self' was seen and made intelligible; where the modern self was practised, produced.
and reproduced; where "characters, locales, populations, and bodies (were rendered) decipherable and also performable."

(p.59)

Mercer elaborates here (1988: 59ff) a mode of cultural analysis which he believes to be more usefully productive than some accepted politico-aesthetic ones. In doing so, he discusses popular cultural forms very much as technologies of self-government as Foucault understands them - though he doesn't use that term. Mercer's main examples are, specifically, Sue's Les Mystères de Paris and, generally, serialized roman feuilleton. He argues that what makes Les Mystères de Paris a novel, capable of generating particular ideological or aesthetic effects, is not anything intrinsic to it as a cultural form. Rather, it is the quite deep-rooted assumptions which drive long-established - and recently combined - modes of political and aesthetic analysis: "Assessed as a unified - ideological, closed, predetermined - object Les Mysteres has certain social effects because it is evaluated in relation to fundamental principles of realism as a politico-epistemological stake." (ibid., p.59).

Texts, and by implication their audiences' responses, become fixed ideologically and generically. In my narrative and generic analysis of Neighbours and Home and Away, I have argued that this tendency is to degrees evident in analyses of soap opera. Perhaps because rather than despite a common desire to remove analysis from the extremes of, broadly, Screen theory, work on soap opera in especially the 1980s has tended to arrive at quite similar conceptions of the genre and its readers. And so arguably, although soap analysis has wanted to move beyond the limits of
anti-realism, ideology and false-consciousness, these remain, however implicitly, important points of reference or definition.

So, instead of a novel (and with regard to *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* I want to argue instead of soap opera), Mercer argues, we would do better to think of *Les Mysteres* as a set cultural relays for entertainment and instruction - part of a network of techniques or 'trainings' in how to read character, topography, gesture, statement (Mercer, 1988: 59-60). It is not a question, argues Mercer, of whether a particular form accurately represents or is 'reflective' of a particular 'consciousness'. Rather, it is the way in which a particular form, always in relation to its 'adjacent domains' and the ways in which it is read and re-read, is practised and is constitutive of a particular mentality or consciousness: "(T)hey don't 'tell you' about these (new social) relations; they actively constitute them." (Mercer, 1986: 189).

"(T)hese diverse forms - feuilletons, Gartenlaube, magazines, the newspaper, serialized novels, 'household words', little books of hints and self-help, all 'entertainingly written' - cannot be taken to be, even in their 'realist' forms, expressive of a totality which might be a society, a class, a community or history. On the contrary, they must be understood not as evidence of something to be located elsewhere, something profound or deep and underlying them, but as the composite of surface technologies which elaborate and inscribe the relations between class, community, nation and history. Not that there is nothing happening elsewhere - in the economy, in the courts, in the streets - but that these forms cannot be read off against that 'elsewhere'. And for this reason: that, in order to understand entertainment as a set of effective technologies concerned with the 'occupation of time' of the population, and to displace the false dichotomies of the concern with realism, an 'occasion of reading' must be taken to be as real as any other social phenomenon." (Mercer, 1986: 183-184).
In his later essay, Mercer details the importance of the material conditions of 'occasions of reading' (Mercer, 1988: 62ff). Forms and occasions of reading, he argues, had decisive effects on the nature of writing and on the author's relationship to his/her public in the nineteenth century (ibid., p. 62). Much literature was read aloud, compounding, says Mercer, its quasi-oratorical and didactic function. This was partly the result of poverty and the limits of literacy - many readings occurring publicly - but more, argues Mercer, to do with the growing importance of the private family unit.

Thus, not only were popular fiction's illustrations immensely successful and important regarding the knowledge and practice of modern types, places and relations, but the visuality of domestic readings constituted a new and significant mode of performance and training. Where reading occurred, who was reading, and to whom the reading was directed were all important in the practice and consolidation of new knowledges - in the effective 'staging of the social', and in the establishment of new and quite specific contracts between author, reader and audience (p. 63ff). Highly visual melodramatic conventions, in particular, notes Mercer, played an important part in securing new relationships between audiences and texts (Mercer, 1988: 67). And though always connected to a variety of public institutions and to the emergent human sciences, it was directly and largely through popular melodramatic forms that audiences became highly discerning experts in particular modes of gesture, speech and conduct (ibid., p. 68). In this respect, argues Mercer, the melodramatic techniques of Dickens and other popular artists of the time should not be regarded as mawkish or unreal; rather, they
should be understood as simultaneously meeting "the technical requirements of serialization, the imperative to engage a popular public, and the generalized project of popular instruction." (p.68).

(iii) Consumer culture

I want to consider now some important developments in the United States and Britain in the early decades of this century. In his analysis of the social roots of consumer culture Stuart Ewan shares Colin Mercer's interest in how it is that modern populations are governed and 'democratized'. Like Mercer's understanding of entertainment, Ewan argues that consumerism's effectivity must be understood as the result of its interrelation and combination with other - feminist, scientific, academic - discourses and practices (Ewan, 1976: 160ff). A good example of this, notes Ewan, is the collaboration of various bodies during New York's 1929 Easter parade. A group of ten women marched smoking cigarettes. The group was led by 'leading feminist' Ruth Hale, and the event was advertised and reported as a freedom march - "young women lighting torches for freedom" (ibid., p.161). The advertising concept came from psychoanalyst A.A.Brill, employed as a consultant by the tobacco company in question. Further, Ewan notes the American Academy of Political and Social Science's optimism regarding the liberating possibilities of consumerism. As 'enterprisers in the business of living', women could "work out an economic plan of life in which (family)...resources are utilized to buy the best possible combinations of satisfactions for today, and...for the future." (Ewan, 1976: 168, quoting the Academy's The Home Woman as Buyer and Controller of Consumption, 1929).
Ewan shows how - in tandem with science and entertainment - consumer practices are able to socialize the domestic, blurring boundaries between the public and the private. Changes in social definitions of 'what a woman should be' were coterminous with changes in definitions of the home (Ewan, 1976: 161ff). As the home became subject to the organisational principles of a modern business, argues Ewan, so were women to conceive of themselves as the managers of that business. Advertisements and popular media capitalized especially on housewives' sense of helplessness, but also on changes and a perceived threat to the family:

"Until five years ago there was nowhere men and women, boys and girls could turn to get a knowledge of the rules of life. They were sent out into the world totally unprepared to cope with life...Then came True Story, a magazine that is different from any ever published." (ibid., p.138, from a 1924 advertisement for True Story).

New ways of organising the home and labour-saving technologies, were applauded by libertarians from various quarters. In fact, argues Ewan, what occurred was a labour-changing rather than a labour-saving process - and a good deal of the labour was to be conducted by women on themselves. Advertisements, and the broader 'consumer ideology' of which they were a part, implored women continually to assess and reassess themselves; to decide how best to "spend her personality...to bring the family and herself the greatest quantity of satisfactions." (Ewan, 1976: 178, quoting sociologists Groves and Ogburn, 1928). As one advertisement put it, a woman's masterpiece was to be herself (ibid., p.179). This imperative, argues Ewan, was not only narcissitic, but highly oppressive in its cultivation of a peculiar type of social paranoia. What
presented itself as the route to fulfilment led only to constant anxiety - and the structured need to spend more to solve and succeed.

Advertising and the consumer ideology's promise, though, argues Ewan, went beyond this. Being a consumer meant freeing oneself from the trials of modernity, strengthening the nation, taking part, no less, in a new democratic process (p.42ff). If one maintained oneself, with the help of the right products, then, for example, the natural roses robbed by modernity from women's cheeks would return (p.44). Being first and foremost, too, an American consumer would level-out, 'democratize' any class or ethnic divisions. Those less than perfect in their mastery of English, for example, should feel compelled to work on themselves, with the help of the right aids (p.43).

Like Ewan, T.J.Jackson Lears argues for the importance of the relation between consumer cultures and other discourses and practices. Consumer cultures, he says, can only be understood as part of a network of institutional, religious and psychological changes (Jackson Lears, 1983: 3). Apparently new in their forms and impact, they nonetheless continually rework other historical practices and values (ibid., p.5). Consumer cultures also share their cultural projects with and must be considered alongside the broad development and multiple forms of modern popular entertainments (Jackson Lears, 1983: 28).

In particular, Jackson Lears is interested in the emergence of what he calls the therapeutic ethos in the modern period:

"I shall argue that the crucial moral change was the beginning of a shift from a Protestant ethos of salvation through self-denial toward a therapeutic ethos stressing
self-realization in this world - an ethos characterized by an almost obsessive concern with psychic and physical health defined in sweeping terms." (ibid., p.4).

Like Foucault, however, Jackson Lears is well aware that care and knowledge of the self - 'therapy' - is in fact a relatively timeless practice. What the modern period witnesses, though, he argues, is the erosion of larger religious and communal frameworks of meaning, so that the quest for health becomes "an entirely secular and self-referential project, rooted in peculiarly modern emotional needs." (Jackson Lears, 1983: 4).

Jackson Lears joins with theorists like Mercer in showing effectively how this process is achieved. The late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he argues, were characterised by a peculiar and profound sense of unreality. For the educated middle classes at the turn of the century, reality began to appear as something to be sought rather than merely lived (Jackson Lears, 1983: 6). As Jackson Lears notes, various economic, technological, religious changes can help account for the uncertainty felt by the urban bourgeoisie (ibid., p.10). (And as I have indicated, Colin Mercer has shown the importance of cultural leaders' felt need for new types of knowledge which both resulted from and resulted in the characteristic forms of modern life.) The primary and crucial result of these changes, though, he argues, is the way in which they combine to effect a felt need and strong desire on the part of modern populations to renew a fragmented sense of selfhood (Jackson Lears, 1983: 4 - in this respect, Jackson Lears acknowledges his debt to the analyses of David Riesman, 1969 and Max Weber, 1968).
An early response to this, notes Jackson Lears, was new therapeutic practices' emphasis on scarcity and maintenance. If one was to avoid the pressures and anxieties of modern life, even nervous breakdowns, then one should learn how to invest prudently in oneself. In the secularization of high Victorian morality, Jackson Lears notes, formal and popular discourses resorted to financial metaphors (Jackson Lears, 1983: 11). Neurologists advised the "careful hoarding of physical and emotional capital" (ibid.). Good Housekeeping told its readers that its questionnaire would "enable them to find out just where their health account stands" (p.12, Jackson Lears is quoting here the president of Good Housekeeping's 'League for Longer Life', Dr Harvey W.Wiley, 1920).

In the search for a fuller sense of self, 'scarcity therapy' was joined by 'abundance therapy'. Prudence was not enough if modern populations were to experience life to the full. The combination of the discourses of scarcity and abundance, Jackson Lears argues, signalled the final demise of Victorian morality, and cemented the relationship between science, religion and consumer cultures (ibid., p.12ff). Eminent social scientists were greatly influenced by popular self-help writers. The psychologist and educator G.Stanley Hall, for example, formulated a 'vitalist critique' of late-Victorian culture. And, Jackson Lears notes, though Hall recruited religious language and imagery to his cause, his ideas were part of a fundamentally secular process (p.13).

Morality should be replaced with morale, Hall argued. A 'cult of condition' must be fostered where populations felt alive, well, young, strong, exuberant. Nowhere, Hall argued, was this more evident than in the Kingdom of God, where man
was exalted in the 'here and now' (p.13). This discourse, Jackson Lears notes, was taken up widely and with the greatest force by liberal Protestant ministers, who unwittingly accelerated the secularizing process.

One of the best and most influential examples of this tendency, says Jackson Lears, was Harry Emerson Fosdick. A brilliant preacher and serious thinker, Jackson Lears argues that he was one of a number who negotiated the extremes of positivism and fundamentalism to accommodate religion with modernity. Christ for Fosdick was a physically vital young man, confident of human potential. Christianity began, he argued, not with otherworldly faith, but in "the inward shrine of man's personality, with all its possibilities and powers..." (Jackson Lears, 1983: 14, quoting here Fosdick, 1913).

By the 1920s, says Jackson Lears, this view was a liberal commonplace. Social scientists, popular literati, self-help advisers, and the avant-garde emphasised self-growth and experience as ends in themselves, becoming over being (ibid., p.15). This emphasis, notes Jackson Lears, was allied to changes in other parts of American culture: social scientists' 'revolt against formalism'; a general revolution in manners and morals amongst the middle classes; and the rise in the leisure ethic. It was also, though, a tendency leading as much to dissatisfaction as self-realization. This was because of its consistent combination with 'scarcity therapy'; and more broadly because of the inevitable incompletion of a 'rounded self' which characterizes and impels such practices in self-government.
Attendant discontent frequently expressed itself in a nostalgia for nature, childhood, and a healthier rural life. Modernity and the city became sources of possibility and distrust at once (still evident, I have noted, in Home and Away and Neighbours). Therapists wanted pastoral peace and technological advance, pre-oedipal innocence and bourgeois adulthood:

"The therapeutic ethos, in short, mirrored the contradictions of a class unsettled by the changes it was helping to promote... Reacting against rationalization, (its) creators nevertheless reinforced that process by promoting a new and subtler set of controls on human behavior. The nature of control varied: Scarcity therapy addressed anxieties; abundance therapy addressed aspirations. But the main point is that longings for reintegrated selfhood and intense experience were assimilated by both therapeutic and business elites in the emerging consumer culture: not only psychiatrists, social theorists, and captains of the nascent 'leisure industry' but also by advertising executives. This was not a conspiracy but an unconscious collaboration. The elites' motives were diverse and contradictory; they were often as full of self-doubt as their clients and as enamored of the therapeutic promise." (Jackson Lears, 1983: 16-17).

Jackson Lears here, and at points throughout his study, strikes a Foucauldian note. He understands historical change and power as neither teleological nor monolithic. Consumerism is more not less persuasive and pervasive for the diversity and often contingency of its genesis. I want to finish this section of genealogical analysis by considering the more directly Foucauldian work of Nikolas Rose.
(iv) Social science, welfare state and therapeutic familialism

Rose, I think, is one of the theorists who best makes the connection between Foucault's later ideas and the modern period. The period of greatest interest to Rose in his study Governing the Soul (1989) is post World War II. Following Foucault's theory of governmentality, though, Rose argues that a decisive historical break occurred in the eighteenth century. This was when, in the west, in place of sovereignty, "the population...appeared as the terrain of government par excellence." (Rose, 1989: 5, and see Foucault, 1991: 98ff).

From this period, Rose argues, government by the modern state is about maximization and efficiency, not coercion. And the best way to govern, the best way to maximise the population's efficiency is to know, comprehensively and intimately, that population. Like Foucault, Rose argues that the state's greatest ally here has been the human sciences; in the post World War II period, in particular, what Rose calls the 'psy sciences' - psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis (ibid., p.7).

With the help of science and the birth of statistics, the modern population became 'isolatable as a sector of reality' and amenable to endless measurement and calculation (p.6). More than this, the psychological sciences "provided the means for the inscription of the properties, energies and capacities of the human soul." (Rose, 1989: 7). For Rose modern psychological measurement plays a crucial part in allowing government to work upon our subjectivities:
"The psychological assessment is not merely a moment in an epistemological project, an episode in the history of knowledge: in rendering subjectivity calculable it makes persons amenable to having things done to them - and doing things to themselves - in the name of their subjective capacities." (ibid.).

Rose is keen to distinguish his study from recent sociological literature - what he calls the paradigm of 'socio-critique' (Rose, 1989: 3). This paradigm, Rose suggests, has a limited understanding of knowledge and power. We should not, he argues, analyse truth within the discursive parameters of epistemology or philosophy. Following Foucault, and like Christine Gledhill (see above, and Gledhill, 1988: 74), Rose asks what are the particular conditions that make contemporary practices of self-government possible. We need to identify the apparatus of truth, how it is that true statements are produced and evaluated (Rose, 1989: 4).

Rose focuses on three institutional sites which he considers to be of particular importance in the post-war period - the military, the workplace and the domestic sphere. All of these, he argues, have been subject to the extraordinary impact and pervasiveness of the 'psy sciences' - or rather, what he calls the "spectacular expansion of the psychotherapeutic domain" (Rose, 1989: 213). Psychotherapy, in various guises, Rose argues, now crosses formal and popular, public and private discourses. Self-government is now a central feature of modern societies' cultural practices.

Of greatest interest to us is Rose's study of changing domestic practices. In the third part and case study of Governing the Soul, Rose illustrates in exemplary fashion
how in the twentieth century the domesticated private family was simultaneously freed from the rigours of authoritative prescription and made highly permeable to normalization; how it became "the matrix for the government of the social economy." (Rose, 1989: 127). At the turn of the century, philanthropists were joined by government and the medical and legal professions in their bid to 'save' the working classes - in fact to construct 'real' (bourgeois ideal) families where it was imagined none existed (ibid.) (4). The middle-class ideals taken into poor homes (but see Lewis, 1986 for the complexities of this process, and the footnote just made) by philanthropists couched moral issues in the language of medicine. This constitutes an important turn. What began to be established and generalized was a set of standards for family life grounded neither in political authority nor religious duty: "(T)he norms of medicine appeared to arise directly from life itself." (p.128).

The success of philanthropists and hygienists' alliances with the legal system and a variety of social institutions resulted in what Rose describes, following Donzelot (1979), as a complex web of tutelage (Rose, 1989: 129). This web of formal government, professionals and 'proto-professionals' was extraordinarily potent in its ability to act forcefully and widely on the difficulties posed by working-class families without compromising their perceived autonomy or potential efficiency. Rose notes that the medical profession, the juvenile courts and the child guidance clinic were the three main points of unification for this matrix. That is, they were the key locus for formal decision-making. Increasingly, though, they, along with the rest of the 'web' of technologies of self-government, drew on knowledge, diagnoses and criteria derived from the psycho-sciences (ibid., p.154). In particular, the child
guidance clinic, as the hub of a programmatic movement for therapeutic child welfare, became a primary point of articulation for the 'new psychology' (ibid.).

Another of the important 'new' features of the new psychology was the positive focus on love. While Freudian psychoanalysis emphasised the unease inherent in civilisation, the new sciences' accent was on social contentment. Love, says Rose, was no longer cast in terms of moral duty or romantic ideal - it was the route to the production of normal or abnormal children:

"The new psychological social workers combined with the psychologists of the clinic in writing narratives of love gone wrong, combining a number of recurrent motifs in family dramas that made childhood maladjustments understandable in terms of the emotions, desires, and disappointments of the adults who surrounded them." (Rose, 1989: 155).

Prior to World War II, the matrix of tutelage Rose describes began to spread itself in various ways. The Children and Young Persons Act of 1933 removed the distinction between reformatory and industrial schools, between the delinquent and the deprived child. The juvenile court linked previously isolated practices - penal, educational, psychiatric and medical - into a multidimensional social network (ibid., p.154). It was still, however, a network aimed mainly at 'problem children'. In the decades following the war, though, and arguably to an extent as a result of wartime experiences, a particular vision of the child and its family was generalised (p.156).
Rose notes that wartime afforded children separated from their parents a special visibility. The new psy-scientists who advocated the importance of psychodynamic relations between mother and child were able to draft children as their allies in their efforts to change social policy (Rose, 1989: 159). The apparent necessity of evacuation presented scientists with "an opportunity to learn priceless lessons for future social service" (ibid., p.161 - Rose here quotes Isaacs, editor of The Cambridge Evacuation Survey, 1941). Evacuation, Rose notes, not only removed psychological and social work from the contraints of the clinic, it also opened up whole new sectors of the population to the gaze of the experts (p.161).

In this context, by far the most influential member of the Cambridge Evacuation Survey established in 1939 was John Bowlby. Using the results of the survey, Bowlby turned the great importance of the mother-child relationship and in-community care into scientific fact and popular wisdom. He was instrumental in establishing fostering as the best solution for parentless children. It was best, though, only if the parent - that is the ideally sensitive mother - was prepared to become the expert manager of the child's emotional economy. In Bowlby's vision, foster parents were to be afforded quasi-professional status, and separation of child from mother was to be avoided at all costs. If this was to be achieved a new child-care service made up of professionals skilled in the psychology and sociology of human relations would have to become integral to family welfare; as Bowlby imagined it:

"a service giving skilled help to parents, including problem parents, to enable them to provide a stable and happy family life for their children... it will care for the unmarried mother and help her either make a home for the child or arrange his adoption, help mobilize relatives
or neighbours to act as substitutes in an emergency...and finally provide long-term care where all else fails." (Rose, 1989: 165, quoting Bowlby here from his Maternal Care and Mental Health, 1952).

In the decades following the war, it is arguable that Bowlby's dream was realized beyond even his own expectations. His principles were enshrined in a number of pieces of legislation and practised across a diversity of institutions. He also, along with others, authored his own popularisation. In 1953, Bowlby's Child Care and the Growth of Love was published in cheap paperback, and was reprinted six times in the next decade before going into a second edition (ibid., p.166).

In 1946, the Home Office's Report of the Care of Children Committee (Curtis Committee) found in Children's Homes a shocking "lack of personal interest in and affection for...children...The child in these Homes was not regarded as an individual with his rights and possessions, his own life to live and his own contribution to offer...(H)e was without the feeling that there was anyone to whom he could turn who was vitally interested in his welfare or who cared for him as a person." (quoted in Rose, 1989: 166).

The appeal implicit here was echoed in the 1948 Children Act. And in 1950, in their new duties, social workers were asked to go beyond a working knowledge of legislation and social services to

"understand the person in need, not only at that particular moment in time, but in all major experiences and relationships which have gone into making him the person he is...with problems whose solution may lie less in external
circumstances than in his own attitudes, with tensions, faulty relationships..." (Younghusband, quoted in Rose, 1989: 167).

Faulty relationships as a primary social problem, and the desirability of and necessity for relationship therapy, were naturalized across public institutions - not least, Rose argues, the mainstream social sciences in America and Britain (ibid., pp.170-171). The child remained at the heart of concerns, and the mother-child relationship remained the most important one to 'service'. Surveys and reports in the 1950s and 60s, though, indicated an increasing number of potential causes for maladjustment and broken relationships. As such, it became plausible to argue that virtually any family was in need of some therapy: "(A)s the number and sophistication of professionals interested in the family increased, more parents stood to be judged inadequate." (Lewis, 1986: 48). The network of expertise, too, should necessarily be extended well beyond the new sciences.

The 1955 Underwood Report (of the Committee on Maladjusted Children) was one of the first to officially cast parents and teachers as general practitioners in relationship therapy (Rose, 1989: 171-172). Formal intervention was now the very final resort, and at all levels of understanding common sense suggested that not only were the child and the family responsible for any social malfunctioning, but that the responsibility for the treatment of any breakdowns lay first with them.

The establishment of the Seebohm Committee on the Local Authority and Allied Personal Services in 1965 seemed to mark the logical completion of this process. The committee recommended the amalgamation of a diversity of public
services into one new department. Child care, education, social work, home help, mental health, adult training, housing welfare agencies were to work together to maintain the ideally functioning family; indeed, not only the family, everyone:

"This new department will...reach far beyond the discovery and rescue of social casualties; it will enable the greatest possible number of individuals to act reciprocally, giving and receiving service for the well-being of the whole community...We could only make sense of our task by considering...childless couples and individuals without any close relatives: in other words, everybody." (ibid., p.174, from the Report of the Committee, 1968).

The new authority, Rose notes, cohered to work upon and construct the family as the site for a policy simultaneously individualized and co-ordinated: "Family technicians sought to align the social and the personal, soliciting the active co-operation...of family members in the re-jigging of their own human relations." (Rose, 1989: 174). The optimism of the Seebohm Committee, however, was short-lived. The restructuring it effected - and the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act which shared the Committee's principles - marked the high point of therapeutic familialism at a formal level. The practices and philosophies of the new scientists and professionals and the new welfare bureaucracies were attacked from various quarters in the late 1960s and early 70s. Historians and sociologists argued that emphases on the mother-child bond and relationship therapy were peculiarly (and so in this context erroneous) modern phenomena. Feminists criticized the techniques as one more way of subordinating women and excluding them from public life. Bowlby and the new scientists were criticized as populist distorters of authentic psychoanalysis. Social workers,
paradoxically it seemed, were criticized for being too interventionist. Libertarians from the left and right argued that children and parents' rights were being denied, the freedom of the individual subverted. The social work paradigm retargeted itself toward radical politics and analysis. The psy-sciences returned to methodological orthodoxy, increasing the rigour of their measures (ibid., pp.175-176).

Ostensible delegitimisation, however, Rose argues, did not mean the evaporation of relationship therapy as a common sense practice. The disintegration of the alliance of psychologists, social workers, psychoanalysts and political progressives occurred at the same time that the norms and techniques of therapeutic familialism were being generalized by popular media:

"(T)he same forces that de-legitimate 'public' interference in 'private' life open the details of wishes, desires and pleasures to a plethora of new regulatory forms, no less powerful for being 'de-coupled' from the authoritative prescriptions of the public powers. Television, advertising, magazines, newspapers, shop windows - the signs and images of the good life were inscribed on every surface that could carry their imprint. The new technologies of citizenship formation were to gain their power through the subjective commitments to values and ways of life that were generated by the technique of choice and consumption." (Rose, 1989: 225-226).
Footnotes

1. Marx's understanding of the move from feudalism to the modern capitalist nation state is as a transition from the concrete and particular to the abstract and universal. As Sayer indicates, in pre-capitalist society the individual had no relation to the state or the nation as neither existed as we now understand them (Sayer, 1991: 77). Individuals' identities were derived only from clear and specific social positions and were simultaneously public and private: "Fundamental to the modern state form is a clear separation of 'public' and 'private'...It is as an abstract individual, a free and equal legal person, independently of the 'accidents' of 'circumstance' that one is a subject of the modern state." (ibid., p.75). The sovereign state and individual - like the economy - are for Marx radically modern representations, conceived for the first time as independent objects and open to scrutiny by the new political sciences.

2. For example, and representative of an important change, Foucault notes that the move from religious to scientific discourses entails a shift from penance to pedagogy. This is accompanied by a move away from renunciation to renewal. The modern self no longer reflects on his/her sins in order only to have them absolved. Rather, he/she learns from his/her mistakes in order to make a new self better able to act and interact with others: "Throughout Christianity there is a correlation between disclosure of the self, dramatic or verbalized, and the renunciation of the self. My hypothesis from looking at these two techniques is that it's the second one, verbalization, which becomes the more important. From the eighteenth century to the present, the techniques of verbalization have been reinserted in a different context by the so-called human sciences in order to use them without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively, a new self. To use these techniques without renouncing oneself constitutes a decisive break." (Foucault, 1988: 48-49).

3. I should also note here Phil Cohen's criticisms of 'back projectionism' (Cohen, 1997a: 188). Like Cohen I want to avoid a cause and effect historicisation while trying to identify continuities and important breaks and changes in purpose. In particular, Cohen rejects that the 17th century was important in the genesis of the life project and self as vocation. The decisive shift, he says, occurred in the mid-Victorian period. As Colin Mercer and others show, this undoubtedly is an important period. Contrary to Cohen, however, I would argue that Paul Hunter (1990) - to whose study I will refer shortly - shows that 17th and 18th
century literature did have a 'measurable impact' on people's lives and broader practices. Hunter, like Mercer, Rose et al and more than Cohen, indicates the important relation Guides had to adjacent domains (science, religion, education and employment) which existed alongside, predated and followed them. He also notes that Guides were popular across classes, and places his analysis within modernity's broad social and cultural changes.

4. Jane Lewis makes a number of useful additions to Rose's research in this context. She notes there is considerable evidence that in early twentieth century England the working classes in fact shared the bourgeois familial ideal, but were prevented from realizing it for economic reasons - not, as was suspected by the period's social leaders, out of 'ignorance' or laziness (Lewis, 1986: 37).

Lewis also notes a shift in public authorities' rationale for targeting the working class family in the early decades of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, the working class male breadwinner's laziness was regarded as the biggest threat to the family and nation's economic efficiency. And because it was feared that state intervention would act as a disincentive to the male's pursuit of employment, the brunt of the responsibility for making the ideal home fell on the wife and mother. In the 1940s and post-war period, Lewis notes, attention shifted directly and dramatically to the working class mother and the problems of child welfare and social dislocation (ibid., pp.33-40).

Rose's more detailed survey shows, I think, that the change was not quite as distinct as Lewis suggests, with concerns for child welfare and a broad move to therapeutic familialism (with the mother at the centre) being evident in the years preceding World War II.
Chapter 7: Summary and assessment

In this final chapter I will bring together the findings and critical points of chapters 1, 2, 5 and 6. I will elaborate what my various analyses - of soap opera literature, Home and Away and Neighbours, the interviews and history - can learn from each other. I will also make reference to some of the recent research and arguments about self-government, popular culture and young people. Finally, I will indicate what I think are the most useful directions for future research in this area.

1. Interdiscursive regime

(i) Discourses combined and reworked

At the conclusion of chapter 1 I referred to the arguments of Kuhn (1984) and Gledhill (1988) which suggest that to locate what is typical to soap operas and the responses of their viewers requires an historical and interdiscursive analysis. In chapter 6 I hope to have shown not only the importance of history, but also what it is that, historically, key institutions share. It is important that all of the theorists to whose work I refer in chapter 6 have a similar understanding of history and the effectivitiy of private and institutional practices. (1). While Hunter's focus is on literature, Rose's on science, Jackson Lears' on consumerism et cetera, each of these researchers emphasises that the persuasiveness of the techniques of self-government practised in these spheres results from their combination with 'adjacent domains'. Neighbours and Home and Away's representations and practices and those of my interviewees do not emerge from one historical origin. Neither do they
result from the interplay of a great number of loosely related discourses. Rather, they are part of a coherent but dynamic network of learning. It is this network that I have introduced and begun to elaborate in chapter 6.

I would argue that an interdiscursive or genealogical historical study is an important part of the analysis of any part of popular culture. However, for the study of soap opera and especially programmes like _Home and Away_ and _Neighbours_, it may be particularly valuable or necessary. As I have argued, the two programmes are highly contemporary, but in a general way. Socially, and in terms of their comic-pantomime aesthetic, their worlds seem more internally-oriented than British-realist soaps. As I noted in chapter 2, characters' will to transform, realize and govern themselves generally seems to be very immediately motivated. It comes from the emotional moves of the previous narrative scene, the advice of a close friend or family member, or apparently from nowhere but within. Frequently it is targeted at nothing more than a loving relationship and/or a contented self. This repetitive and restricted structure explains in part my interviewees' tendency to deride the programmes.

The frequent refusal of my interviewees to take the programmes seriously is also a heightened version of the type of criticism still sometimes targeted at soap opera generally. As I noted in chapter 1, in what is a sophisticated and measured analysis of _EastEnders_ David Buckingham nonetheless reproduces the familiar argument that the programme's function is mythical in that it neglects the public domain and reduces social tension to the level of the personal (Buckingham, 1987: 104ff). More recently, the same argument has been made of the American domestic drama.
thirtysomething (see Bonner and du Gay, 1992, and Torres, 1989). Like Tania Modleski, and as I also noted in chapter 1, I would argue that to deplore generic texts for what they structurally omit is at best a highly reductionary form of criticism (Modleski, 1982: 113). (2). Unlike Modleski, however, I do not want to reject such criticism in order to argue for the progressiveness of soap opera. Rather, I want to reject it because it tends to suggest that programmes like Home and Away and Neighbours are individualizing, illusory and separate from what are understood as public life and reality.

In chapter 6 I hope to have shown both the 'origins' of Home and Away and Neighbours' mundane practices of self-government and that the programmes are far from alone in how they make sense and invite us to make sense of modernity's secularizing processes; in the ways in which they understand "the social and political only as they touch on the moral identities and relationships of individuals" (Gledhill, 1992: 108). This, following Foucault, is an individualizing and totalizing, a private and public process of government. Indeed one of the ways in which the effectivity of the forms of government specific to modern societies is secured is through their ability to cross what are thought of as public and private domains. As Nikolas Rose shows most persuasively, crucial to modern democracy is how the codes of a number of related institutions become normal, private practice and appear to "arise directly from life itself" (Rose, 1989: 128).

What chapter 6's historical, interdiscursive study also shows is the stable and changing nature - the 'backwardness and forwardness' (Probyn, 1990: 150) - of the matrix of which Home and Away and Neighbours and my interviewees'
practices are a part. A number of the techniques of self-government practised by the programmes and my respondents seem remarkably enduring, but are simultaneously put to new uses. Like the seventeenth and eighteenth century Guides studied by Paul Hunter, Neighbours and especially Home and Away concern themselves with the modern 'problem' of youth. Like the young people targeted by early Guides, the two programmes appeal to specific and general senses of dislocation. The sense that particular institutions no longer provide young people with the necessary blueprint for life informs a variety of related contemporary discourses. Prominent among these is that the family is in crisis and that this is a major cause of social, especially youthful instability. In reproducing these contemporary ideas, Neighbours and Home and Away also clearly continue the broad processes identified by Hunter. (3). As I noted in chapter 2, the young characters do indeed arrive at Summer Bay and Ramsay Street 'crooked', highly 'flexible' (vulnerable), and in need of parental guidance - a seventeenth century Guide's conception of youth (Hunter, 1990: 271).

As I also note in chapter 2, they arrive in Summer Bay in particular at what, historically and discursively, is their logical destination - the place where their 'uncivilized', troubled self can be purged and their new self can emerge. Arguably, in both British and Australian popular imaginations rural, coastal, liminal Australia represents both the promise of a new start and the pain of change and reformation. Further, Nikolas Rose's study shows us that the discourse of rural retreat and reformation connects not only with national imagining but with science and other specific, wartime incidences of mobility and change (other, that is, than the enforced migration of thousands of young Britons to Australia to which I refer in chapter 2). Rose's description
and analysis of how therapeutic familialism found fertile ground in Britain's experience of World War II and its aftermath provides one useful context for understanding Neighbours and in particular Home and Away. As I have noted, countless young people arrive and depart from both texts' communities. Almost always they are emotionally damaged as a result of bad family experiences. It is the task of both texts' families - especially the Ross family, an official fostering family, and especially Pippa Ross - to turn these torn souls into rounded, autonomous selves. In this respect, as I have argued, if Summer Bay is a holiday camp and fantastic leisure world, it is also, always, a retreat for protection, rehabilitation and education.

Rose like Mercer insists on the close relationship between science and other spheres, not least entertainment. In this respect, Home and Away and Neighbours, like the Cambridge Evacuation Surveys, afford mundane practices and intimate relations a special visibility - not just for scientists, but for us all. My interviews show that the programmes are indeed 'mechanisms' for imagining modern life, 'trainings' in interpretive mastery, particular knowledges and ways of communicating.

My consideration of the discourses of consumption in chapter 6 and tourism in chapter 2 reveals further ways in which spheres and practices interrelate and are historically reworked. Jackson Lears indicates that consumerism shares with science, nationalism and entertainment a belief in the merits of nature and rural retreats. And David Rowe shows that contemporary nationalist-Australian tourism reproduces a similar discourse which like turn-of-the-century consumerism combines hedonism with asceticism, 'abundance therapy' with 'scarcity therapy' (Jackson Lears, 1983: 13).
An investment orientation to life and to oneself which combines notions of restraint and liberation is one of the most acute ways, I think, in which we can see the 'backwardness and forwardness' of *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*. In the classical practice of *askesis* and especially Epictetus' notion of the money changer, we can see clear connections with the programmes and the ways with which they are engaged. Characters and viewers are continually invited to weigh their images - assess them, change them, make new investments in them. They make investments in themselves and are the 'investment counselors' (ibid. p.12) of others. All of the programmes' characters keep the stock of rounded selves high.

In modernity and the consumer cultures and popular entertainments of late-modernity, this discourse and practice is generalized and given a new meaning. Mike Featherstone historicises consumerism similarly to Jackson Lears, and extends his analysis to the contemporary moment. In the late-twentieth century, argues Featherstone, consumer cultures efface divisions between outer body and inner self (Featherstone, 1991a: 171). In this process, says Featherstone, contrary to those who argue that in modern consumerism hedonism triumphs over asceticism (which includes Rowe, 1993), the two work in tandem. A considerable amount of 'calculating hedonism' is demanded of contemporary consumerism's participants, argues Featherstone. For example, in earlier periods tanned bodies were associated with convalescence and the labouring classes. Now they are a sought and worked after commodity. Tanned bodies are not only the mark of a successful holiday; tanned, fit, honed bodies are a sign of a successful investment in oneself:
"(F)itness and slimness become associated not only with energy, drive and vitality but worthiness as a person; likewise the body beautiful comes to be taken as a sign of prudence and prescience in health matters." (Featherstone, 1991a: 183).

Featherstone argues that it is no coincidence that contemporary life is organised to afford the greatest opportunity for bodily display. We are invited to exhibit the realization of our investments; encouraged to accept that the body is something malleable, 'plastic' that can be worked upon and transformed. Popular images remind us of what we may yet become; and like other commodities, free time is given over to bodywork. Further, Featherstone argues that such instrumental practices resonate with the more entrenched features of consumer cultures - features which invite us to approach not only other leisure activities, but our social relationships in a calculating fashion. In this respect, with other theorists he argues that the contemporary self is a negotiating and performing figure, emphasising appearance, display and the management of impressions (ibid., p.187).

The historical establishment of the tanned, honed body as indicator of a successful investment in oneself and as a sign of 'calculating hedonism' is a process which, clearly, is continued by Home and Away and Neighbours. Ramsay Street and especially Summer Bay, as I have noted, are where young, torn souls go to repair and rebuild themselves. The constant display of muscle-packed, tanned and slim bodies is one indicator of what can or (usually) will be achieved. Featherstone is accurate in that the emotional investments which the programmes' characters repeatedly make in each other cannot be separated entirely from the work they (the
young characters mostly) perform on themselves in the Beach Club's gym. (Though the beach and gym are generally absent from Neighbours, the same principle applies - and the programme takes what opportunities it can for bodily display.)

Featherstone's argument that in consumer cultures the inner self and outer body become cojoined also helps to explain one of the ways in which Home and Away and Neighbours' characters are responded to by a number of my interviewees. That is, as I note in chapter 5, when interviewees judge characters they frequently blur appearance with perceptions of ethical behaviour or self skills, acting ability and personality. My interviewees' membership of consumer cultures undoubtedly informs this type of response. Importantly, though, my historical study shows that it is not only a specific, recent version of consumerism and self-government which informs this response. Interviewees' searches for authentic selves are derived variously and do not point only toward the commodified self and life project suggested by Featherstone's analysis. An aesthetics of existence, as Foucault shows, is a deep-rooted and changing part of our culture. Finding virtue in the ways in which one appears and conducts oneself crosses classical, religious and consumerist cultures and is one of the foremost practices engaged in by my respondents.

Locating the authentic character of 'man' and how he/she should behave is also, as Colin Mercer shows, central to modern science and the popular entertainments preceding Neighbours and Home and Away. Mercer's analysis underlines the simple but very important point that popular culture simultaneously performs an entertaining, educative and socializing function. The consumption that goes on in homes

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is no less educative than that occurring in classrooms. This, I would argue, is as much the case for *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* as it was for earlier popular entertainments. When we consider how broadly the programmes sketch their characters, and how my interviewees repeatedly insisted that they could see through the one-dimensionality of particular characters, Mercer's illustration of the relation between the 'serious' and the 'frivolous' is valuable.

Mercer's analysis of the relationship between the human sciences and popular culture in the nineteenth century begins to explain not only how in general "a new picture of the character of 'man'...became deeply sedimented and dispersed" (Mercer, 1988: 57); it is also, I think, quite specifically something which *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* take from this period. Mercer notes that in one edition of *Le Journal des Debats* - in which Sue's *Les Mysteres de Paris* was being serialized - twenty five physiologies (including the tailor, the musician, the bourgeois, the unhappy woman) were listed in the advertising section, selling at one franc each and drawn by popular artists of the time. The more 'serious' version of the same practice was provided by figures like Dr Morel de Rubempre, author of a number of early sexological treatises and editor of *L'Ami des Peuples*, the brief of which was "the physical and moral perfection of both sexes" (Rubempre, 1830, quoted by Mercer, ibid.).

The physical and moral perfection of both sexes remains one of *Home and Away* and *Neighbours'* aims. And, as I noted in chapter 2, Mercer's historicisation begins to explain why the programmes' characters are always simultaneously highly transparent and recognisable, and transformative. They are transparent broadly as the recognizable types of modern popular culture, Alf Stewart as a quintessentially English,
petit-bourgeois keeper of the corner shop being as good an example as any (working alongside this character's version of masculine Australianness). They are also transparent in their motives, expressions and gestures. This results not only from viewers' understanding of the narratives, but also from the genealogical process analysed by Mercer - the process by which audiences became experts in particular modes of gesture, conduct and speech. And characters are transformative because as Dr de Rubempre would have had it, to know intimately the modern character is to know the changeability of one's own character.

As I noted in chapter 6, these types of recognition and engagement are broad and complicated, not one-dimensional. When my interviewees recognize and judge characters they simultaneously interpret representations and practise versions of themselves. They engage not only with the programmes' structures, but with what, following various theorists, in chapter 2 I called structures of social relations. The texts' scenes, following Noel Carroll, are not only paradigms of soap opera, they are paradigms of modern life. My interviewees often argued that because Home and Away and Neighbours represented particularly excessive versions of the former, they failed to reach the status of the latter. As I have shown in chapter 5, though, frequently it is very difficult to separate out when it is that responses concern themselves with the texts alone and when they are about 'something else'. Indeed, it is notable that not only did responses sometimes mobilize a notion of the soap opera genre that bore little resemblance to the representations of Home and Away and Neighbours, at points discussions seemed to dispense with soap's form as a guide altogether (in for instance, as I note in chapter 5, my interviewees' attack on Brenda).
Mercer's notion of character recognition and judgement as a form of social and cultural practice takes us away from reductionary notions of identification and stereotype. It is also lent support by a number of the responses I received. My interviewees rejected characters as stereotypical, but as I note in chapter 5 their notions of bad or inauthentic representations were often more to do with the ethics of a particular scenario than characters per se. Frequently, interviewees discussed ethics and aesthetics simultaneously. The programmes became most real when a character seemed right, looked right, did the right thing. Hated characters were despised for how they behaved and for how they looked. Some characters were liked because they were 'like me/us'. All the favourite characters, though, were liked because of the way they conducted themselves generally in their lives and intimate relations; and it is notable that all interviewees felt qualified to assess any character's ability as a parent, sibling, friend or partner. Respondents' engagements, then, were with specific characters and narrative scenes, and with how social relations are or should be structured. The general nature of this type of response is important, and I will return to it shortly. Now, though, I want to consider the specifically gendered ways with which interviewees engaged with the programmes.

(ii) Gender, old and new

As chapter 6 shows, the idea of individuals free to choose is central to the discourses of self-knowledge and management in modern liberal societies. As Paul Hunter indicates, popular seventeenth and eighteenth century Guides
emphasised the importance of the life choices facing 'uprooted' sections of the British population - especially young people and women. And as Hunter notes, while the Guides fell well short of leveling relations between men and women, they nonetheless tried to meet, while reproducing, the sense of displacement and loss of identity experienced by women in the Restoration (Hunter, 1990: 272). Indeed Hunter argues that if the novel most fully provided an imaginary home for women, then the Guides began this cultural process (ibid.).

In chapter 1, I noted that, in support of Hunter, Christine Gledhill argues that it was the domestic novel that gave the greatest elaboration to new, lived realities - new modes of subjectivity and interaction affecting mostly women. Importantly, Gledhill notes that the novel's sphere of influence and interrelatedness extended beyond women and the home. The novels played their part in taking 'feminine' values into other parts of society and culture and in reforming men (Gledhill, 1992: 111). This process, Gledhill notes, is continued and given new life by soap opera. And, as Gledhill indicates, it is arguable that in recent decades soap opera has been well placed to respond to and play a part in the broad social and cultural changes affecting gender relations and identities.

In the light of Hunter and Gledhill's research and this study we should ask what the implications are of one the central arguments about soap opera to which I made reference in chapter 1. That is, that under "present cultural and political arrangements" women are more likely to possess what are thought of as personal skills (Brunsdon, 1981: 36). It is arguable both that men would seem to have been remarkably slow in learning 'self skills', and that 'present
arrangements' have changed - but have been changing for some considerable time. These arguments are supported by *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* and by the responses of my interviewees.

A large part of the programmes' projects of self-government, as I note in chapter 2, is concerned with the negotiation of modern gender identities. Explicitly, sometimes excessively, the texts make their characters highly gendered in old and new ways. All of the characters find themselves torn between residual and emergent versions of masculinity and femininity. This tension, as I indicate, is most apparent and consistently figured by particular characters - for example, by Gaby in *Neighbours* and by Nick in *Home and Away*. Gaby wants to be independent and a romancer loved and in love. Nick wants to be authoritative and in control, but must learn greater sensitivity and reflexivity. The texts' ideal characters - Dorothy in *Neighbours*, Luke in *Home and Away* - experience these problems too, but are better able to mix all of these attributes.

One of the strongest findings of my interviews is that my respondents considered themselves to be experts in the management of intimate relations - more expert than Dorothy or Luke, or any of the programmes' characters. Frequently this expertise was in gender relations and entailed the projection of an ideal, gendered self. The expertise was practised by male respondents, but came most forcefully and consistently from female interviewees. Before looking at the masculine selves I was offered, I want to give greater consideration to the gendered responses given to me by young women.
A comparison of this project with other researchers' studies of teenage girls, their media consumption and intimate relations would seem to indicate that the 'present arrangements' referred to by Brunsdon have indeed changed. At the close of chapter 5 I indicated that my female respondents presented themselves as more autonomous and more consistently critical of media representations of young women than those of Elizabeth Frazer (1987). And, Sharon Thompson's study of teenage girls' sexual practices, when compared with my findings, also points to a shift in gender identities. Thompson's respondents - interviewed in the late-1970s and early 80s - represented themselves as the victims of romantic and sexual narratives (Thompson, 1984: 351). Comparing Thompson's female responses with mine, we witness an apparent move from the reproduction of familiar discourses of sexuality, love and romance to the practise of expertise in gender relations and self-management.

As I note in chapter 5, and under generic realism in the recurring findings, one female interviewee rejects what she perceives is the programmes' judgement that sex should be bound to love. The same interviewee, as I have noted, practised in a heightened way tendencies exhibited by most of the female respondents. That is, she frequently went beyond the actuality of the texts' representations in order to illustrate how gender-typical they were and how easily she could see through such stereotypes. In so doing, like others she simultaneously fashioned herself as an expert in cultural criticism and in how to be behave - in how to be a woman.
As I also indicated, this interviewee (C, 15) argued that none of the women in Home and Away and Neighbours enjoyed positions of independence, authority or power. Her friend pointed out that she was wrong; and a number of female interviewees said that they were impressed and glad when the programmes' women characters were strong, planned their careers, or asserted themselves - "'Cause that's what I would have done".

These types of response seem to lead us away from the tragic and masochistic nature of the feminine condition theorized by the critics I refer to in chapter 1 - and apparently reproduced by Thompson's interviewees. They also make sense in the context of Lillian Rubin's research. Rubin studied the sexual histories of a thousand heterosexual Americans between the ages of eighteen and forty-eight. Her research, she argues, reveals "a tale of change of almost staggering proportions in relations between men and women" (Rubin, quoted in Giddens, 1992: 9). Changes are most pronounced, says Rubin, among her female, especially young women respondents. In stark contrast to older interviewees, Rubin's young female respondents openly enjoyed autonomous and varied relationships and sexual practices.

The versions of female autonomy privileged by Rubin's respondents and mine are also supported by recent observable social and cultural change. Helen Wilkinson, reporting in The Guardian, notes that 'forecasters' predict that women will take nine out of ten new jobs in Britain by the year 2000 (Wilkinson, 1995). On safer ground, Wilkinson reports: that between 1960 and 1990 the number of working women rose by 34% while the number of working men fell by 20%; since 1980 2 million men have disappeared from the British workforce; in secondary and higher education females now
outperform males considerably; between 1989 and 1993, while 29% more men entered higher education, the number of women starters rose by 45%; and, young women now account for more first time mortgages than men (ibid., Wilkinson reporting here research commissioned by Demos and conducted by Opinion Leader Research).

My female interviewees' self-fashioning, and how it relates to earlier qualitative academic studies of young women and the research of Rubin and Demos, would seem to point to distinct changes in gender relations and women's identities. Such apparent practices in self-government and autonomy also meet at one level the historical process analysed by Nikolas Rose which I consider in chapter 6. They are the logical outcome of history, too, for other critics.

According to Arlie Russell Hochschild, young women today are invited and expected to practise a 'cool', unisex code of conduct and being. This code is normalized, says Hochschild, as a result of two related developments. Firstly, women are adopting middle-class and male rules of intimate conduct. As in other parts of society, the bottom is emulating the top. In previous generations it was middle-class men who controlled their emotions and did not allow themselves to fall in love until they had established themselves/their careers. Now, Hochschild argues, women learn this cool, masculine code. It is a code, she says, which both explains and continues the weakening of the family (Hochschild, 1994: 17).

The second tendency, Hochschild argues (and entitles her essay), is the abduction of feminism by commercial culture. This process, she suggests, is analogous to the one identified by Weber:
"Feminism is to the commercial spirit of intimate life as Protestantism is to the spirit of capitalism. The first legitimates the second. The second borrows from but also transforms the first." (ibid., p.12).

Advice books and commercial culture generally have turned the feminist ideal of equality into one of ascetic and detached autonomy:

"The ascetic self-discipline which the early capitalist applied to his bank account, the late twentieth-century woman applies to her appetite, her body, her love." (p.13).

Just as certain conditions - declining feudalism and growing cities and middle classes - allowed capitalism to flourish, so, Hochschild argues, does the fragmentation of family, community and church permit this figure to become one to which women commonly aspire. (4).

The American advice books Hochschild analyses are part of the same historical 'network of tutelage' as *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*. In this context, interviewee C (female, 15) in particular would on first analysis seem to be a good example of Hochschild's autonomous, ascetic "postmodern cowgirl" - who "rises on the ashes of Cinderella" (Hochschild, 1994: 10). C not only scoffed at the idea that sex was in any way connected with love; she was also highly cynical of the programmes' ideal communities, and of the notion that neighbourly communities existed generally, in her life.

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However, as C's responses indicate, if *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* privilege particular types of independence, this is done within and alongside ideals about romance, community and family life. The two programmes are not alone in this respect. If the type of advice book Hochschild targets outsells others (as she indicates), its discourses are nonetheless in competition with a host of popular representations of family life and true love. Further, as studies like that of Paul Hunter indicate, in the popular imagination the family has been 'in crisis' throughout modernity; as well as continually fragmenting, it is continually refortified. And, crucially, as Nikolas Rose's genealogy shows, if the family is threatened by the apparent growth of autonomous selves, it also, paradoxically, helps to produce them.

As I also indicate in chapter 6, like the family, feminism is integral to and not separate from the genesis of contemporary techniques of self-government. Feminism's relation to capitalism and popular culture - and science - may be an uneven one, but it is more complicated than Hochschild suggests. As Elspeth Probyn argues, feminism is not merely opposed to or vulgarized by commercial versions of equality. It is, rather, part of the contemporary discourses of choice and autonomy - one key player in what Probyn calls the contemporary discursive positivity:

"That for the most part it (feminism) is a repressed and abject strata...does not lessen its circulation through and across various popular discourses and images." (Probyn, 1993b: 284).
Further, if postmodern cowgirls have won out over Cinderella in the advice books of greatest interest to Hochschild, this is not the case in *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*. As I indicate in chapter 2, a good number of the tensions experienced by the two programmes' female characters are to do with trying to be both Cinderella and a postmodern cowgirl. That the programmes are unwilling to privilege either is indicative of how they combine residual and emergent discourses and try desperately to retain a particular type of pluralism - articulate what Elspeth Probyn might term New Traditionalism (ibid., p.279).

As I show in chapter 5, my interviewees also negotiate and sometimes struggle with old and new ideas and discourses. Cool, detached C is a case in point. At different stages not only was she genuinely confused about the programmes' projects, but also had to work hard to hold together the autonomous self she reproduced during the interview. And as I note, sometimes C went so far in this effort that her friend 'policed' her - told her to be more honest, reveal a bit more of her less cool self. Most of my female respondents in fact mixed discourses of independence with traditional notions of family and romantic love. And many interviewees, younger and older and of both genders, referred to how much they had enjoyed Meg and Blake's (*Home and Away*, prior to the episodes I have examined) heavily romanticized relationship.

My female interviewees, then, may not cast themselves as the victims of heterosexual love, but neither have they or the programmes entirely relinquished traditional romance. Romance in the texts and in the responses of interviewees is not eclipsed by the modern self - Hochschild's argument - but is based primarily on the growth of a gendered self.
This was the finding, too, of C.Lee Harrington and Denise Bielby's recent study of American daytime soap operas (Harrington and Bielby, 1991). Programmes like General Hospital and Ryan's Hope, they found, share an emphasis on the quest for the ideal modern relationship - where men and women can be independent and genuinely interdependent at once. The soap operas, however, remain conservative. The researchers found that they ultimately support traditional notions and structures of heterosexual love - that is, women sacrificing their independent selves in favour of a committed relationship. The perpetuation of such themes, argue Harrington and Bielby, "is more than seeking comfort with the familiar in the midst of social change. Rather, we speculate that in reality the negotiation of heterosexual intimacy has remained closer to traditional form than most would care to acknowledge." (Harrington and Bielby, 1991: 142-143).

Harrington and Bielby's speculation, I am sure, is generally a safe one. However, just as Neighbours and Home and Away and my interviewees are generally not as extreme in the autonomy they practise as Hochschild's diagnosis suggests, neither are they as conservative-affirmative as is suggested by Harrington and Bielby's analysis. Home and Away and Neighbours repeatedly highlight that a good, committed relationship is one in which men and women make equal sacrifices and are give the same opportunity to develop as autonomous selves. (5). In chapter 2, my analysis of the husband and wife/parenting negotiation between Philip and Julie (Narrative 1, Episode 2, Neighbours) is the best of numerous examples of this. (6).
My analysis of the programmes and the interviews indicates not dramatic change or stasis, but slow shifts in gender identities and relations. When L (female, 15) polices C, she is saying both that C projects her assertive self too far, and that *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* are not as backward as C suggests. L's government of her friend, like that of the programmes, is positive and neo-liberal in its reflexiveness. Like so many of the responses I received, L and C's exchanges are simultaneously assessments of highly gendered representations and highly gendered practices in self-government. As I indicate in chapter 5, these judgements and practices were most heightened and forceful when they came from young women. This as I have argued is no historical coincidence. In a complicated and hegemonic process, my female interviewees were the quickest and sometimes harshest governors of their own gender. The gender-policing was not always, like L's, positive and liberal. The group attack on *Neighbours'* Brenda to which I refer in chapter 5 is, as I note there, unusual in some ways. It is also, though, the most extreme example of the broader tendency of my female interviewees to be most critical of the behaviour and appearance of the programmes' women characters.

In her analysis of the US-produced chat show *Donahue*, Susan Bordo refers to similar practices and tensions (Bordo, 1993). "Women are never happy with themselves", says one of Donahue's all-women audience. In an apparently historically-blind reverse logic, the participant is arguing that female-targeted cosmetics and fashion advertisements are about personal choice, not politics. Women, she says, just want to have fun, transform themselves. She and almost all of the black and white female audience reject Donahue's argument that advertisements which invite black women to
look less black and more Caucasian are racist. Bordo asks us, and by implication Donahue's audience, to remember the not unusual nineteenth century comb-test. Only the black women whose hair passed through a fine-tooth comb were admitted to countless clubs and churches (ibid., p.272).

To state the obvious, the comb-test, in whatever incarnation, has not gone away; and part of Bordo's argument is that the advertisements referred to by Donahue are versions of the comb-test. And, however much Home and Away and Neighbours slowly extend their ideal, pluralist worlds, they too, at one level and never by themselves, remain comb-tests of sorts. Black characters gain occasional and limited entry to Summer Bay and Ramsay Street; and the programmes' regular characters - especially the young characters, especially the young female characters - we can be sure will overwhelmingly be white, slim, attractive, straight-haired...

My interviewees are well aware of the limits of Home and Away and Neighbours' gendered choices. Indeed, as I note in chapter 5, they tended to read the programmes as less plural than in actuality they are. However, Bordo's Donahue example reminds us of a number of important things. Firstly, it reminds us of the pervasiveness and persuasiveness of contemporary discourses of self-autonomy, choice and transformation. However less insidious Home and Away and Neighbours may be than white-ideal adverts for women, they nonetheless broadly contribute to the same discourses. My interviewees struggle with these discourses, reject them, but also reproduce them. Bordo's example secondly reminds us of the frequently gendered nature of the discourses of autonomy and choice. It is as I have argued no historical
surprise that "women are never happy with themselves", and this is one reason why my female respondents were so critical of their own gender's representation.

Reflexive men

As I note in chapter 5, my male interviewees were generally less assertive and critical than my female ones. Nonetheless, it is important that, like the young women, the male respondents generally considered themselves to be expert in the management of self and intimate relations. They also fashioned themselves in their responses primarily as young men, and in so doing negotiated residual and emergent discourses of masculinity.

Some of my male respondents, as I indicate, were particularly keen to present themselves as liberal and reflexive. They were sensitive to notions of good conduct and the popular representations of not only men, but women too. As I note, like a number of the female interviewees, in projecting this sensitive self they worked with a conception of Home and Away and Neighbours which is more conservative than the programmes' actual representations. Indeed, it may be noteworthy that while all interviewees - male and female - criticized (and sometimes fantasized) the programmes for presenting an idealized therapeutic world, none of the male respondents remarked on the extent to which Neighbours and Home and Away engaged in the re-education of men.

As my textual analysis indicates, and as I note in chapter 5, on first inspection this extent is considerable. In the narratives I have examined, men are repeatedly punished and taught to reform themselves: Lou must be cured of
philandering; Doug is an inept organizer of romance; Philip must learn to communicate with his wife; Wayne is boring and insensitive 'outdoors man'; Russell needs therapy; Jack will be rejected by Ramsay Street and Gaby before he learns his lesson; Les will be rejected by Blake and Summer Bay before he learns his; Alf is a comic, castrated bull; Nick is about to prove his lack of skill as a brother/father again; Tug is deaf to advice again; Shane still has not grown up; and Michael still needs lessons, too, in how to be a mature, sensitive man.

It is arguable that this apparently considerable effort after the reformation of men is naturalized as a common sense feature of contemporary soap opera by the fact that my male interviewees do not comment upon it as a notable tendency. More than this, for a number of male respondents Home and Away and Neighbours' male characters remain predictably masculine and backward in their ability to manage themselves. The interviewees present themselves as expert and the programmes as static. Again we have to think of this as a selective engagement with the representations of the texts in order to present an educated, knowing form of masculinity.

As I argue in chapter 2, Home and Away and Neighbours are distinguished by the fact that their male (and female) characters are successful in rapidly and repeatedly learning and transforming themselves. If it was women alone who were educating and transforming men to limited success, then the texts would be more familiar than new. However, the men in the programmes are not only helped by women but, like my male respondents, are able to 'do it for themselves'. Frequently in the programmes the male characters do not only work upon themselves, but are effectively galvanized by
other men. In Episode 1 of Neighbours, Mark quickly turns Brad's mood and self around, persuades him of his ability as a romancer, and leads him to Beth who Brad then transforms. In Episode 1 of Home and Away, it is eventually (in later episodes) Blake who tames his biological father Les, teaches him to look inside and transforms him. In Episode 3 of Home and Away (and in future episodes), Pippa's success in transforming her husband is only partial. Michael agrees to sharing economic responsibility for the family only if Pippa will relinquish some of her mothering/caring duties to him (which, given Pippa's status in the text, represents a major sacrifice and important move). This still is not enough for Michael, though, who continues to feel left out of the family's circle of care. He insists that the couple see a marriage guidance counsellor.

To feel whole, Michael must be a good and loved parent. In Episode 2 of Home and Away, in fact, he is doing all the parenting. He counsels Sally and Fin to effect, and as I note in chapter 2 at one point is shown to be wiser in his parenting judgement than Pippa. Indeed most of Episode 2 focuses on men as parents. In the only narrative which does not feature Michael taking almost all of the parenting responsibilities, Nick is agonizing over his role as brother and guardian to Shane - and his wiser adviser, Donald (Shane's only other guardian at this point), is also male.

It would be easy to conclude from this that the historical process of male reformation, in which as I noted earlier soap opera and popular fiction plays an important part, is well advanced. Further, that my interviewees' tendency to consider themselves to be more expert than Home and Away and Neighbours' men is evidence that the texts reproduce a
common sense, even conservative understanding of men skilled in the 'personal sphere'. However, there are a number of counters that can and should be made to such a conclusion.

Firstly, as part of the general, historical project of self-government I detail in chapter 6, changes in masculine identities occur across culture, are slow, and are conservative and liberal simultaneously and in particular ways. For feminist critics like Susan Jeffords, it is arguable that Home and Away and Neighbours are part of a general contemporary process - a double movement where both traditional masculinity is affirmed, and, extending Hochschild's (1994) argument, masculinity further colonizes feminine space.

Jeffords argues that the differences between the films The Terminator and Terminator 2 indicate the way in which, generally, masculinity deals with its current 'crisis' and refortifies itself (Jeffords, 1993: 248ff). The new Terminator does not endlessly renew itself in order to achieve its goal, to kill. Rather, it grows and learns by looking within. It becomes a father, becomes a mother to fill the gap left by the new, hard, super-military Sarah Connor/Linda Hamilton. Its mission is self-growth and the protection and guidance of children for all our futures. As in Neighbours and Home and Away, all the men in Terminator 2, the film shows, must learn the new code. Following Brown, Jeffords calls this the ideology of sequential self-extension:

"When the antinuclear chain letter enjoins us to take a stake in futurity, or when the nursery rhyme reconstructs our self-extension in the world, they epitomize our familiarity with and reliance on a notion of projection in which we ourselves are our (possible) futures." (Brown, 1989, in Jeffords, 1993: 255).
Films like Terminator 2, argues Jeffords, offer men a vision, a place in the future. They offer male viewers "an alternative realm to that of the declining workplace and national structure as sources of masculine authority and power - the world of the family." (p.258). What is disquieting about this vision for Jeffords is that it tends either to marginalize or displace women altogether. (7).

Jeffords' argument helps us, again, to see the 'backwards and forwardness' of Neighbours and Home and Away. Men in the programmes, indeed, are simultaneously reformed and refortified. They not only learn the new codes of self and relations management, but are displayed and commodified in familiar, hyper-masculine ways. Even at their most confused, it is arguable that the honed and half-naked bodies of Blake, Shane, Luke, Brad et al signal the reverse - strength, control, discipline. If Brad and Blake and Shane are classically Greek in their androgeny - "one of the west's great sexual personae" (Paglia, in Simpson, 1993: 33) - then arguably their shining, sculptured bodies - like so many of the same in contemporary popular culture - also represent the rediscovery of the phallus (Simpson, 1993: 34). We should also note that while many women characters in the two programmes sit at the top of the self and relations skills hierarchy, they are either largely de-sexualized (Pippa, Pam), or displayed and commodified in familiar, 'feminine' ways (Roxanne). (8).

Contrary to Jeffords, though, and unlike the extremes of Terminator 2, the gender deal in Home and Away and Neighbours, while uneven, does not singularly favour men. The two programmes certainly have not relinquished
traditional mother-figures or turned all their women into action or business figures. As I have indicated, too, the men in *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* are as often punished and confused as successful in their self and relationship work. Arguably, their superbodies are as much an indicator of uncertainty and anxiety - a familiar point of return and comfort - as a sign of omnipotence. Notably, too, as I indicate in chapter 5, one of my male interviewees over-read the young male characters' appearance as a sign of insensitivity and one-dimensionality - 'himbos'. And, as numerous recent newspaper reports indicate, representations of male superbodies are not only arguably a sign of masculine insecurity as well as power; they are also able to engender insecurity in male consumers. In a case, crudely, of the biter bit, men are worried about living up to their media representations (see, for example, McKee, 1995).

As I also suggest in chapter 5, some of the more conservative responses I received from young men might also be thought of as holding onto the familiar in the face of uncertainty. More than one male respondent exhibited both expertise in how to conduct oneself in modern relations and returned to a familiar relation to women - to be objectified, to be the domestic servants of men. Such respondents are certainly not alone in this respect. We must ask, too, to what extent my more sensitive-expert-modern males worked with ideal images of themselves. Earlier I referred to Lillian Rubin's recent empirical study of heterosexual practices in the United States. As well as showing marked changes in gender identities and relations, Rubin's study also supports other researchers' arguments that structural inequalities remain intact. Rubin's male respondents generally condemned women who were open or defiant about the extent and variety of their sexual...
experience - while continuing to applaud males' 'conquests'. Women themselves noted that they had to pretend to greater chastity in particular contexts - especially marriage when it arrived. And, generally, Rubin's study shows that even the most 'modern' men talked considerably more equality than they practised. Today, said one bruised male, women "don't want to be wives, they want wives". (Rubin's study reported in Giddens, 1992: 11).

Clearly, then, in *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* and in my interviews a new contract between men and women is being negotiated on uneven ground. Crudely, the new deal entails for women the winning of space, and it is obvious that there is still a lot to be won. For men, it entails holding onto space, to established positions and senses of themselves; but also the finding of new locations from which to act, be and imagine. This search for a new space informs much of *Neighbours* and *Home and Away's* projects. It also guided some of the responses I received from young male interviewees, who, while insisting that they travelled on a higher plain than the programmes, frequently used them, in a sense, to help them along.

2. A regime for all

Throughout this thesis I have argued that the specific techniques in self knowledge and government practised by *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* and my interviewees are part of a broad tendency. My two safest co-ordinates in this respect are history and gender. (9). History shows the longevity of particular techniques and modes of imagining, and that in an interrelated fashion they are variously originated and practised. At no point in the modern period have these
techniques been the preserve of one gender. And if at particular points - during this century especially - this might seem to have been the case, then my analysis of the two programmes and my interviewees' responses indicate that women and men now are expected to and enjoy practising expertise in self-government.

Paul Hunter's study shows that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was mostly male religious and literary figures who first authored the guides to self knowledge that were to become popular across all sections of British society. Hunter also supports Foucault's suggestion that particular techniques endure and, being relatively open to appropriation, may be reworked historically - put to new uses. As I noted in chapter 6, turn of the seventeenth century authors and entrepreneurs quickly realized that the same basic ethical advice and practices could be applied across religious, economic, employment and entertainment contexts.

Women and young people became key targets of moral and entertainment literature during this period, and this was partly out of a realization of the new markets they represented, as well out of concerns for the economic health of the nation and the spiritual health of young people and families. As Stuart Ewen (1976) indicates, such concerns were given a new purpose at the turn of the last and early decades of this century. As part of the growth of consumerism and the 'cult of domesticity', women were invited to take a long and detailed look at themselves, and were hugely overdetermined as wives, mothers and keepers of the home.
This, nonetheless, should be thought of as something broader still. Consumerism, as T.J. Jackson Lears shows, emerged from and crossed business and religious, as well as domestic, spheres. And, as Nikolas Rose's study shows, the home and the family were not only at the heart of consumerist dreams, but for science and government became the locus of what was perceived of as a national problem. Rose illustrates that what was initially thought of as a maladjustment of 'problem' children and families and the founding mother-child relationship, in the middle decades of this century became generalized. Not only could any family be faulty and in need of internal repair; all individuals should recognize that self-management was a modern necessity and represented not only a problem, but a possibility.

Perhaps most directly, Rose's thesis is borne out by this study. As I have indicated in chapter 2, in tandem with the family but more so, the self is the programmes' primary point of mediation. The texts' first and most consistent invitation is to self-evaluation and transformation. All characters, even eventually villains, perform the same basic narrative function. All are imperfect, and all are the victims and repairers of themselves. Importantly, in these respects neither women nor young people are singularly privileged. The texts do not afford only key women characters particular skills, communicative transparency and emotional intensity - the generic argument of a number of influential soap opera theorists. And, while the programmes clearly privilege teenage years as a crucial lifestage and reproduce an entrenched discourse of youth (see Cohen, 1997: 182), the principles applied to young characters - malleable, transitive and transformative, in need of expert help, problem and possibility - inform the representations of all of the characters of Home and Away and Neighbours.
The most striking and persuasive evidence of the historical and contemporary tendency identified by Rose is my interviewees' readiness and ability to issue advice on and imaginatively enter into intimate relations from a variety of perspectives. Almost all of the respondents felt qualified to offer any character advice on how he or she should be and behave. They referred to their own experiences as sons, daughters, siblings and gendered individuals, but also exhibited to me that they were experts in parenting and in how to be a good romancer, partner or individual generally, across ages and genders. The important knowledges were clearly not restricted to a particular social identity, or to first-hand experience. This broad expertise is illustrated most vividly by L (female, 16), to whose responses I refer in detail in chapter 5. As L suggests, the programmes expect and are designed for general use.

What Rose neglects in Governing the Soul is the historical importance of gender politics and identities, as well as popular culture and consumerism, to the regime he identifies. (10). As I have begun to show above, these have been a key part of the terrain on which techniques of self-government are practised in recent times.

Moving beyond history and gender, however, beyond my analysis of the texts and interviews and historical shifts and generalities, takes us into a realm of greater speculation. Class and ethnicity, in particular, remain two of the most open and important questions for this study. My feeling is that all classes and cultures in Britain and 'the west' are enjoined to work on themselves; and that this occurs as part of important social and cultural changes and within existing and in some cases widening social divisions.
This feeling is informed by the recent studies and arguments of various researchers. Without looking at any of this work in detail, I nonetheless think it is important that we give it some consideration. This is both to support further my argument that what I have identified above is a broad and perhaps growing regime, and is one useful route by which to conclude the study.

(i) Ethnicity

Firstly, I want to suggest that the compulsion to know and expertly manage oneself crosses cultural groups in Britain and 'the west'. Beyond the fact that my Scottish interviewees were familiar with the routine practices of the Australian-produced programmes to the point of felt superiority, I have little to support this argument from my study alone. My main allies in making the argument are the studies of Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz (1990), and Marie Gillespie (1995).

As I noted in chapter 5, all of the variously-originated interviewees of Liebes and Katz engaged with Dallas and the Israeli researchers' interviews in similar ways to my respondents. They all 'tried on' characters and situations, and made what were simultaneously textual interpretations and investments in senses of themselves. Liebes and Katz' 'modern' American respondents in particular were, like mine, able to think both 'within and above' (Sharratt, 1980: 290) the structures of Dallas, played with its form, and were experts in individuality and interpersonal relations. As I note in chapter 5, I have some reservations about the notion of context employed by Liebes and Katz. I do not doubt, however, that this close similarity results from shared features of the social and cultural contexts of the American
respondents and my interviewees. The two groups' 'matrix of tutelage' may differ in some ways, but I am sure that the social sciences, consumerism and entertainment will be key spheres in both networks.

More directly still than Liebes and Katz' American interviewees, the British-Asian respondents of Marie Gillespie's study engage with soap opera and qualitative interviewing in a similar fashion to my interviewees. In one sense this should come as little surprise in that Gillespie interviewed British teenagers about - among other things - their consumption of Neighbours. In the context of ethnicity, however, it is noteworthy because Gillespie argues that her respondents' modes of engagement with the programme are "highly culturally specific" (Gillespie, 1995: 147). They are informed by and constitutive of their British-Asian identities, and experiences as residents of Southall. Because of the important similarities and differences between Gillespie's study and mine, I want to consider its findings and Gillespie's arguments briefly here.

Gillespie argues that, as a cultural resource, her interviewees use Neighbours to negotiate the hopes and tensions they experience in peer and parental cultures, and to fashion new identities (Gillespie, 1995: 142ff). Neighbours, she says, facilitates interviewees' discussion of their everyday problems and as such serves a therapeutic function (ibid., p.147). Her teenage respondents use the programme to talk through how to deal with problems, to "see if they (Neighbours' characters) did things the right way" ('Gita', p.147). This, argues Gillespie, is a "highly
culturally specific function of soap talk in Southall, the importance of which can hardly be overestimated." (Gillespie, 1995: 147).

The strength of Gillespie's conviction emerges from the restrictions her interviewees experience as members of 'traditional' Asian families and communities. Their behaviour and intimate relationships are closely policed by elders, and they find this suffocating (ibid., p.169, and see Gillespie, 1993: 36). Neighbours, says Gillespie, affords her interviewees relative freedom from such government. They can discuss issues and practise versions of themselves prohibited by kinship structures. This, Gillespie notes, is especially the case for female interviewees. They face tighter restrictions than male respondents, and are particularly impressed by the freedom afforded to and control exhibited by Neighbours' young women characters (Gillespie, 1995: 169). Indeed respondents of both genders indicated to Gillespie that Neighbours inspired self-determination and personal freedom: "I just used to look at them (Charlene and Scott) and think to myself, 'How can I improve?'" ('Diljit', ibid., p.174).

This will to fantasy and self-transformation is exhibited by Gillespie's respondents despite their scepticism of 'western' representations and the obvious differences between Ramsay Street and the Asian communities of Southall. Gillespie's explanation for this is that her interviewees did not so much identify with the characters, substantive representations or content of Neighbours as with its narrative situations and its "very processes of narration" (p.149). The ability of Neighbours to encourage change and debate, argues Gillespie,
"resides, in the last analysis, less in the substance of its representations than in the homology between the modes of narration which characterise it as a soap, and those which prevail in the dense kinship, social and communicative networks of Southall." (Gillespie, 1995: 174).

The relation of Gillespie's respondents to Neighbours may be culturally specific, but I want to question the way in which she explains this relationship. What is first most obvious is that despite Gillespie's insistence that her respondents' engagements with the programme result from their immediate experiences as Southall British-Asians, very similar responses are given to me by teenagers from the Lothians and Fife. They, too, use Neighbours as a resource by which to fashion themselves, judge others and practise imaginary and real life scenarios. My respondents may seem more 'cool' and knowing than those of Gillespie, but this does not detract from the important similarities between the responses of the two groups. Both groups use the programme as a guide to self knowledge and fantasizing and self-government. The programme in both cases is part of the network by which the young people simultaneously are governed and govern themselves. To say that my interviewees, by being more cool, are better able to 'see through' Neighbours' project is a mistake. The reverse of this is that their apparently greater expertise (greater than Neighbours, greater than Gillespie's interviewees) in knowing 'the right thing to do' is evidence that they have been more fully seduced - interpellated - by Neighbours' illusory message. One of my most astute interviewees was not duped when she said that - like Gillespie's respondents - she thought that the programmes were "an inspiration for some people, for me".
The notions of discursive practice and government which I have stressed throughout this thesis are generally absent from Gillespie's argument. Relatedly, she tends to take her interviewees' responses at face value. Forging new identities, with friends and fantasizing about self-determination, romance and the future with the help of Neighbours and an academic study are every bit practices in government as traditional kinship structures. The former practices, which Gillespie casts as more liberating, might also, as I have argued, in some ways relate to as well as oppose the latter culture.

The nature of my interviewees' interdiscursive negotiations is immensely complicated. The same is true of Gillespie's interviewees. In their responses they simultaneously show a commitment to community and kinship while rejecting their strictures. My female interviewees, like those of Gillespie, aspire to and practise autonomy. As I note in chapter 5, one of my all-female groups saw kinship, especially the attitudes of their fathers, as a restriction on this. The same group, though, apparently saw no contradiction in its attack on Neighbours' Brenda as a scarlet woman. My interviewees also tend to ironically distance themselves from their fathers' disposition toward Neighbours, but simultaneously - to some extent at least, and combining it with more recent forms - reproduce it as a discourse. Using an ethnic frame, we might argue that the discourse of my respondents' fathers (as well as being Ien Ang's ideology of mass culture) emerged from a Scottish or northern identity - canny, deflating pretention, I kent his faither et cetera. Ethnicity, however, only begins to explain such an attitude. To Scottishness/northerness we would have to add gender, class, and a particular type of asceticism.
Gillespie's notions of context and negotiation, then, I would argue, are too limited. My study indicates that it might be useful to consider not only what is special to young Southall British-Asians' cultural experiences, but also what they share with teenagers in other parts of Britain. The fit between the narrative structure of Neighbours and the Southall teenagers' community and kinship patterns seems to me too straightforward. It neglects not only the broader historical matrix of which contemporary practices are a part, but also what I have argued is special to Neighbours. The theory of Neighbours' structure and effectivity which Gillespie employs is not only familiar from my review of soap opera literature in chapter 1; it also undermines the strength of her argument about ethnicity.

To explain her interviewees' responses Gillespie combines her knowledge of their local communities with what I have argued is now an orthodox model of soap opera analysis. She draws on David Buckingham's (1987) literary, reader-oriented analysis of EastEnders (Gillespie, 1995: 161). Neighbours' extended - protensive, retensive, lateral - narrative gaps "encourage speculative talk about characters and their relationships. Hence young people's marked tendency to perceive soaps in terms of gossip and to identify with the process of narration rather than with any one individual character." (ibid., p.162). Gillespie neglects here what I have argued is special to Neighbours' form. Neighbours and Home and Away, I have argued, are especially inviting of particular practices of judgement and expertise partly because of how they diverge from (established soap opera) generic norms. Crudely, they do not encourage self-management and transformation by dint of being typical soap operas; rather they are practitioners of such
techniques and achieve this status by being more fully members of a particular arena for learning than I would argue is the case for most soap operas - and which begins to be indicated by their narrative form.

Further, separating the narrative content and form of Neighbours and viewers' engagements with them is more difficult than Gillespie's analysis suggests. My interviewees, as chapter 5 shows, engage with the programme at various levels, moving between the generic and the referential, blurring the appearance, behaviour, and inner selves or personalities of characters. If self-mangement and transformation are central to the texts' form, then how characters are represented - as gendered, domestic, contemplative and aspiring selves, not structural functions or rounded characters - is an integral part of this. Indeed absolutely no part of Neighbours and Home and Away, I would argue, does not make some contribution to the programmes' discursive regime - and as such cannot be counted out as part of interviewees' negotiation with the texts which is simultaneously a practice in identity formulation.

The logic of Gillespie's argument is that her respondents see something real in the structure of Neighbours beyond its content. From the analyses of Ang (1985), Modleski (1982) and others this seems familiar - and I will not repeat the criticisms of anti-realism made in chapter 1. (11). In this context, the problem, I would argue, is not only that a genre orthodoxy is extended on what I consider to be unsafe ground. More than this, soap opera's anti-realist, reader-oriented, 'open', progressive (but now thoroughly recognizable) structure is now able to make authentic connections not only with what is special to the feminine condition (as it is experienced by women in Holland, the USA
and Britain), but with the unique experiences of young British-Asians in Southall. More than at any point in Gillespie's rich and valuable ethnography, here ethnicity as a meaningful category threatens to disappear altogether.

(ii) Class

The relationship between contemporary patterns of class and the regime of self-government examined above is also an extremely difficult and important question. The question has not been the focus of this study, and, like ethnicity, it is not one that the study can answer by itself. However, like ethnicity, class is one area into which the study might usefully be extended, further, comparative empirical work being a logical first step.

The theorists to whose work I refer in chapter 6 argue that generally, in the modern period and in 'developed' countries, self knowledge is generalized as a common sense practice and regime of government. As far as class is concerned, I would argue that this is supported by my empirical study. Class divisions, though seldom extreme, existed within the small sample of young people I interviewed; and, alongside some important differences, all, I would argue, engaged with Home and Away and Neighbours and the interviews in a similar fashion. Consistently, respondents from varying backgrounds asserted that they knew what was the appropriate behaviour for a particular scenario - a particular textual, but frequently more broadly imaginative and ethical scenario. Almost all considered themselves to be experts in the discussion and practice of self-management and intimate relationships. Importantly, in group and individual interviews this was quickly naturalized
as a common sense way with which to engage with the programmes and the interview, and did not emerge singularly from my questions or from dominant interviewees.

As I have noted, the study's 'coolest' and most critically distant responses tended to be offered to me in the individual interviews. Difficulties of access meant that these home sessions were more singularly middle-class in constitution than the group interviews in school. In all of the homes I visited education was highly valued and most of the older interviewees expected to enter higher education in their late-teens or early twenties. However, none of my interviewees came from distinctly wealthy homes or attended fee-paying schools. Further, one of my most articulate and self-possessed interviewees was a member of a working-class household. (In chapter 5, I have considered the responses of L (16) in some detail. Her father works in a Fife shipyard. Her home and immediate community are working-class. L intends to study law at university.)

In the individual interviews, L (16) and D (16) were the respondents who exhibited the most aesthetic knowledge and aspired to the greatest cultural distinction. (D was easily the most aesthetically knowing and cool of my interviewees and was to study English literature at university in the year following my interview with him.) However, not only were nearly all of my interviewees able and keen to make artistic and generic criticisms of Neighbours and Home and Away, but the skills which L and D exhibit are not singularly about art and class.

Beyond those whose work I have considered in chapter 6, a number of theorists and researchers support my argument that expertise in self knowledge and management crosses classes,
and perhaps increasingly so. These researchers and critics are differently motivated and in some cases reach quite different conclusions. They share, though, the belief that the practices I have considered above are generalized.

The most critical of the contemporary regime of self-government are theoreticians like Arlie Russell Hochschild, to whose arguments I referred earlier (Hochschild, 1994). Like Hochschild, critics like Frances Bonner, Paul du Gay and Mike Featherstone base their critiques on analyses of recent media and culture. Also like Hochschild, they believe that the growth in self-government as a common sense practice directly results from the expansion of consumer culture and middle-class hegemony.

Bonner and du Gay analyse the popular domestic drama thirtysomething (Bonner and du Gay, 1992). They argue that it results from and reproduces the rise of the new petite bourgeoisie. Following Bourdieu (1984), Bonner and du Gay argue that this class expands and succeeds in legitimating its lifestyle through its "central involvement in the production and dissemination of consumer culture imagery and information" (Bonner and du Gay, 1992: 80). thirtysomething naturalizes the self as an investing, enterprising, consuming figure, competitively individual with its values rooted in consumer culture. The therapeutic, say Bonner and du Gay, is integral to the new petite bourgeoisie, whose primary project is the self. In a discourse which emphasises choice and individual rights, and for which the furthest reaches of the social is the family, thirtysomething elides broader social contexts and questions and neglects any notion of social obligation (ibid., p.86ff). Further, the growth of the new petite bourgeoisie is concomitant with the
expansion of an insecure and underpaid servicing class. This class is not seduced, but repressed by a new consumption-led regime of government (p.87).

I have already referred to Mike Featherstone's analysis of bodily regimes in contemporary consumer culture (Featherstone, 1991a). These regimes, Featherstone argues, go well beyond body work. Self-government is generalized in the contemporary period, and, like Bonner and du Gay, Featherstone argues that this results from the growth of the new petite bourgeoisie which "is concerned to expand and legitimate its own particular dispositions and lifestyle" (Featherstone, 1991b: 84). This new section of the middle-classes succeeds both in discrediting traditional values and family-centred remedies, and in undermining bourgeois achievement ideology. An individual's performance is no longer judged on universalistic criteria, but on 'extra-functional elements' - that is, on their skills in relations management, style and bodily presentation; on their personalities (Featherstone, 1991a: 191). The new petite bourgeoisie's expansion is allied to the growth of the 'helping professions' which favour therapy, personal growth and scientism:

"In education, social work, health education, marriage guidance, probation, the helping professionals have not only been able to develop careers based upon interpersonal skills but have also transferred and imposed the new modes of emotional and relational management onto their clients. Social relations take on a veneer of informality and equality, but in actuality demand greater discipline and self-control as management through command gives way to management by negotiation. The 'negotiating self' is...granted legitimation outside the work sphere as new styles of social interaction spread into family life not only through the direct intervention of experts but also through the feature articles, advice pages and problem programmes of the popular media. In effect the professional-managerial middle class, which expanded in the
course of the twentieth century are (sic) in the process of becoming 'the arbiter of contemporary lifestyles and opinions'." (Featherstone, 1991a: 191-192).

Two influential critics who meet to some extent Featherstone and Bonner and du Gay's arguments regarding the spread and persuasiveness of self-government in the contemporary period are Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck. Giddens and Beck, however, are more sanguine about the origins and effects of the cultural changes which they argue currently affect 'western' societies.

Beck supports Featherstone's argument that traditional structures of communality and support have diminished in strength and importance in 'developed' countries. Individualization, he says, is no longer only a middle-class value and practice; autonomy and control over one's life are sought by all classes. The effort after autonomy necessitates the willingness across classes to depend less on home and kinship support. Life becomes a 'biographical project' entailing greater mobility, experiment and risk. New generations recognize these new structures, and that their projects and the risks they entail are shared. A new attitude - a new structure of feeling, we may say - emerges which is supported not by neighbourhood, family or class but by a network of shared 'life interests' and ambitions. Beck argues that changes in employment and education have played the most important part in effecting these new structures. Both institutions place a primacy on competition and individual capacities and rewards. Young people now stay longer in education and training where they seek to enhance their chances of entering a more complex and diverse labour
market. Changing employment patterns, argues Beck, are the principal cause of increased individualization and mobility (Beck, 1987).

Beck argues that this 'destructuring' is most evident in the social and cultural practices of Germany's youth. It is however, he says, a process which in the post-war period has occurred and speeded up across wealthy industrialized societies:

"(S)ubcultural class identities have dissipated, class distinctions based on 'status' have lost their traditional support, and processes for the 'diversification' and 'individualization' of life styles and ways of life have been set in motion. As a result, the hierarchical model of social classes and strata has increasingly been subverted. It no longer corresponds to the realities." (Beck, 1987: 341).

Less specifically interested in class, but in general keeping with Beck's argument, Anthony Giddens argues that late-modernity witnesses the 'disembedding' of social relations (Giddens, 1991: 209; and see Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994). The new ethos of self-growth, says Giddens, is a sign of and plays a key part in major social changes - changes which interpenetrate the local and the global. Central to these changes is the emergence of life politics. Life politics owes it largest debt to the women's movement and feminism, which put into radical doubt the nature of politics and identity. Life politics, though, should not be understood only as an offshoot of particular movements; as a new version of the emancipatory politics which have characterized modernity; or as the 'politics of the personal'. We are dealing, argues Giddens, with much more deep-lying and irreversible changes:
"In the tension between the privatising of passion and the saturation of the public domain by sexuality, as well as in some of the conflicts which today divide men and women, we can see new political agendas. Particularly in its connection with gender, sexuality gave rise to the politics of the personal, a phrase that is misunderstood if tied only to emancipation. What we should rather term life politics is a politics of life-style, operating in the context of institutional reflexivity. It is concerned, not to 'politicise', in a narrow sense of that term, life-style decisions but to remoralise them - more accurately put, to bring to the surface those moral and existential issues pushed away from everyday life by the sequestration of experience. They are issues which fuse abstract philosophy, ethical ideas and very practical concerns." (Giddens, 1992: 197).

The new politics, argues Giddens, are founded on the principles of autonomy and authenticity. These principles are not based on ethical absolutes, but on a 'rolling contract' - a dynamic network of rights and responsibilities. At the heart of the contract are the autonomous self and the pure relationship. In the former, in 'post-traditional' societies, the question, Who shall I be?, is inseparable from, How shall I live? The latter refers to a "situation where a social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within in it." (Giddens, 1994: 246). The sine qua non of the pure relationship, says Giddens, is free and open communication. And crucially, its principles shape both public and private behaviour, local and global spheres (Giddens, 1992: 195). (12).
3. Conclusions

**Individualizing and totalizing, but neither atoms nor monoliths**

In their assessments of the generalization of self-government in the contemporary period, all of the critics I have referred to under class are accurate, I would argue, to some extent. Featherstone and Giddens, in particular, extend the historicisation I provide in chapter 6, and come closest to its theoretical basis. Featherstone usefully indicates the multiple, interrelated reach of particular practices. And the rolling contract structure of relations informing the new political realities identified by Giddens, is precisely the form, I would argue, followed by *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* and, frequently, my interviewees.

However, I also want to argue that - as well as Bonner and du Gay and Beck, if less so - Featherstone and Giddens depend too heavily on singular notions of origins or effects, as well as on familiar dichotomies. These tend to leave my respondents either too singularly repressed, or too liberated in their autonomy. In making some brief criticisms of these theorists, I want to re-emphasise the notions of power as a simultaneously repressive and emancipatory force and history as a process of stability and renewal. I also want to argue that if the regime of self-government discussed above is variously originated, then, relatedly, it does not point only in one direction.
Ulrich Beck is accurate to suggest that all sections of society now seek greater individual autonomy. This desire both characterizes modernity, and, as Beck argues, has been lent greater emphasis in recent decades. It is now both an expectation and a necessity that 'modern' populations learn self-government and autonomy across the various spheres of their lives. Beck neglects, however, that this tendency occurs alongside the maintenance of entrenched class structures and inequalities. This is shown clearly, and as a counter to Beck's thesis, by the recent empirical studies of some British sociologists (Chisholm, 1990; and Jones and Wallace, 1990).

As I argued earlier in this chapter, like Hochschild and other theorists, Beck overlooks, too, that if kinship structures are now fragmenting in new ways - as part of an on-going, historical process - then arguably they are also re-combining in new ways. This is Giddens' argument (Giddens, 1992: 96), and is one way in which his thesis, usefully, I would argue, diverges from that of Beck. And as I argued earlier, following Rose, the family should not be thought of as the casualty of changes in social relations, but as playing an integral part in them.

Bonner and du Gay also argue that the apparent growth in self-government as a desirable practice is an indicator of the increasing fragmentation and 'individualization' of society. This, as I note in chapter 1, is how Tania Modleski characterizes modernity (Modleski, 1982: 108). For Modleski, soap opera compensates for the atomization women experience in the late twentieth century. For Bonner and du Gay, thirtysomething functions to extend this experience for all - albeit that the new middle classes are seduced, the new
servicing classes repressed; for both classes thirtysomething's representations are illusory. Bonner and du Gay are the most critical of the theorists to whom I have referred under class. Their arguments are open to question on a number of counts.

Firstly, in their emphasis on illusory individualism it is arguable that Bonner and du Gay both fail to recognise what is special to the contemporary regime of self-government and invoke a familiar type of nostalgia. The former is the criticism Giddens makes of critics like Christopher Lasch, who "mistake the new ethos of self-discovery for the 'old-modern' aggrandising individual" (Giddens, 1991: 209). Lasch and others, argues Giddens, fail to identify the major social transitions indicated by the current ethos of self-growth. The latter tendency of Bonner and du Gay's argument, Nikolas Rose argues, marks critiques of modernity and 'individualism' throughout this century at least (Rose, 1989: 217).

Protestantism, Romanticism and the market economy have all been invoked as the causes of the tendency of modern societies to look inward; and in recent times, in the burgeoning of the therapeutic culture of the self, this type of criticism has been renewed. Marxist and historical criticism, Rose notes, has tended to consider the contemporary culture of the self to be the logical outcome of late capitalism, and has been marked by a sense of regret. Therapy can only be a palliative, a "fetishized element (of) consumer culture, thriving on the very disappointment (its) unfulfillable promises (can) only accentuate." (ibid., p.215). Various theorists point to an era prior to the weakening of the 'social superego', when communal values were shared, and a thriving and genuinely
(critical, artistic) public sphere existed. Such criticisms, argues Rose, are not only misleading in their nostalgia for a better, more public past, they also depend on a concept of the individual as previously more authentically autonomous. The question, Rose argues, should be posed in the opposite manner. The relation, for example, between the 'psy-sciences' and political power does not reveal the weakening of subjective autonomy. It shows, rather, how the self is constructed as a key term and object of expert knowledge in the analysis of social problems and realities. The distinction between public and private is understood, then, not as a stable category of analysis, but as "a mobile resource in these systems of knowledge and power" (Rose, 1989: 217).

This meets Giddens' argument about the changing nature of social relations at both public and private levels. It also connects with complicated and on-going debates about the transformation of the public sphere and the relationship between public and private practices. Here is not the place to go into these debates in detail. However, the logic of this thesis is that private practices and the contemporary regime of self-government are not merely the expressions or results of changes at broader levels; they are part of those changes. As I have argued with the help of Nikolas Rose, analyses which conceive of the public sphere as devastated and individuals as enfeebled, fail to grasp, for example, "the ways in which the private family has, on the one hand, been linked into new forms of political rationality which have developed over the last century, and, on the other hand, has been central to transformations in subjective realities and desires." (Rose, 1987: 66).
We need, as Giddens argues, to trace uneven developments in the public sphere, and to rethink entrenched understandings of political life (Giddens, 1991: 174ff; and see Mort, 1989: 40-41, and Cohen, 1997b: 32-33). What are not altogether productive, as I argued in chapter 1, are anti-realist critiques like those of Bonner and du Gay which understand generic entertainment only as impoverished and reductionary. It is misleading, as Rose argues, to analyse "representations of...family life and so forth as if they distort experience or impose false consciousness; they are crucial aspects of the processes by which individuals constitute their selves and their lives, and come to establish certain 'personal' aspirations and evaluations." (Rose, 1987: 72-73).

As I have argued, we need to recognize how programmes like *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*, and *thirtysomething*, explicitly articulate and negotiate new political and social realities. It should go without saying that generic programmes will represent these realities in a bounded fashion - and that in some texts the terrain on which struggles occur will be considerably 'flatter' than others. Where Bonner and du Gay's argument is also misguided, I would argue, is in the way in which it casts expanding consumerism insidiously and as a cause of changing social relations.

Bonner and du Gay's notion of consumerism is closely allied to their critique of illusory individualism. It is also a familiar way in which the effects of modern consumer cultures are understood. Arguably, Bonner and du Gay reactivate "the earlier melancholy 'aristocratic' disdain with which critics of 'mass society' regarded the rise of new consumer goods, advertising and the like" (Miller and
Rose, 1997: 2). Such discourses, I have noted, are hard to avoid when analysing consumerism. As a number of critics have noted, they frequently combine ideas about nationhood, femininity, youth and aesthetic value (as well as Miller and Rose, see Frith and Horne, 1987; Hebdige, 1988; and White, 1983 - and see chapter 2, footnote 4, above). In chapter 6 I referred to Stuart Ewan's influential historicisation of consumerism. Ewan's analysis helps us to understand part of what is typical to Home and Away and Neighbours. Its conclusions, however, like those of Bonner and du Gay, leave consumer cultures and their participants at one end of a familiar dichotomy. The ideological pressures of the consumer market, Ewan argues, are "passively received" (Ewan, 1976: 170). Young people, fathers and mothers are "functionally (defined) by businessmen and their advertising" (ibid., p.138). Consumerism robs collectivity from the family and mothers of their 'natural' homemaking skills (Ewen, 1976: 173-182).

More helpfully, as I indicate in chapter 6, Jackson Lears shows how, historically, consumerism is a broad and multiple term, its influence crossing spheres and mundane practices. (13). In the contemporary period it is arguable both that consumerism permeates our lives more comprehensively, sustaining and helping to increase social divisions, and that its 'relative autonomy' and multiple symbolic value is heightened. Bonner and du Gay, with others, favour the former end of this duality. We must recognize, however, not only the historical part that consumerism has played in the contemporary regime of self knowledge and government, but also that consumer culture now provides many of the resources for 'new politics', identities and modes of existence (Lury, 1996: 240). The discourses of choice and self-realization at the heart of consumerism, for example,
Inform official and unofficial ('large' and 'small') political imperatives (ibid., p.248; and see Probyn, 1993b and Mort, 1989).

Arguably the analysis of Giddens and especially Beck turns Bonner and du Gay's critique of consumerism on its head - veers, that is, toward the possibility end of the problem or possibility dichotomy. Giddens' thesis, I would argue, is considerably more historically and theoretically sophisticated than that of Beck. However, while Giddens is alive to the economic and material realities within which the contemporary regime of self-government operates, he nonetheless is quite sanguine about its democratic possibilities. In his discussion of sexuality and relationships, in particular (Giddens, 1992), I would argue that Giddens tends to exaggerate the degree of autonomy afforded to 'plastic', malleable selves. How autonomous and transformative one really is, clearly will vary considerably across class and ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Giddens for example tends to present the intimate and sexual practices of gay people as paradigmatic of the possibilities presented by changes in social relations (ibid., p.15). What tends to get flattened out in this specific case is that the relationships and selves that gay people fashion and depend upon result more from struggle than play - entail, as Bourdieu puts it, making virtues out of necessities (Bourdieu, 1990: 54).

As I noted in chapter 6, following Jackson Lears, Giddens and Beck are not the first academic assessors of contemporary consumer cultures to be persuaded of the potential they offer for a new politics and self-realization. They have also, as Celia Lury and Susan Bordo have noted, been overtaken considerably in their
optimism by some other observers. For Hilary Radner, for example, shopping becomes a way in which women realize self-worth, control and autonomy (Radner, in Lury, 1996: 148). And for Cathy Schwichtenberg, the new sexual politics enables women to use their transformative bodies and identities strategically, as an on-going and multiple challenge to gender norms (Schwichtenberg, in Bordo, 1993: 282).

Such understandings of changing identities and relations, Bordo argues, institute new versions of the multiple self, shorn not only of unity, but of any critical or historical location. They contribute, she says, to a 'postmodern conversation' intoxicated with individual choice and difference and suspicious of generalization and coherent patterns of any kind (ibid., p.276). Such analyses, Bordo argues, also are representative of a familiar and unfortunate appropriation of Michel Foucault's ideas. The notion that power is multiple and generative rather than monolithic and directive gets translated into an understanding of power as the possession of individuals. (14).

In my analysis of the interviews I have emphasised notions of cultural practice and multiplicity; that my interviewees are expert negotiators and use the programmes as resources to fashion themselves and take up more than one position. With the help of Bordo I want to stress that the resources my respondents use are always limited, the positions they take up always situated. They reproduce and negotiate gender and other relations on an uneven, not flat and limitless terrain (Bordo, 1993: 278). Power, as Bordo helpfully reminds us, is uneven and not something we 'possess'. It is, rather,
"a dynamic of non-centralized forces, its dominant historical forms attaining their hegemony, not from magisterial design or decree, but through multiple 'processes, of different origin and scattered location', regulating and normalizing the most intimate and minute elements of the construction of time, space, desire and embodiment. This conception of power does not entail that there are no dominant positions, social structures or ideologies emerging from the play of forces; the fact that power is not held by any one does not entail that it is equally held by all. It is 'held' by no one; rather, people and groups are positioned differentially within it. This model is particularly useful to the analysis of male dominance and female subordination, so much of which is reproduced 'voluntarily', through our self-normalization to everyday habits of masculinity and femininity." (ibid., Bordo quoting in part here Foucault, 1977).

Further, however confident and assertive numerous of my interviewees were, we must continue to ask - as I have at various points above - to what degree did they use Home and Away and Neighbours and the interviews to fantasize themselves into positions of autonomy? Had the sessions been directed at their own lives and intimate relationships my respondents might have been less assured and have had to confront more difficult contradictions. (15). Though interviewees consistently made reference to something conceived of as real life, the introduction of an actual lived experience as a means of comparison was in fact rare. This is to suggest neither that the fantasies of my interviewees are hidden or unimportant, nor that some of their responses point to something false. All of the responses I was offered, whether aspirational or based on lived reality, constitute important social practices; and however minimally, the interviews are one part of the lives of respondents where they can enjoy practising critical expertise and a measure of autonomy.
The logic of the work of critics like Featherstone and especially Bonner and du Gay is that this measure of autonomy, depending on the class trajectories of my respondents, is minimal, illusory or non-existent. The question of class and its relation to expertise in self-management, as I have noted, is complicated - more complicated, I would argue, than Bonner and du Gay and Featherstone suggest. A number of critics have argued that Featherstone's analysis of a new model of middle-class hegemony, with a privileged lifestyle and reflecting self at is centre, depends too heavily on speculation (Lury, 1996: 103ff provides a useful review of the debates). Featherstone and Bonner and du Gay both (all) largely rely on the critical framework provided by Bourdieu (1984), but employ this without the support of the related and extensive empirical work conducted by Bourdieu and his colleagues. The question of how easily 1960s and 70s French class-based cultural practices are translatable to the experiences and practices of American and British populations in the 1980s and 90s remains more open than Featherstone and Bonner and du Gay's analyses suggest - and is explicitly challenged by some recent research. (16).

Most usefully, Lury suggests that the types of practice analysed by Featherstone may be appropriated in different ways and are not used only to one end - that is, for the consolidation of the new middle classes' hegemony. This, I think, is important, given that almost all of my respondents - boys and girls, from the lower-middle and working classes - exhibited expertise in self and generic reflexivity; reproduced the discourse of calculating hedonism identified by Featherstone (Jackson Lears' scarcity and abundance therapy); and both immersed themselves in and distanced
themselves from the programmes in turns. How my interviewees use these skills in their lives, and the extent to which they are enabled to use these techniques in their future lives, will, as Lury indicates, vary depending on a number of interrelated factors, including their class trajectories (ibid., p.245).

Bonner and du Gay note that they want to avoid the naiveties of reflectionism in their analysis (Bonner and du Gay, 1992: 78). I want to argue, though, that their understanding of the contemporary regime of self-government proceeds little further than reflectionism. This is an important argument to make in the concluding parts of this thesis. From Bonner and du Gay’s critique it would be easy to conclude that the practices I have considered above have emerged as a cultural force relatively recently, and are the effects only of broader changes - changes, especially, in Britain and the United States in the 1970s and 80s, which have resulted in shifts in the nature of class, politics and employment patterns, and in the rise of consumerism. This conclusion would neglect the broad and multiple genesis of contemporary techniques in self-government; that such techniques are integral to a number of recent historical changes and practices; and that, as Lury indicates, such techniques are not infinitely but are always relatively open to appropriation and re-use.

Bonner and du Gay’s analysis focuses on a particular type of enterprising figure now very familiar to the ways in which we re-imagine the 1980s. As Nikolas Rose argues, to consider either that such a figure derived its force solely from the apparent triumph of the New Right, or to seek satisfaction in the waning of the persuasive power of a particular class fraction believing it to signal the demise of an era of
self-obsession, is a mistake. The language of enterprise, notes Rose, is one way only of articulating ethical presuppositions which are already widely shared across institutional practices and public and private forms of government in modern liberal societies:

"Specific styles of political discourse may be ephemeral, and the salvationist rhetoric of enterprise culture espoused by the British conservatism of the 1980s may fade away. But the presupposition of the autonomous, choosing, free self as the value, ideal, and objective underpinning and legitimating political activity imbues the political mentalities of the modern West, as well as those now sweeping what used to be termed Eastern Europe." (Rose, 1996: 151). (17).

Rose's work indicates the need for historical and theoretical models less one-dimensional than those used by critics like Bonner and du Gay. It also points to the need for more empirical work. If self-government is as persuasive and integral to most of our lives, as Rose argues and this study confirms, then we must investigate the broad and specific ways in which particular groups and individuals participate in the contemporary regime. This study's focus has been how it is that young people engage with popular television entertainment. It shows how these engagements connect with history and with broader social practices. The study also invites us, though, to look further - in particular into other parts of the lives of my respondents. How do the skills they exhibit translate into other spheres? - for example, their formal education, their family lives, their peer and extra-familial relationships, their participation in other media, leisure and consumer cultures, their current and future working lives. By investigating these areas, and by conducting more extensive and comparative research, we might also uncover more obvious and
significant class and gender differences in interviewees' practices - and in the uses, restrictions and outcomes of their self-management skills. Clearly, too, this study and that of Marie Gillespie (1995) invites greater comparisons between the practices of different regional and ethnic groups in Scotland and the UK.

As well as this study and the theoretical framework I have begun to elaborate, some of the recent valuable empirical work that can be learned from and extended has been conducted by researchers like Phil Cohen (1984 and 1997a) and Beverley Skeggs (1997). Both of these researchers point to the need for an understanding of the cross-relationship between a number of historical discourses and determinants - in particular the important ways in which gender and class interrelate. They also point to the multiple but situated ways in which self knowledge is practised and reworked in specific contexts. (18). Skeggs' research in particular shows how the self-governing practices of a group of working-class women are at once generalized and highly specific. Different in various ways from my own, Skeggs' study nonetheless highlights similar tendencies. (19).

Skeggs' study shows us how some of the broadly-learned skills exhibited by my interviewees might be practised in a specific context. A group of academically and economically disadvantaged working-class women and a Community Care college course in the north of England might seem a long way from Edinburgh teenagers expertly deconstructing Home and Away and Neighbours. I would argue, however, that the college course - as well as the women's non-formal education - is part of the same network of learning I have discussed above. Crudely, we might say that Home and Away and Neighbours primarily concern themselves with community care.
Further, history indicates that there is more than a good chance that some of my working-class female respondents, in particular, will spend large parts of their lives caring for others - paid, lowly paid, and often unpaid. The skills they will practise out of necessity then, I am arguing, are not wholly divorced from the ones they exhibited to me.

Plainly and painfully, Skeggs shows us that if self knowledge and management represent a possibility, in particular social and cultural contexts they also represent making the best uses of available resources - making, as I suggested earlier, virtues out of necessities (Skeggs, 1997: 72). Skeggs employs a similar Foucauldian framework to the one I have used above. Her study shows that power and identity formulation are productive, not one-way processes. It also shows, however, that techniques in self-government are always practised on uneven ground - and that choice and the possibility of emancipation are considerably more limited in some contexts than others. While my interviewees were highly critical of the limited boundaries of the worlds of Home and Away and Neighbours, the real choices afforded to them in their current and future lives may or may not outstrip those offered to the young people in the two programmes.
Footnotes

1. The only obvious exception being Stuart Ewan (1976). I will make some criticisms of Ewan's study later in this chapter.

2. I do not want to imply that Buckingham is guilty of this. It does, however, tend to be the destination of Bonner and du Gay's (1992) critique, to which I will make reference later in this chapter.

3. Phil Cohen also provides a useful summary of the bio-political premises which support entrenched discourses of youthism (Cohen, 1997a: 182).

4. Hochschild's analysis is based on the recurring patterns she identifies in most of the recent advice books aimed at women in the United States. Her critique might seem all the more germane to this study because of the similarities between the structures and project of the books and those of Home and Away and Neighbours. Like the picture strips of Jackie to which I referred in chapter 3, the books privilege self-knowledge and management. The reader is addressed as a friend and the frame of reference for advice seems to be nothing other than the 'life situation' itself. In the narratives, communication itself is the narrative substance and dramatic high point. Like the key intermediaries in Neighbours and Home and Away, the advice books' writers and experts function as self and emotional investment counsellors.

5. The two Australian soap operas are unlikely to be more progressive in this respect. More probable is that the two American ones will have shifted in their representations of intimacy since the period of Harrington and Bielby's research.

6. In Narrative 3 of Episode 3, Home and Away, Michael is at the beginning of a characteristic narrative of self-growth where he must learn to relinquish the notion he has of himself as the male, breadwinning head of the family. In Episode 1 of Home and Away, Sophie is not altogether unusual in being a single mother supported by Summer Bay's wider kinship network. And, in Narrative 2 of Episode 3, Neighbours, while it is Brad who takes the decisive action, who decides that Beth and he will finally unite, he nonetheless then follows Beth to Sydney so that she can pursue her career in construction.

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7. Lynne Joyrich is equally critical, and makes the same argument as that of Jeffords (Joyrich, 1990).

8. Not only is Roxanne commodified along conventionally feminine lines, she is also shown to be in transparent denial of her 'true' Cinderella self. That is, the text repeatedly and explicitly tells us that however independent Roxanne is, what she really needs to be happy and complete is a man. Neighbours' equivalent - tall, slim, late twenty/thirty something, conventionally-feminine-attractive character, Gaby, dispenses, even, with denial. Gaby does not so much give in to Cinderella as gladly gives up trying to be an autonomous, postmodern cowgirl.

9. And I should make a number of caveats here about how reproducible my findings may or may not be. Firstly, Home and Away and Neighbours may be used and interpreted differently depending on their ethnic or regional context of reception. It is only through comparisons that I would be able to determine the importance of my interviewees' Scottishness (south-east Scottishness, Britishness). I have some measure of comparison with Marie Gillespie's British-Asian respondents, and I discuss Gillespie's study shortly under ethnicity. As I argue, my findings are lent strength by those of Gillespie because of the similar way, generally, in which her interviewees engage with Neighbours. Secondly, as I indicate shortly, I can say little about the importance of my interviewees' class positions with regard to how they have responded to the programmes and the interviews. As I note at the close of chapter 7, Bev Skeggs (1997) recent study is by far the best illustration to date of - in a particular class context - the painful gaps between self-management as a desire and reality. Skeggs' study is exemplary in its methodological rigor and theoretical sophistication. Skeggs employs a similar Foucauldian framework to the one used in this thesis. However, her more extensive empirical work and critical femininst perspective allow her to make some useful and detailed criticisms of Foucault's concept of the self. She does this while retaining the notion of power - its terrain and effectivity - advanced in this thesis. As I note at the close of chapter 7, this study would undoubtedly benefit from temporal as well as cultural comparisons - from the longitudinal perspective afforded to Skeggs; then I might have been able to see and work with my interviewees in important 'adjacent domains', and to witness just how idealized were some of their more confident responses.
Finally, a note is required on history - beyond those questions I address at the beginning of chapter 6. Perhaps the study's biggest historical question is the use of Paul Hunter's examination of 17th and 18th century pre-novel literature (I have already made some reference to this question in note 3 to chapter 6). Hunter's study does look at a specific period and a specific population. However, it is also a radical re-thinking of how to conceive of the novel and literature which makes a strong connection with the work of Colin Mercer (as well as Nancy Armstrong's excellent *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, 1987). Mercer is able to make the connection to the contemporary moment more directly, only, than Hunter. Both of their studies go a long way, I would argue, toward explaining contemporary texts and relations. Further, I would not have included Hunter's study had I not been so persuaded by its argument, as well as by the rigor of Hunter's research. Hunter is acutely aware of the theoretical and empirical difficulties involved in re-writing history. He has conducted considerable empirical work in order to fully engage with the specific debates - e.g. on class and literacy - which are on-going in literary and cultural studies. The latter, I believe, still has a lot to learn from studies like that of Hunter; and I am indebted to my supervisor, Bridget Fowler, for introducing me to Hunter's work.

10. Intentionally or not, in the latter parts of his study Rose tends to suggest that popular media and culture are the late heirs to an earlier generative process; and that the way in which they articulate practices in self-government makes sense with reference to, is the logical outcome of his genealogy. Hunter, Mercer et al show us the important relationships between popular culture, science and government throughout the modern period. Recently, Rose has shown some of the important links between science and consumerism in twentieth century regimes in self-government (Miller and Rose, 1997).

11. While, for instance, Ien Ang may privilege *Dallas*' visual affective elements over its 'relativized' dialogue (Ang, 1985: 73), and Gillespie *Neighbours* 'radio-inherited' dialogue over its 'low-production visual discourse' (Gillespie, 1993: 40), both critics apply the same basic theoretical model. And for another example of the same method, applied, as in Gillespie's case, to support an argument about soap opera consumption and ethnic specificity, see Miller, 1992.

12. Giddens provides a number of examples in both volumes to support this argument (see Giddens, 1991: 221ff and Giddens, 1992: 195-196).
13. Jackson Lears and Featherstone have both criticized Ewan's study for the bluntness of its critique (see Jackson Lears, 1983: 3 and Featherstone, 1991a: 175).

14. In an equally familiar fashion, Giddens turns the dichotomy round. He says that he is not interested in 'discipline' in Foucault's sense (Giddens, 1991: 218), and uses this as a foil for his somewhat optimistic analysis of 'new politics'. For a similarly misguided understanding of Foucault's ideas - we are regulated, disciplined (i.e. dominated) in new, insidious ways - see Power, 1990: 177. As I note in chapter 3, Foucault's argument, and that of the theorists I follow most closely, is not that domination and coercion have disappeared as forms of government; rather that the stimulation of subjectivities, desires and anxieties are much more pervasive and effective forms of government, and increasingly so, in the modern period.

15. This, certainly, proved to be the case in the studies of young people's intimate and sexual practices conducted by Sharon Thompson (1984) and Elizabeth Frazer (1987). The focus of Frazer's study (to which I refer in chapter 5), more accurately, is teenage schoolgirls' consumption of Jackie. However, in the context of the current discussion, when Frazer asked her interviewees to move from assessing Jackie's representations to group discussions of their own problems, conduct and relationships, she found that some were less willing or able. Notably, it was Frazer's public schoolgirl respondents who seemed least able to discuss themselves and their intimate relations. Frazer's study in fact produces some very interesting nuances and questions in this respect.

Frazer notes that her public schoolgirl interviewees soon learned the 'discourse register' required for therapeutic discussion groups; that is, when they discovered what was expected of a particular context they were in fact able to talk about themselves and their intimate relationships quite confidently. On the basis of the responses which Frazer provides, I suspect that the change in her public schoolgirls' abilities is more a question of class and confidence than a question of switching and learning discourse registers depending on very specific contexts. That is, not only were the public schoolgirls' therapeutic skills learned well in advance of a specific interview context, but I would argue that they are the same skills that they employed when they deconstructed Jackie - which are very similar to those used by my interviewees.

The hesitancy of the public schoolgirls to talk about 'personal things' in a group context may at one level be the result of class dispositions and experiences. They may have
learned, in a number of settings, that to discuss personal matters in public is 'vulgar'. Further, and bluntly, their lives may have given them less need to than is the case for Frazer’s comprehensive school interviewees. The public schoolgirls probably have been afforded greater autonomy in their personal experiences, and have less need to know and face up to the pain analysed by Ang (1985) and Modleski (1982). This begs the question to what extent do theories of gender competencies not only require to be empirically researched, but may also need to be cross-referenced and analysed alongside class and ethnic specificities. For example, Liebes and Katz' (1990) finding that economically secure Americans were more able to 'do' personal psychology than more 'traditional' communities may be complicated in a British class context.

Finally on Frazer’s study, she notes that all of her interviewees resisted Jackie’s fictional status - which is certainly in keeping with my own findings. However, and perhaps surprisingly given the above, Frazer indicates that not only were public schoolgirls more likely to compare Jackie to their real lives, but that the comprehensive interviewees were quicker to criticize Jackie "at the level of ideology" (p.416). However, and again basing this only on the responses provided by Frazer, I would argue that the comparisons which any of Frazer’s interviewees make between Jackie and their own, actual experiences are in fact rare. Rather, like my interviewees, they compare the magazine with a general perception, with ideas they have about how to be and how to act - "...it’s not true that you need the right bloke to make your life work..." ('Fiona', p.416). In this sense the responses of Frazer’s interviewees do not represent authentic resistance to illusory ideology. Rather, they are negotiations, discursive practices competing with and sometimes reproducing the discourses of Jackie.

16. In the light of her empirical work, Michele Lamont suggests that rather than incorporated wholesale the Bourdieu model needs to be adjusted to take into account national and ethnic differences, as well as important differences in dispostion and practice both within and between classes (Lamont, in Lury, 1996: 108). With the help of the research of Lamont and others, Lury extends this criticism. As well as ethnicity, class practices must be examined alongside and in relation to gender and age. Further, the class-based analysis of Featherstone and others tends to neglect the contradictory and relatively autonomous parts sometimes played by media and consumer cultures in new regimes of identity and self-knowledge. These cultures contribute to, but do not only reflect social and economic divisions. Not only, argues Lury, are the processes by which cultural capital is turned into economic capital changing.
and still not entirely clear to us, but more research is required into emergent forms of cultural expertise which are not based solely on class and formal education (Lury, 1996: 109ff.).

17. Rose argues that in the UK not all but nearly all political subjects participate in the contemporary regime of self-government. Some excluded sections continue to be governed in older, harsher ways. But even the most marginalized groups are subject to and invited to learn the same broad techniques in self knowledge and possibility - to make a project out of their own capacities, the self they could become. Even unemployment is recast as an opportunity (as well as a right) to learn and practise entrepreneurial skills. The unemployed become their own clients, entering into a contract with themselves as much as the state. They are no longer passive, dependent and in need of support; they are active job seekers whose allowances reflect their own efforts to find work - Rose, 1996: 161.

18. In his prescient and on-going studies of post-school training and education, Phil Cohen argues that we need new analytical strategies by which to explain the 'new vocationalism' (Cohen, 1984 and 1997a). In keeping with the arguments I have made above, Cohen rejects what he calls left-functionalist criticism which sees in new regimes of self-government only repetition, domination and repression (Cohen, 1984: 109, and see his notes 2 and 6). Instead, says Cohen, we must recognize how the 'new individualism' combines traditional modes of education, economic, labour and familial practice with recent political and social-scientific discourses. The persuasiveness of the new regime results from its ability both to rework residual historical practices - for example the generic 'proto-domestic' features of working-class youth labour - and to be highly transferable across a number of spheres: "Skill (subjectivized, commodified and transferable 'social and life skills') is constructed through a discursive apparatus whose networks embrace not only the specialised fields of education, counselling and occupational training, but radiate into general forms of the dominant and popular culture, connecting a whole range of political, moral and behavioural ideologies related to class and gender, on the way. The new vocationalism derives much of its legitimating support from these wider relay systems, and, in turn, seeks to articulate them to its more specialised sites of intervention." (ibid., p.116).

19. Skeggs' interviewees engage with their Community Care college course by making investments in themselves (Skeggs, 1997: 59). In so doing, they rework existing and related cultural resources - in particular, their highly gendered
and working-class familial experience. Like my interviewees, Skeggs' respondents blur ethics of conduct with recognizable personalities. Who shall I be?, and What should I do? - What type of a person is he/she?, and How have they conducted themselves? - became one question. As my interviewees tended to assess realism within conduct and personality, so Skeggs' respondents could only assess caring criteria by locating authenticity and aptitude within personality types. Skeggs' interviewees also practised situational ethics. That is, while they knew that in theory there was a generally 'right thing to do' (sacrificing personal pleasures when a friend or relative needed baby-sitting help), like Home and Away and Neighbours' characters and my interviewees, they felt that the right ethical course of action could only be followed when the full details of the specific case were known (ibid., p.70). Following Hunter (1990), example outweighed precept in importance. Further, in keeping with the logic of the regime I have discussed above, Skeggs' interviewees' work on themselves was never complete. Using the formal criteria of the college course and their own 'innate' (gendered, familial, class-based) learning, they constantly evaluated themselves - projected anxieties and desires onto the sense they had of themselves as good, 'true' carers.
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Appendix 1: Interview schedule

1. Do you watch Neighbours and Home and Away regularly?
   - how often?
   - how long have you been watching them/it?

2. Do you think that the programmes have changed during the time that you have watched them?

3. Would you count the programmes among your favourites?
   - which of the two do you prefer, and why?

4. Who do you tend to watch them with?
   - what do they think of the programmes?

5. Do you discuss the programmes with your friends?
   - with your teachers?

6. Tell me what happened in yesterday’s episode(s)?
   - was it a typical episode? - in which ways, or not?
   - did you enjoy it/them?

7. If someone asked you what are the two programmes about, what would you tell them?

8. What do you think of the characters in the two programmes?
   - any which you particularly like (and why)?
   - any which you particularly dislike (and why)?

9. Do you think that any of the characters are treated differently in the two programmes? - for example, men and women?, boys and girls?, young people and older people?

10. What do you think of the way in which young people are shown in the programmes generally?

11. What do you think of the ways in which the programmes
show family life?, friendship?, romance?, school life?, working life/jobs?

12. What do you think of the two programmes’ stories?
   - are there any that are particularly memorable for you (and why)?
   - do you find them realistic?, funny?, sad?, interesting?, serious?... or what?
   - do you find the stories easy to predict, or not?

13. How do the stories (and the programmes generally) compare to your own lives?

14. How do Neighbours and Home and Away compare to other soap operas?, to other media?
   - are they similar or different in any ways?

15. What do you think of where the two programmes are set - Ramsay Street?, Summer Bay?, Australia?
   - are the settings important?
   - is the fact that they are set in Australia important?

16. What about the sets - the diner?, the beach?, the beach club?, the coffee shop?, the watering hole?, different characters and families’ homes?, other sets/places?
   - do you like them, or not, and why? - are they familiar in any ways?

17. What do you think of the programmes’ music - the music in the programmes and their signature tunes?

18. What makes you return, repeatedly, to the two programmes?

19. Why do you think so many people watch them so often?

20. What do you think of Neighbours and Home and Away’s image in the media/in British public life?

   - do you think there are any similarities between the other media you read, watch etc. and Neighbours and Home and Away?
GROUP INTERVIEW 2B: 5TH YEARS: TWO BOYS, TWO GIRLS 19.11.92
(Dave, Chris, Lorna, Lorna - will use A for one of these)
000-680 QMC's Sony Walkman

MS: Do you all watch both the programmes?
D: I only watch Neighbours.
C: I watch them both.
L: Both.
A: Both.

MS: Do you watch them most days through the week?
C: Neighbours everyday - well, I sometimes miss it if I'm working. Home and Away, I always miss the first fifteen minutes.

MS: What about yourself?
D: I watch Neighbours every day, except for the last week I've missed it 'cause of Star Trek on Sky 1.

MS: So you prefer it to Neighbours?
D: Oh aye.
L: Watch them just about every day.
A: It depends on how much homework I have. So it varies each week.

MS: If someone asked you, would you say you were fans of the programmes?
A: No.
D: (laughing slightly) Aye, I would.
L: No way. (laughing)
C: Maybe.

MS: Would any of you say they were your favourite programmes, or not?
D: Nah, no’ ma favourite programmes. I never watch the telly, really. The only time I watch the telly is at teatime. When you’re sitting having your dinner, then that’s on, so you watch it.

MS: So, you’re always eating your tea when it’s on?

D: Aye.

MS: What about you. What do you do when you’re watching it?

C: Well, I’m always just finished ma tea, or...

MS: With brothers, sisters?...

C: Aye, the whole family.

MS: And what do they think about Neighbours?

C: Ma dad thinks it’s extremely funny. He thinks the acting’s terrible, the stories always the same. Ma mum loves it.

MS: So they both like it, but maybe for different reasons?

C: Yeah.

MS: I’m maybe putting words in your mouth there. But do you think your dad like it?

C: Oh yeah, ma dad really likes it. He watches it all the time. But slags it constantly.

MS: But your mother doesn’t slag it?

C: No. She loves it.

MS: What about yourself. Do you watch it with other members of your family?

D: Aye, wi’ ma family, aye. Ma dad never used to watch it, like, but basically he’s been coming in early the last couple of weeks. And he’s been getting right intae it. Gets the characters mixed up all the time.

MS: Does your mother, does she like it?

D: Aye, she likes it, aye.
MS: Do you speak through the programmes, or tend to watch them in silence?

D: Silence.

MS: What about you. Who do you watch them with?

L: Just my mum and my sisters. My dad can't stand it, so he disappears into the next room.

MS: So, do you usually eat after them, or during them?...

L: Sometimes during them. But I'm usually doing my homework at the same time.

MS: Does that not alter... Do you understand what's going on?...

L: Yeah. (of course, no problem tone)

MS: What about you?

A: Basically, I'm the same. It depends when my tea is. And I watch it with the family. And although we all watch usually downstairs, my mum, she'll be making the tea, or washing up, so she'll be watching it with my sister in the back.

MS: Do you ever have arguments with your mum or your sister or anything, about wanting to watch something else, or about the programmes themselves?

L: Sometimes, like, dad'll come in, change it over and we'll all shout turn it back. My dad wants to watch the News, and we want to watch Neighbours. We always outvote him.

MS: When you're watching the programmes, do you speak over them? Do you discuss what's going on? Or?...

A: Wait until it's finished, because I get told to shut up.

MS: What about you. Do you ever speak through them? Or?...

L: Yeah. Sometimes we watch it. And sometimes we just ignore it, and, like, have a conversation. (100)

MS: I missed both of them yesterday. Can you tell what me happened in Home and Away?

L: Well, Nick... We discovered that Lou's going to paint Nick's portrait. As far Nick knows, it's just his face, but she's wanting to paint him in the nude, and he's not too pleased. So Ryan volunteers, and Nick...puts his face out,
do you know what I mean. Emm, Meg gets home from hospital for the day, and she’s got to go back. (A is helping and adding)

MS: She’s still alive, is she?

L: Yeah.

MS: I thought she was going to die yesterday.

A: Today.

MS: Oh, it’s today is it?

L: Today or tomorrow, I’m not sure. And then... That’s all that happened, really. Not much happened.

C: I missed it ‘cause I work in a chip shop (MS’s local knowledge: an Italian, family-run chipper and restaurant. C looks Italian - i.e. he’s an Italian Scot. On the face of it, the cultures of this interview and the chipper are very different - see later notes.), and the boss hates it. And I always turn it over when he’s not looking an’ that. And he always notices. It really annoys me, ’cause I’m dying to see it. If you miss one day, then you’re confused the next day.

MS: Do you find that, yeah? Do you not find it’s easy to pick up... Like, form what you’ve been saying...

C: It is, aye. But it’s still annoying to miss one day.

MS: ’Cause they do tend to drag the storylines out quite a bit. What about Neighbours. Anyone see Neighbours yesterday?

A: Yeah.

MS: What was happening?

A: Well, yesterday, not yesterday the day before, Josh and Todd had an accident with...

MS: I saw that, yeah.

A: ...Jim’s car. So, they took it to this scrap yard to get a door for it. And, like, they went and got the door, came back, car’s gone. Total panic, they turn round and see the car, identical, but it’s scrapped and crushed. So the two of them think it’s the car. So they go back home, don’t say anything, stay quiet. The next morning, he’s told to go in the garage. He goes in the garage, and there’s a car. They
don’t know what’s going on. They discover that Helen followed them and got the car back. And then, Paul’s invested in a faulty business.

MS: Is that that guy he was speaking to the day before?
A: Uh-huh. It was Felicity’s nephew, stripped him and that. 'Cause of what he did to her.

MS: Aye, I remember that. So how do you feel about Paul losing a lot of money? (140)
A: Serves him right.
MS: (laughing) Does anybody like Paul?
C: Na.
D: I like Paul.
L: I used to like him. But lately... I don’t like him.
MS: Who are your favourite characters in the programmes?
D: Joe Mangel.
MS: He’s away just now, isn’t he?
D: And, emm... What his name?... Josh. Brad’s dad. What’s his name?
MS: Doug.
D: Aye. I like Doug.
MS: And who do you least like in Neighbours?
D: Least like? Lucy.
MS: Who do you most like in both the programmes?
C: I like Joe Mangel in Neighbours. And, eh... Brad and Josh. And Gaby for her looks, as well. (A laughs) In Home and Away, I least like Sophie.
MS: You least like Sophie?
C: Aye.
MS: Can you think why you don’t like her?
C: She does ma nut in. (and laughs) And, eh, I like best...Blake.

MS: You like Blake?

C: Aye. And Marylin.

MS: You like Marylin?

C: Aye.

A: In Neighbours, I quite like Joe Mangel. The younger ones, like Lucy and Josh, I quite like them. I don't really like Paul, and Jim, I can't be bothered with him. In Home and Away... I don't like Sophie too much. Blake's okay. I like Blake. I quite like most of them.

MS: Can you think why you don't like Sophie?

A: She seems, like... She's just really annoying.

MS: Who are your favourite characters?

L: In Neighbours, I like Melanie. And I don't like Todd and Josh. I can't stand them. (laughing) And, Home and Away... I don't think I have a favourite character. I don't like Blake. (and laughs)

MS: Why don't you like him?

L: I don't know what it is. Emm... I just... There's something about him I don't like. (and laughs)

MS: Can you think why you like Melanie?

L: I think she's fun.

A: Yeah, her laugh, it's so corny. She's funny. She makes you laugh.

C: She's nice and bright, as well. Very cheerful - she's always jumpin' about.

MS: And can you think of any other reasons why you... It's just Sophie you've really mentioned, isn't it?

C: Lucy.

A: Sophie used to be okay. It's just lately she's turned dead (196) bigheaded...

L: It's 'cause she's got pregnant.
A: She expects everyone to take notice of her. I don’t like that.

L: The clothes she wears are terrible.

A: I know.

MS: And Brad in *Neighbours*. Can you think why you like him? (200)

C: Because he’s just like us.

MS: Do you think so, really?

C: Aye. He’s nae got brains or nothing.

L: That’s true.

B: And he’s a surfer an’ that.

MS: Do you find the storylines... predictable?

A: Definitely.

Echoed by all the others.

MS: Can you always tell what’s going to happen?

D: Not always.

A: Not always.

D: Usually. You can always have a good guess at it.

MS: And do you think you’re right most of the time?

D: Most of the time.

C: I dinnae try and guess. It just spoils it.

MS: Uh-huh?

C: Oh aye. It can get easy sometimes, but...

MS: Do you find them easy?

L: Yeah.

A: Definitely.
L: I mean, you don't try to predict what's going to happen, but you just know what's going to happen.

MS: Do you ever know in advance what's going to happen?

A: Yeah. In the papers. They always give it away. I've known for months that Meg was going to die before she even came in.

MS: Does that spoil it for you at all?

A: No. Just wait for it to happen.

C: See they're saying that before the programme ends, well, coming up for Christmas, there's only going to be two original characters in it. That's Helen and someone else.

A: Yeah. Helen and Jim.

C: And the rest o' them are all gonnae be different people.

MS: Are there going to be a lot leaving the current cast?

D: Aye. There's gonnae be a lot of deaths, marriages an au that. And just traumas.

MS: In Neighbours?

D and A: Yeah.

MS: Right. That'll take quite a lot of deaths before Christmas.

C: Nah, no' all before Christmas. But coming up.

MS: Right.

D: It just said in a matter of months, like. I cannae remember where I read it, if it was a magazine or a paper.

MS: And what do you think, for instance, about the Meg-Blake thing? Her illness, and the romance and all the rest of it. Have you enjoyed that?

C: Aye... It's sad, but... Well, they done the same in Neighbours as well, similar. Because Todd was on the computer to that girl.

MS: Oh, that's right, yeah.

C: And then he never even met her, and she's died of leukaemia.
MS: What do you think about the Meg-Blake thing? Have you enjoyed that one?

D: I don’t watch it.

MS: Oh sorry, yeah. Have you enjoyed that particular storyline?

L: Mmm, I thought it dragged on a bit.

A: Yeah, but I still quite like it.

L: But every day you’re expecting her to die. (laughs)

C: Nah, the music...

L: And you never know when she’s going to. And at the end you think, I wonder if it’s tomorrow.

A: But the papers give it away. They tell you how she dies, and who she dies with and everything.

L: My magazines don’t.

MS: Which magazines do you look at?

L: BIG.

C: The reason I liked it is 'cause I kept thinking something was gonnae happen an' she wasnae gonnae die. So I’d been waitin' for something tae happen. Like, when was it, two days ago when he says, eh, you can go home.

A: Uh-huh.

C: I thought he was gonnae say you’re cured, or something.

MS: Are there any particular types of storylines... Like, if someone was to ask you a very open question: What is Neighbours about? I know it’s difficult, but if you can imagine someone who’d never seen Neighbours, and they asked, What is the programme about? What would you say to them?

D: Relationships.

C: Everyday life. Home and Away’s definitely more realistic than Neighbours.

L: Yeah.

MS: Why do you think that?
C: It's more true to life, really. *Neighbours* is more...sortae...stupid. The dog's waving an' that. (group laughs)

MS: Do you agree with that? (264) Do you think *Home and Away* is more realistic?

A: I don't think so. *Neighbours* has... got a different atmosphere about it. There's something different about it. I don't know what.

MS: Aye, that is a difficult one. Can you think what it is?

A: Yeah. (to it's difficult) I don't know what it is.

MS: Do you think one's more realistic than the other?

L: I don't think any of them are very realistic. I mean they're so unbelievable. (and laughs)

A: They're both stupid.

L: Yeah. I mean, the storylines they come up with are just... I mean they're not everyday kind of things.

MS: If someone were to say to you, you could do anything you liked with a soap opera at that time of day, what would you prefer to see?

L: Emm...

MS: I know that's a very difficult question. (pause, no response) Again, same question: If someone were to say to you, who'd never seen *Home and Away*, what's the programme about, what would you say to them?

L: Emm... I mean, it's hard to describe, 'cause, I mean, so much happens. Yeah, as Dave was saying, it's about relationships and things. And everybody's friendly.

A: Everyone seems to know each other.

D: Oh, that's amazing. Everyone knows everyone! (laughs, group laughs)

C: See in *Neighbours*. Imagine, like, I live in Pilton Crescent, imagine someone new comes in, or if ma mum and dad were to go away, I'd just move in with all ma neighbours. I'd just walk in an' oot ai au the hooses, all up and doon
the street. (irony) It just doesnae happen like that. You
know a couple ai your neighbours, but yi couldnae just go
an' live wi' them like that.

MS: So, would you like to go and live in somewhere like
Ramsay Street?

C: Aye, I'd love it. (and laughs) That's what I think's
actually sad as well, 'cause it's no' real. You think (??
296)... and it's just pretend, innit.

MS: Do you think it's better than anywhere could be?

C: Nah. I wouldnae mind living there. It'd be alright.

MS: What about Summer Bay. How would you like to live there?

C: For the beach it'd be good. (300) I'd be easy aboot
livin' in both of them.

MS: What about you two. How would you like to live in
somewhere like Ramsay Street?

A: Quite good.

L: Yeah.

A: Good weather.

C: But, do you notice how it's never sunny in Neighbours?

A: Yes it is. It is sometimes.

C: No' really sunshine. It's always got a dull cloud over
it, hasn't it?

L: No it's not.

A: In Home and Away, the beach would be good.

MS: Do you think there's anything especially Australian
about the programmes?

L: The expressions.

A: Some of their slang language.

C: Surfin'.

A: G'day, and stuff like that. (laughing)
MS: The language and the surfing. Anything else that's especially Australian? For instance, the surfing could be, I don't know, California... Is there anything that makes you think, this is definitely Australia?

D: No' really, nuh. It could be anywhere.

C: If you didnae know the programme, and you had the sound down, and you showed it to somebody, they wouldnae be able to say Australia.

MS: What about the language that's used. Do you ever hear that repeated? Like in school or anything, the phrases they use, or...

C: You do sometimes do it for a laugh.

D: Sometimes.

C: Us and our mates.

They give an example, and MS laughs.

MS: Do most friends watch the programmes?

C: Aye.

D: A lot of people watch Neighbours and Home and Away.

MS: Do you ever speak about them amongst your mates?

C: Aye.

D: Yeah. (both laugh)

MS: What type of things do you speak about?

D: Sortae, like, relationships, and the girls in them...eh... just, funny things in them. And if you didn't see it yesterday, you ask what happened.

MS: Do you speak about the programmes at all?

A: Yeah.

L: Yeah.

MS: Again, like, what types of things?

L: Oh, did you see Neighbours or Home and Away? Wasn't it so predictable? Just stuff like that.
MS: Do you ever speak about it in the classroom with your teachers?

A: In English we do.

MS: Uh-huh?

A: We’ve got a good English teacher. And if we’re not doing anything, he usually asks us these questions to see if we’ve been watching it or not.

MS: So, just ‘cause he’s a fan of it?

A: I don’t know. Sometimes he’s... He says he only watches it sometimes. But he still asks these questions to see if we’ve been watching it or not.

C: See sometimes in ma hoose an’ that. If ma mum’s been watchin’ it at dinner time. She’ll be making the tea or something. She’ll come through and say: I woulnae watch it today. Helen died an’ au that. And she’ll turn round and wipe her eyes. And then... Oh, she tells me something totally stupid. An’ I believe it. An’ I’m sittin’ there waitin’ for it to happen. An’ at the end I say: but it never did happen. (self-mocking tone, and the girls laugh)

A: When I watch it on Friday afternoon, I hate watching it again, ‘cause you know what’s happened.

C: Aye. In the school holidays as well. If you watch it at dinner time, you’ve nothin’ to do at teatime. So I just try an’ no’ watch it.

MS: What do you think about the young people? The way in which their relationships are represented. With their parents, the relationships between the young folk and their parents. Do you think those are quite... You know, can you relate to those at all? Are they at all similar to any of your relationships you have with your parents?

C: Nah, no’ really.

D: I wouldn’t have said so. ’Cause they’re too friendly. I mean, like, if somebody does something wrong, they just get: Oh, don’t do that again, sort of thing.

C: Yi never see them gettin’ belted up an’ doon the hoose. You know what I mean?

Group laughs.
C: (playing to them) Yi never see them gettin' booted up an' doon the hoose, smacked off the walls an' that. (group in hysteric)

MS: (laughing) What about you two. Do you think they're realistic relationships?

A: I don't think so.

L: No, not really. They're too friendly.

A: Usually... like take last night, for example, with that car. Usually I'd get a belt for that.

D: Y'd get killed for it!

L: Like, yesterday, they literally got away with it!

A: And they just said sortae like don't do it again. And they'd probably be grounded or something, which doesn't really do much good. I think that's just...

C: In fact I says that to him. I said, what would you do if I stole your car? (joker) He says, you woudnae have done it again (in an authority-mocking voice).

MS: And what do you think about the way in which young people are represented in the two programmes? Do you recognise them at all, like, yourselves, your friends? Do you think they're at all like anyone you know, the teenagers?

C: Aye, slightly.

D: They're no' too bad.

MS: In any particular ways?

D: Eh, just sortae like... what they're wearing... relationships, that sortae thing. I can sortae relate to that.

MS: Right. Anything else, do you think? Do you think they're like yourself, or your mates or anything? Or not in the least bit?

C: Aye. Well, mair in Home and Away than Neighbours. They're just like normal teenagers. Obviously in the programme they cannæ show them doin' some of the things that we do.

A: I used to associate ma neighbour with Mrs Mangel.
MS: Uh-huh?

A: 'Cause, like, she was always pickin' on ma little sister for the slightest thing.

MS: What do you think?

L: Yeah. Like some of them are like people you know. I mean I can compare, like, Mrs Mangel to, sometimes, ma gran. (laughs, and group laughs)

MS: Again, this is a difficult question, a really open question: Do you ever think the programmes have a message, or are trying to tell you anything?

L: Yeah. Like, with Meg and Blake's situation, I think they're trying to, like, children who are watching it, and an experience that has happened to them like that, shows them how to deal with it.

A: There was a while ago when Toby was caught smokin'. His dad made him smoke a whole packet, and he was sick. I think there was a message there: you shouldn't start smokin'. But it never gets across to anyone, really, anyway.

C: ...I never expected that in Neighbours.

D: There's none of them ever smoke.

A: And the... said that Neighbours never included alcohol, drink or drugs. Well, at the Waterhole, you see them drinking all the time.

MS: What about you guys. Do you ever think the programmes are trying to tell you anything, any messages?

D: Well in Neighbours, I haven't really noticed anything.

C: Aye, I think sometimes, aye. I just think... They're both quite real tae... They're both quite real, aye. You do learn a lotae things.

MS: Do you ever get really annoyed at the programmes for any reason?

C: Aye. On a Friday they always end up wi' something very... (whole group laughs and agrees)

D: Oh, I hate that.

C: ...and yi cannae see it till Monday.
A: This is how Home and Away's gonnae end on Friday: Meg's gonnae just drop dead. And they always end like that. I hate that. You know what's gonnae happen when they end it, and you're just dying... and you wait the whole weekend. And then if you miss it on Monday, that's worse. (others agree)

C: ...No' real in Neighbours. Somebody was goin' away, like, ca' mind who it was, ages ago, but say for instance Joe Mangel and Melanie, whole street out, like kissing and saying goodbye. Whole street, like, know what I mean? I mean, like, imaginge yer whole street kissin' an' huggin', and, like, take care. (group is laughing)

MS: Did that annoy you?

C: It never annoyed me. Just used to laugh at it.

MS: (laughing) Did you not get emotional about it yourself, no?

C: Ah... They kept saying for weeks that Harold wasnae deed. He got floated away... 'Cause they never found his body. I kept thinkin' he's turn up, like...

MS: He might still.

C: That's what I think.

L: Yeah. He's actually out there.

A: He's still coming back.

L: No he's not. He's never coming back. I've got a pen pal in Australia, and she writes to me and tells me what's gonnae happen. And he didn't come back. He's out of it for good.

MS: Bobby came back in Dallas.

L: Yeah. (as in, that's a point)

MS: Are there any big differences between Neighbours and Home and Away? (434)

A: The atmosphere in Home and Away. It's, like, more open. It's like... Neighbours, like, they're always in the same place... and house. You know it's a studio when you're in the house. But when you're in the house in Home and Away, it doesn't seem like that. There are things like... natural colours.
L: And Home and Away has, like, a lot of beach scenes. Neighbours is mostly indoors.

D: Or just Ramsay Street.

MS: Do you like it, the fact they go outside? (in H&A)

D: Uh-huh.

L: Yeah.

C: D'yi ken that's a real place, that Ramsay Street is?

L: Yeah.

C: Ma auntie used to live there.

A: It's not called Ramsay Street.

C: It's called... saint nannies, or something. Nan, nan something, anyway. Nan nanbarrie, that's a tea bag innit? (group laughs) Nan something.

MS: Nan bread. What are the differences between British soaps, Coronation Street, Eastenders, Brookside and those two? What do you think the differences are?

C: Dinnae like any of them at all.

MS: You don't like the British ones?

C: Nah.

MS: Why don't you like the British ones?

C: 'Cause they're so fake.

MS: Uh-huh?

C: There not (I think 451) fake. I dinnae like them at all.

MS: Can you think why you don't like them?

C: Borin'. Nothin' ever excitin' happens. It's au fullae horrible places an' that.

D: It's all so dreary and dull.

C: And Albert Square. All the voices an' that. (tones of distaste, then imitates E's cockney with a nasty whine)
MS: You don't like them?

D: Oh no. They're depressin'.

MS: So what do you think are the differences, then, between the two, the two Australian ones and...

D: Well, the Australian ones are sort of cheery and happy, wi' excitin' things, and they're funny. But British soaps, it's all disasters, and nothin' ever happy happens.

MS: So, you find them too depressing?

D: Aye.

C: Sharron just greets au the time, as well. Greets every day, just aboot. (L laughs)

MS: What do you think about?...

L: I watch Brookside. I quite like that.

MS: Do you like it more than Home and Away and Neighbours?

L: No.

MS: You prefer Home and Away and Neighbours? Can you think of the differences between Home and Away and Neighbours and Brookside?

L: Brookside's, like... you know, Barry murdered Sue. He shoved her off that building site. It's obvious that everyone knows he done it. And they can prove that he did it. But it's how he's still on the street. I think that's foolish. He's still there. I still watch it anyway.

C: Brookside makes me want to smash our telly. I hate it.

(group laughing)

MS: Do you watch any of the British ones?

A: No. I don't watch any of the British soaps. But I suppose if they were on at the same time as Neighbours and Home and Away, I might watch them. I think it's just the time they're on, as well.

C: See another thing. I never watch the television at all, right, really. Never, hardly. The only things I watch, really, are Home and Away, Neighbours, and Prisoner fae Cell Block H.

L: Ohhh, forget that!
C: I dunno what it is, like, but I just like the Australian soaps.

MS: I wonder why that should be?

C: I hate missin’ them, like. Everybody seems to be the same. Well... (then names various classmates)... will watch it. We all talk aboot it.

MS: I wonder what the thing is, then, if it’s not the Australian thing. I mean, there’s the language, but then, like you say, they could be set anywhere. So I wonder what makes them different, from like...

L: One thing about Neighbours and Home and Away. One character walks out of Home and Away, and then walks into Neighbours! It’s annoying. They’re just walking between the two.

C: And a thing I remember. Ma dad, when he first started watching it a couple of years ago, used to ask nonstop questions, like who’s that? Who’s she? What happened there? What happened yesterday? Oh, dad, shut up! (group laughs) And ma mum she goes out on Tuesdays, most Tuesdays, and she does the hoovering between five and six. She does the hoovering when you’re trying to watch it. You go right up to the telly, and put it up right loud so you can hear it...

D: Start an atmosphere. Done that many a time. (group is laughing)

MS: Does your dad, does he know who everybody is now?

C: He’s... getting a rough idea. But he gets mixed up between Marylin and Melanie. And they’re in two different programmes.

A: They’re similar. They’re both stupid.

L: Yeah.

C: They’re both bimbos, aren’t they?

A and L: (laughing) Yeah.

MS: Can you think of any other similar characters across the programmes?

A: Joe’s quite a practical joker. So’s Adam.
MS: What’s happened to Adam? He’s on holiday with Marylin, is he?

A: He’s away with Marylin.

MS: Yeah.

A: I used to like him. He used to be quite funny. His schemes never used to come off. They were so silly. You knew they were never going to work.

D: Remember Lance?


D: Martin. Who’s Martin.

A: Martin was his pal.

MS: What about the various settings. (500) For instance, what do you think about the coffee shop in Neighbours? Do you like it? Do you think it’s?...

A: Well, one day it was like... remember when it was burnt down, and they (?? 504). And that was on the Friday. By the Monday the whole place had changed round.

C: Aye. I noticed that.

A: It just suddenly changed! You didn’t know anything about why it had changed or anything.

C: Much more modern.

MS: Do you prefer it now?

A: Yeah. I like it now.

C: Eh... Aye. But they never told you, or that. It just happened. They thought nobody’d notice. Eh? They thought nobody’d notice.

A: (laughing) Aye. Like, one day you go away, and, oh, different programme here.

MS: It sounds like you’ve all been watching them for quite a few years. Have you noticed changes over the years? Any particular changes?

D: Just characters and that.

MS: Uh-huh? Just the characters?
D: Stories are still the same.

MS: What do you think about the diner in *Home and Away*? Do you like it, or?...

C: Aye. I like the diner.

MS: And what about the different living spaces in *Home and Away*? Like, for instance, between Pippa’s kitchen and, say, Donald’s kitchen or living room. What do you think are the differences between them?

L: Never seen his kitchen.

MS: No. He’s in a new house, is he?

C: Aye.

MS: What do you think about Pippa’s kitchen? Does that remind you of anything?

General grunts of not really.

MS: Do either of the programmes remind you of any other television programmes?

D: It’s a huge house, like.

Then, general no(s).

MS: Move onto some broader questions now. What are your favourite television programmes?

A: I quite like *London’s Burning*.

L: I like sitcoms, like *Bottom*, *Cheers* and *Roseanne*.

A: *Fresh Prince*.

L: Yeah. *Fresh Prince*.

C: (laughing) Forgot aboot them, like. (in ref, I think, to his earlier claim that he doesn’t watch anything but N and H&A) This is what we dae in ma hoose, like: At ten past five, we put on channel three. And then when that finishes, it goes to channel one. And then automatically, four. Till half six. (L and A are agreeing and laughing) You get *Roseanne*, *The Wonder Years*, *My Two Dads*... Yi get au them.

MS: Do you all really like the American sitcoms?
General chorus of yeah, great.

MS: Any other TV programmes you really like?

D: There was this programme that was on last night, but I missed it 'cause I fell asleep. It's called Prisoner, and it's from the sixties or something...

MS: Oh, yeah.

C: Patrick McGuigan (?)

D: Aye. Oh, it's a crazy programme. But I watched it for some reason. I don't know why. I just keep thinking he's gonnae escape.

MS: Do you all have video recorders?

D: No, we dinnae.

L: Yeah.

MS: Do you use it much?

L: Yeah. If there's any good films on, or... Or, sometimes if we go downstairs for tea, and Neighbours is on. Sometimes we'll record it.

A: Well usually something... I'm never in, so I get my dad to tape (?? 545). Or if there's any comedy... But mostly for Christmas. 'Cause, like, there's good stuff on one channel, but also there's good stuff on the other channel.

MS: What do you use yours for?

C: I dinnae usually record programmes on the telly, 'cause it's no' the same watchin' them on a different day. Like Prisoner (Cell Block H), if you have to watch it on another day, it's just not the same. So I dinnae bother. The only thing I, well, ma mum tapes, is on a Saturday night. She watches channel one. I'm away out, like. She tapes Gladiators, Blind Date and Beadles About. And on a Sunday morning, when we get up we watch them. 'Cause it's just all the church programmes an' that on.

MS: Do any of you get films out on video much?

L: Yeah.

MS: What type do you get?
L: Usually like all the new releases and things. I mean... We get videos a lot. About... six a week.

MS: Uh-huh? What type of stuff?

L: Just... any films that look good.

MS: You don’t stick to any particular type of film?

L: No.

A: We usually... If we see anything good, we just buy it.

MS: Any particular type of film?

A: Uh-huh. We’ve got a lot of Tom Cruise films. We’ve got a lot of, like, concerts. Like Simple Minds’ concert.

MS: Do you get any films or anything?

C: Nah, no’ really.

MS: Do you go to the pictures much, or?...

D: Nah, but ma mum and dad do.

C: We’ve got Sky. That’s really neat.

MS: Do you read magazines or comics or anything like that? Or novels or?... If you read stuff, what type of stuff do you read? Or do you not really read?

D: Satelite TV. That’s about it. Just a magazine.

MS: What about yourself. Do you look at magazines or comics or anything?

C: No’ really magazines. Comics, just, eh, papers. No’ for information or that (?? 576), just to get the (??) And I love the News of the World. (and cracks a joke about it that the others recognise and like)

MS: What about yourself?

A: I look at newspapers, magazines, books...

MS: What type of books do you like?

Responds, but can’t catch it. ( 580)

MS: What about yourself?
L: I get magazines. BIG, Smash Hits, Just Seventeen. I don't read newspapers or comics. Just... latest gossip on all the stars and stuff. (and laughs)

MS: Do you ever think that the two sexes are treated differently in Neighbours and Home and Away? Like, the young female characters, or the older female characters, the way in which they're treated compared to, like, the young male characters, or the older male characters. Do you think there are different storylines for different sexes? Or, that they're treated differently? (pause, no response) Do you ever think anybody's point of view is favoured? Like, older people's point of view is favoured, or young people's point of view...

A: Usually the young people's point of view is favoured by us. And, like, your parents favour, like, their point...

MS: Right.

A: They always say that they're right when you think they're wrong.

MS: Do you think the programme favours anybody's point of view, though? You know, the way in which it's shown, that the programme's on somebody's side, if you like.

A: I think it's usually on young people's side.

L: Yeah, young people's side. It's aimed at sort of like a young people audience. So that's why they have it...

MS: Do you agree with that? Do you think Neighbours, for instance, favours the young folk or the older folk?

D: Probably the young folk.

MS: Do you think so?

C: I don't know, bit of both really.

D: Aye, bit of both. (600)

MS: It's a difficult question: Do you think that the two sexes are treated differently at all in the programmes?

A: I do. You never see, like, Sally or Sophie coming up with stupid schemes, like, Adam comes up with. It's always the boys that come out with something like that. You never see the girls trying anything like that.

MS: Anything else?... about the way the sexes are treated.
A: The guys... (I think A says here that the punishment given to the boys is always harsher than that given to the girls - it certainly finishes: They seem to get away with a lot more. 609. Q is who.)

C: I thing I don’t understand is when they get grounded an’ that. They get that at their ages, yi know, seventeen, eighteen.

MS: You think that just wouldn’t happen?

C: Nah. Well, maybe fifteen, just turned sixteen, but no’ after that. Yi dinnae get kept in. You’re supposed to be more mature so you can talk it over, ken wit ah mean. Yi dinnae get grounded. Eighteen’s auld enough tae go tae a pub an’ that, ken wit ah mean.

MS: What do you think about advertisements on telly? Do you like them?

L: Some of them.

D: Aye, some of them.

L: There’s ones I can’t stand.

A: Yeah.

MS: Which ones can’t you stand?

L: Fairy Liquid! (laughs, group laughs and agrees) And I don’t like the bank ones, TSB. I like the funny ones. You know the one, the Weetabix one with Bugs Bunny?

D: Aye, I like that one.

A: I like that one.

C then sings everyone’s a fruit and nut cake remarkably well, and group laughs.

MS: Here’s a difficult question. Do you think there are any similarities between what goes on in Neighbours and Home and Away and adverts?

C: Some of the adverts are better than the programmes, like.

L: They’re both trying to sell. The programme’s trying to get more viewers. The adverts are trying to sell more products.
MS: Yeah, that's a really good answer (tutorial). Any other similarities?

A: They both show... It's not real life, it's like a fantasy life, you know, the ideal.

MS: Music. What about the music in Home and Away. What do you think about the signature tune, for a start?

C: The song at the start?

MS: Aye.

C: Pure singing. (I think 635, and irony for sure - MS and group laughs)

MS: Do you like it?

C: I have to always jump up and turn it over and sing it. (C's mix is frankness and irony) I like it.

MS: What about the Neighbours signature tune, do you like it?

C: I think it's good, what they've done to the start of Neighbours. You know how they used to have the big start? (whole group is making noises of agreement) They don't do that now. It used to be, oh, hurry up! It just comes right on now. It shows you what happened yesterday, and then it just does a wee (and gives snatchet of signature tune, as programme did at time of this interview).

L: I don't think the programme's any longer, though.

MS: You wish it was longer?

L: Yeah. 'Cause, like, they always leave it hanging, like on a Friday. And you're always, like, oh, come on. If it was just a couple of minutes longer you'd find out what happened. I wish it was just a wee bit longer.

MS: What about the music in Home and Away, not the signature tune, but...

A: It's the same music all the time. (group agrees, echoes) Really boring.

MS: If you think about Eastenders, there's no music. So, why do you think the music's there in those two programmes?

D: To emphasise things.
C: In Neighbours, it’s the same, that (then imitates N’s light narrative piano piece, and group recognises it and laughs)

MS: So, are you glad that music’s in the programme?

C: Aye, it’s alright.

A: It tells you, like, if it’s funny. You can tell by the tune if that was funny or not.

L: And see what’s going to happen.

A: If you’d just come in and you didn’t know what had happened, you’d know whatever it was had been funny. Or really sad.

MS: Are you aware of any public comments on Neighbours and Home and Away, or soap opera? You know, like, in newspapers, from the government, from authority figures, any discussion around the programme that’s going on in sort of like...

A: I remember, a while ago the reason they changed Neighbours to nights was because most people were skiving school in the morning, just to watch it.

L: It was on in the morning?!

A: Yeah. Do you not remember they used to have it. It used to be on at half past nine every week day morning. Then in the afternoon at half past one. But then they changed the morning episode to night.

C: It’s been on for years, like.

A: Aye. It’s been like that for years now, but it used to be like that. I’ve watched it from the first episode.

MS: So, are you aware of any other public commentary?

A: If you mention it to some people, they say, oh, yi cannae watch that tripe. In the papers, you always see Coronation Street, Eastenders always coming top of the soaps. And yet all your frjends don’t seem to watch them, they always seem to watch Neighbours. So I wonder how...

C: It’s good how they both fit in, as well. Because before you always used to miss a wee bit of Neighbours if you watched Home and Away. (group agrees) Now they fit in just perfectly.
MS: So, you were mentioning the ratings there.

A: Aye.

MS: Why do you think the programmes are so popular, they’re watched by millions of people?

A: It’s addictive.

MS: You think so?

A and L: Yeah.

A: Yeah, and they’re funny.

L: You don’t... deliberately want to see them. But it’s on and you just watch it. You can’t tear yourself away from the screen. (phenomenalist tones)

MS: Can you think of any other reasons why they’re so popular?

C: I don’t know. I think it’s the time, as well. (others agree)

A: That is why they’re on at that time. It’s teatime, and everyone’s...

C: Oh, aye. I think it’s brilliant. I hate when I go on holiday and miss two weeks of it.

A: Tape it.

MS: Can you pick it up quite easily when you come back?

C: Aye.

A: I hate that. I went camping this year. And when I came back, it was on the TV when I came through the door. And I got to the TV, and the TV looked so weird. I just didn’t understand what was going on. I just looked at it. I hadn’t seen TV for, oh... three weeks. And I’m gathering all the papers from weeks behind to find out what’s been happening.