

ARTICLE

Wot No Queers: The Search for Sexual Representation in Audience Research

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ABSTRACT

‘New audience research’ is a well established field within media and cultural studies. However, an analysis of audience studies since the 1970s demonstrates that issues of sexual identity have rarely been addressed. In this article, I argue the dominance of class and gender in the development of new audience research, and the influence of poststructuralism in queer studies, have contributed to the ‘queer’ being ‘sidelined’ in audience research. By critically analysing existing textual queer media research, I attempt to demonstrate why we need more audience research which addresses both the queer audience and representations of sexuality and sexual identity.

KEYWORDS

Queer theory; audience research; media and cultural studies

Introduction

The issue of sexual identity and its representation in the media has been much discussed by academics in the queer studies field (Dyer, 1993; Gross, 1991; Medhurst, 1994). There has been a transformation from a complete lack of gay representation on UK TV before the 60s, through to the stereotypes of gay men as camp on TV during the 70s and 80s, to the current portrayals of ‘ordinary’ gay women and men in reality TV shows such as Big Brother. A consideration of the effects of either not having role models for queer women and men to aspire to, or whether the models offer a fair representation of current queer identities, has rightly been a topic for academic discussion. There are other questions that we might ask vis-à-vis media consumption and sexuality: How do same sex relationships change power relations in terms of control of the television? How does sexuality interact with ideology in relation to TV decoding, if at all? It is not the purpose of this paper to answer these questions, rather to start a discussion about why we need to do more research that can help us answer questions such as these. As Kellner (1995) argues we should take a holistic approach to researching the media’s effects; one that looks at political economy, media texts and its consumption. However, as queer media studies academics in the UK at least, we should be addressing more questions about the effects of media texts from the perspective of the text than from that of the audience or consumption perspective. It should be noted at this point that in this paper I will refer to the study of homosexuality as queer studies in order to avoid any gendered assumptions associated with the terms gay and lesbian. Also, in the interest of maintaining focus this paper will not be able to address transgender issues.

The endeavour of this article therefore, is to build a case for more UK based ‘ethnographic’ research that investigates queer media consumption, which I will argue, has been limited thus far for a number of historical, methodological and theoretical reasons. It should be noted at this point that most audience research has not been ethnographic in the anthropological sense. Ethnography in anthropological terms usually refers to a lengthy period of observation where the researcher becomes part of the lived environment. On the whole audience studies have used qualitative research methods with some short term observation and/or a combination of depth interviews, focus groups, and open ended questionnaires. Whilst I will use the terms ‘ethnographic’ in this paper, it is as a catch all for the various types of qualitative research currently employed in the new audience research.

In the first part of this paper I will investigate the main new audience studies. Through this analysis, I aim firstly to consider to what extent sexuality and sexual identity of respondents has been addressed in terms of the way this might influence readings of texts. Secondly, I am to analyse how sexuality and sexual identity as TV content has been addressed in terms of audience reaction. I will suggest that ‘new’ audience research has developed its frameworks for research with a focus on class and gender. In doing so, sexuality was never really seen as a ‘natural’ consideration of the new audience research agenda. In the second part of this paper I will argue that the research agenda of the new audience studies could have been challenged in the 90s by the surge of interest in sexuality and the birth of queer theory. However, its poststructuralist underpinnings have encouraged academics to take a self-reflexive approach discouraging the development of new audience studies that investigate sexuality and sexual identity. This paper is too brief to enter into the important poststructuralist debate about fluidity of identities and whether or not we should be ‘labelled’. Instead this paper is based on the premise that sexuality and socially constructed sexual identity are current phenomena and are therefore worthy areas of study in terms of their potential influence on encoding/decoding texts and the context of media production/consumption.

I will investigate whether we need more queer media ethnography to redress the balance between the currently well subscribed, textually-focused queer theory work and the less well subscribed media consumption/context, which could arguably help the projects of both queer theory and the new audience studies. Before I offer a detailed analysis of the new audience research methodologies, a discussion about the origins and what defines new audience research will help set the context for the article.

The origins of ‘new’ audience research

It was the publication of Hall’s (Hall, 1993) seminal text *Encoding/decoding* that gave birth to what is commonly referred to as ‘new audience research’. Hall’s theory is complex but for the purposes of this article I will give a simplified summary for context. He provided a rationale for looking at how messages are encoded in a text (textual analysis) and also the need to understand how these messages are decoded by the recipients. He posited a text could be read in different ways depending on the context/background of the reader but that there were preferred readings on offer. New audience researchers took up an invitation from Hall to begin testing his theory of

communication and to look at programming other than just the news in what has been referred to by Kellner (1995) as ‘reception studies in a cultural studies tradition’.

Morley (1980) was the first academic to take up Hall’s invitation. In his ‘Nationwide’ study Morley conducted interviews with men and women from different work backgrounds to establish whether they decoded the ‘Nationwide’ programme into the preferred readings theorised by Hall. Since its publication many other academics have followed in his footsteps although not to test Hall’s preferred readings theory but to critically interpret how meanings from TV and Film are understood by readers of the texts. In more recent cases these methods have been extended to look at the interactions between household members around media and its technologies (Walkerline, 1986; Gray, 1987). Whilst there is a wide range of studies in the new audience research as Staiger (1992) notes that they do have some common themes based on their heritage in British Cultural Studies: ‘In general these writers emphasize (sic) that interpretations and uses of texts connect to ideologies and cultural, social and political power’(89). With this in mind, one might assume that the power of oppressed groups such as gay women and men with different sexual identities fits into the new audience study remit. I will now turn to an analysis of the new audience studies and their methodologies in order to assess how sexuality and sexual identity has been addressed.

The new audience research and sexuality so far...

A table of the main new audience studies conducted since 1980 can be found in Appendix one. I have analysed the 18 studies and their methodologies based on two criteria: firstly, how the research deals with sexuality and sexual identity as content of media texts; and secondly, whether the research addresses the sexual identity of the audiences it investigates. An analysis of the first criteria reveals that up until 1995 there were barely any mentions of sexuality and sexual identity in terms of content of media texts; just three studies found in this search addressed the issue of sexuality and sexual identity as TV content. The first study by Hallam and Marshment (1995) focused on the screening of the BBC TV series, ‘Oranges Are not the only Fruit’. The research interviewed eight women and distributed open ended questionnaires generating a further 32 responses from women. The study seems to be a rare exception to the majority of studies in its attempt to engage women through ‘ethnographic’ methods about lesbian TV content. Whilst the researchers did not aim to pre-select research respondents by sexual preference they did receive replies from women of various self identified sexualities. The second, the TV Living study by Gauntlet and Hill (1999), included quotes from respondents about their homophobic views of the content of TV texts. Whilst this is a very revealing and large scale piece of research addressing homosexual TV content, it did not seek out the opinions of gay identified women and men, it only noted responses which related to homosexuality. Additionally, it did not record the sexuality of respondents preventing any analysis of responses in terms of their potential relationship with their own sexualities. The third study by Thomas (2002) explored themes of sexuality with the research respondents in terms of gay male characters in ‘The Archers’ and the potential of gay female characters entering the show, but again did not relate this to the sexual identities of the respondents.

Three pieces of research addressed the criterion of the sexual identity of respondents. Firstly, research by Hemphill (1995) took an informal approach to gathering views from black gay men in the US about the US TV comedy “In Living Colour”. The author was seeking to understand whether the comedic portrayal of gay black men as camp was offensive to black gay male viewers of the programme. This study is rare in terms of its focus on both TV content and the sexuality of its respondents. Secondly, research by Austin (1999) addresses issues regarding sexuality in relation to cinematic film and sought to understand how straight men reacted to the overtly sexual nature of the film ‘Basic Instinct’. Austin’s research project aimed to include gay men in its analysis by writing to both gay and straight magazines to recruit respondents. Although Austin received responses from gay men he was not able to include these in the final published version of his research. The third piece of research conducted by Jenkins (2003) investigated queer fans of the US TV show ‘Star Trek’. The study addressed the issue of a lack of representation in terms of a queer character and the fan’s campaign for the series producers to include one. Again, whilst this study is rare it is also US based.

Prior to 1995 then, new audience researchers were sluggish in addressing sexuality and sexual identity. Post 1995 there are a few more studies addressing issues of sexual identity as TV content or how sexual identity might be related to the reading of a text. However, they rarely address both sexuality and sexual identity as content and its relationship with the sexual identity of the viewer. The studies which have done so are mainly US based. I will return to the reasons for this lack of research post 1995, but firstly I will focus on the pre- 1995 period.

Where were all the queers at the birth of new audience research?

Whilst not explicitly mentioning sexuality in his own later critique of the ‘Nationwide’ study, Morley (1992, p. 125) admits that he aimed to address a number of classifications such as age, sex, race and class, but that he actually only really focused on the latter:

Although reference is made to the affectivity of the structures of age, sex, race and class, only the latter is dealt with in anything resembling a systematic way. Race is invoked as an explanatory factor on a rather adhoc basis, as is sex/gender: age is mentioned but not explored as a structuring factor. Evidently this is a severe problem – as the age and sex/gender dimensions are particularly important in relation to Nationwide and its construction of the domestic sphere in relation to women’s position in the family

Seiter’s overview of the birth of new audience research provides an excellent summary of why this focus on class may have arisen: ‘The CCCS (*Centre for Communication and Cultural Studies*), under Stuart Hall’s guidance, was a crucial influence on the development of this work. Like much of the work conducted at the centre [CCCS], these researchers’ work was rooted in Marxist and feminist theory, and questions of class and gender have therefore been central’ (Seiter, 1999, p.14 – my italics and brackets).

It seems then, at least in the 70s and 80s, one of the key reasons that the new audience researchers led by Hall and Morley may not have addressed issues of sexuality is the influence of the CCCS and its main projects of class and gender. Kellner (1995) also notes that this focus on class, although important, could have been dangerous:

There is also the reverse danger, however, of exaggerating the constitutive force of class, and downplaying, or ignoring, such other variables as gender or ethnicity. Staiger (1992) notes that Fiske, building on Hartley, lists seven "subjectivity positions" that are important in cultural reception, "self, gender, age-group, family, class, nation, ethnicity," and proposes adding sexual orientation.

In this way, other academics had noticed the lack of attention paid to sexuality by the new audience researchers, as Kellner mentions in the previous quote when he cites Staiger (1992) and her discussion for the need to include aspects such sexual preference in audience research. Even in terms of criticisms, there are few mentions of the omission of sexuality and sexual identity by the new audience researchers. The issue of gender however has been dealt with much more extensively in new audience research and it is to this area that this article now turns.

Gender and sexuality

In his critique of the 'Nationwide' study, Morley does not mention sexuality explicitly but he does mention 'sex/gender'; an interesting combination of these two concepts. Morley could well be using the two words interchangeably even though these two constructs are not the same. In this way it is possible that sexuality was considered as an implicit part of the gender debate in the new audience studies which was well represented through the explosion of feminist audience research. However, whilst this is a plausible argument, it does not explain why only two of the studies reviewed for this paper discussed sexuality and sexual identity and its relationship to textual content in an explicit way. Radway (1987) and Thomas (2002) are exceptions which should be noted. Radway tackled how women's sexual fantasies explored through the romantic novel could provide an escape from patriarchal domination but also acted to secure them within that domination by only offering a temporary way out. Thomas (2002) also tackled women's conception of romance as portrayed through programmes such as 'The Archers'. However, if sexuality really was being addressed as part of the new feminist audience studies one would expect to see more explicit discussions of how sexuality and sexual identity, be that heterosexual or homosexual, manifested themselves in terms of readings of texts.

One potential reason why sexuality and sexual identity were not higher on the list of priorities for the new audience researchers, even when gender had become more important through feminist studies, could be that gay and lesbian studies had not yet become a major academic influence.

Gay liberation and the new audience studies

The gay liberation movement in the UK was born in the early 70s at least in part in response to the Stonewall riots in New York (Blasius and Phelan, 1997) and the gay and lesbian academic movement only really flourished after that in the 80s (Epstein in Seidman 1996). The CCCS was highly political and influenced by the new left from its birth in the 60s (Schulaman, 1993). Their radical views may well have been influenced by the gay movement at the time but the ideological reproduction of sexual identity was not a high priority and therefore was less likely to influence the CCCS. This means that at the inception of the new audience research, when arguably the principles of how to conduct this type of research were being founded, sexuality and sexual identity were marginalised as part of the fundamental categories that should be investigated. In this way, up until the early 90s the discourse in the new audience studies with its roots in the CCCS was focused on class and gender. To challenge those assumptions would take a concerted effort from queer studies academics, not only in terms of conducting their own media consumption focused research but also to challenge the new audience researchers to ‘think queer’.

During the 90s and the years since the start of this century, politically, the gay movement has made great progress with the reduction of the age of consent for gay men in the UK and the introduction of civil partnerships. As the profile of the gay culture increased, research around stereotyping, representation, potential media effects on gay women and men and context related questions about gay media consumption may have been expected to increase in this context. But, except in a few cases as cited here, there is still barely any media consumption research focused on queer issues. Why didn’t academics from gay and lesbian studies also begin to use these techniques in their own research regarding queer media production/consumption and context? I will now turn to the 90s to ask why this type of research did not increase in the new audience studies. At the time, gay and lesbian studies was in its infancy but was about to undergo a transformation with the birth of queer theory. It is that movement I will suggest may have discouraged the new audience researchers and gay and lesbian academics from focusing on queer media consumption and its context.

Gay dear, who dear, me dear, no dear....

Queer theory emerged in the early 90s (Kirsch, 2000) when gay and lesbian studies was still in its infancy, driven by the birth of the lesbian and gay movement (Epstein in Seidman, 1996). It was influenced by the rise of political groups such as Queer Nation in the US and ACTUP in the UK; ‘Queer’ became an overarching term which wanted to avoid societal labelling. In essence, queer theory wanted to move beyond names such as ‘gay’ and view the world through the lens of difference (from heteronormativity) as a means to understand it in the context of social, cultural and political issues. The philosophical underpinnings of queer theory referred to as poststructuralism were mainly derived from the theorisations of academics such as Foucault and Derrida. It follows Derrida’s (1976) notion of ‘supplementarity’ which suggests ‘meanings are organised through difference’ (Namaste, 1996, p.196). Heterosexuality needs homosexuality to assert its difference. Queer theory asks how this relationship is played out; how heterosexuality asserts its difference within texts. It also asks us to be aware that the very study of homosexuality or queerness actually adds credence to the heterosexual position.

Poststructuralism underpins queer theory's resistance to seeking rational truths through empiricism thus challenging the Cartesian approach that 'individuals as free thinking subjects are the basis on which one conceives political and moral action' (Namaste, 1996, p.195). Foucault has challenged these assumptions through his *History of Sexuality* (Namaste, 1996). He demonstrated that the idea of homosexuality did not exist before the 19th century and that it was through the creation of homosexuality as a legal and medical term that it, as an identity, came into being. In this way, Foucault demonstrated that an identity is created through discourse. For queer theory then, our identities are socially constructed and any focus on homosexuality will only reiterate its difference to heterosexuality by perpetuating this discourse of difference. Poststructuralism and its distrust of the 'real' also focused academics on discourse and the text; this, and queer theory's roots which are based in the American humanities (Namaste, 1996). Although, as Namaste also notes, the social sciences have made considerable contributions to gay and lesbian studies, as have other disciplines, but they are often obscured by the dominance of queer theory. This led to the practice of 'queering' texts (as seen in Doty's [1993] book *Making Things Perfectly Queer*) whereby academics look at texts from the views of the oppressed, finding the queer in the ostensibly unqueer. With queer theory emphasising the socially constructed rather than the essential elements of sexuality, I would suggest this has discouraged an empirical consumption focused approach which potentially requires us to pre-select respondents by sexual identity.

The influence of poststructuralism and the social constructionist viewpoint has not been confined to queer theory. Epstein (in Seidman, 1996, p.145) points out that the social constructionist point of view was dominant in gay and lesbian studies (and much of humanities) before the birth of queer theory; queer theory has just championed its cause. As Morley notes:

“The predominant reading of Foucault has promoted a decentring of media research in which, as Curran puts it; ‘the role of the media is reduced to a succession of reader-text encounters in the context of a society which is analytically disaggregated into a series of concrete instances...or in which power external to discourse is wholly evacuated’

(Curran 1990, p.140 in Morley 1992, p. 26)

As Morley also notes this is leading to increasingly independent research methodologies. With queer theory discouraging researchers from media consumption related work and poststructuralism in a more general sense making empirical work more academically unfashionable there has not been the surge of queer new audience studies post 1990 that one would expect. However, I believe that queer theory and the new audience research can benefit from audience research and in the final part of this paper I return to textually focused queer media studies and show how it could benefit from a media consumption perspective.

Making things...even more perfectly queer

In the introduction to Doty's (1993) book *Making Things Perfectly Queer*, Doty argues that straight audiences are not seeing the queer in their readings of the text:

'I've got news for straight culture: your readings of texts are usually "alternative" ones for me, and they often seem like desperate attempts to deny the queerness that is so clearly part of mass culture. The day someone can establish without a doubt that images and other representations of men and women getting married, with other children, or even having sex, is the day someone can say no lesbian or gay has ever been married, had children from heterosexual discourse, or had sex with someone of the other gender for any reason' (xii)

Doty is of course right to highlight that the media might portray heteronormativity and that 'straight' viewers might not see the potential of secret queer lives behind these images. However, Doty is also making an assumption that 'straight' people will not make a queer reading of the text. Essentially, without conducting audience research to understand how media consumers interpret texts, any queering of a mass culture text is an act of self-reflection. Doty in fact goes on to suggest that queerness is not confined to texts: 'the complexity and volatility of mass culture production and reception-consumption often make any attempt to attribute queerness to only (or mostly) producers, texts or audiences seem false and limiting.' (xiii). However, in the rest of his book he focuses on what he can read and therefore what he feels others can read into a media text. I suggest that there would be many benefits to looking to others for their readings of media texts to understand if 'straight' people ever do read the queer in the text. A closer look at the rest of Doty's book will demonstrate how this could help.

Bringing the audience to the queering of media texts

Doty focuses on several media texts including the US sitcom *Laverne and Shirley* (1976) as well as the children's TV show *Pee-Wee's World* (1981). In these analyses he looks for where queer is connoted in the text; where queer is the unsaid. This task is fruitful where his argument exemplifies how the living situation of the ostensibly straight women in *Laverne and Shirley* (two women sharing a flat) often requires additional narrative to shore up their heterosexual credentials. Whilst this is interesting in terms of the potential readings available, it would also be interesting to read an account of a straight viewer of the programme; to find out if they do indeed grasp any of the connoted queer meanings in the text. Does the audience question *Laverne and Shirley's* living arrangements or do they accept the excuses provided in the form of additional narrative for why they are living together? In other words, by analysing interviews we might be able to find out more about the process of rejecting the 'queer' reading of the text. In this way, new audience research methods could help us to considerably expand an area of queer media research. One of the studies reviewed for this paper is a good example of how this could work and it is to this research that I will now turn to further demonstrate the argument.

Queer new audience research...boldly going where no researcher has gone before

In Henry Jenkin's (2003) study of queer star trek fans, he takes up John Hartley's call for media scholars to pursue 'Intervention Analysis' which 'speaks from, about and

for the margins of popular culture' (Hartley cited by Jenkins, 2003, p.173). Jenkins becomes involved in a campaign for the inclusion of a queer character in Star Trek. He quotes one fan who was disappointed about the show's refusal at the request of fans to include a queer character: 'They betrayed everything Star Trek was – the vision of humanity I have held for over 25 years. They betrayed Gene Roddenberry and his vision and all the fans. They didn't have the guts to live up to what Star Trek was for.' (Jenkins, 2003, p.174). By interviewing fans about their views on Star Trek, Jenkins links the media text to the audience text showing how media texts link with everyday life – how an ostensibly unqueer text can be queered by the experience of a star trek fan. He highlights how the dominant heteronormative ideology can be sustained by capitalist hegemony to serve its own interests and that members of the audience can campaign against this monopoly. In essence, he shows that 'ethnographic' techniques can focus on micro issues but can also be ideological, opening a dialogue about macro theories of power; something that some critics of new audience studies have suggested is not possible (Corner, 1991). Jenkins's approach also prevents us as queer media academics from closing our minds and becoming trapped in textual ivory towers. As Ang notes:

'Ethnographic fieldwork among audiences, in the broad sense of engaging oneself with the unruly and heterogenous practices and accounts of real historical viewers and readers – helps to keep our discourse from becoming closed texts of truth, because it forces the researcher to come to terms with perspectives that may not be easily integrated in a smooth, finished and coherent Theory'.

(1985, p. 227)

I would suggest that we need more research such as that conducted by Jenkins to begin to bridge the theoretical gap between queer theory and the new audience studies.

Conclusion

In my analysis of the new audience research, sexuality and sexual identity seem to have been neglected as potential factors which might influence how the audience read texts. I have argued that this is caused mainly by two factors: firstly, a development of the frameworks of new audience studies which focused on class rather than gender at a time when gay and lesbian studies was in its infancy; and secondly, that during and after the 90s, when the queer audience research should have flourished, the birth of queer theory and the rise of poststructuralism and its mistrust of empiricism further discouraged gay and lesbian academics from conducting new audience research. Together, these factors have at least partially prevented much influence from being exerted on current new audience researchers to include sexuality and sexual identity as part of their own audience research.

If we are to bridge the theoretical gap that exists between queer theory and the new audience studies, it seems that assumptions about conducting new audience research need to be challenged so that the factors considered include sexuality and sexual identity. In terms of queer media research, it seems that we need to redress the balance between textually focused work and media consumption studies to help us to

answer more of the questions posed by the rise of queer theory, and to prevent us from becoming too reliant on self-reflection.

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TV Programmes

Laverne and Shirley, 1976

Pee Wee's World, 1981

Table Showing the Major ‘New’ Audience Studies in Chronological Order

Author	Publication Date	Study Name/ Publication title	Sample	Sexuality as TV content addressed ?	Sexuality of respondents considered?
D. Morley	1980	Nationwide	Men and women from different work backgrounds i.e. trade unionists vs. managers	No	No
D. Hobson	1982	Crossroads: Drama of a soap Opera	Men and women	No	No
I. Ang	1985	Watching "Dallas" : soap opera and the melodramatic imagination	Men and women	No	No
J. Radway	1984	Reading the Romance	Women	No	No
D. Morley	1986	Family Television	Families – men, women and children studied	No	No
A. Gray	1987	Behind Closed Doors: Video Recorders in the Home	Families – women, men and children studied	No	No
J. Corner, K. Richardson and N. Fenton	1990	Nuclear Reactions: Form and Response in ‘Public Issue’ Television	Men and women with common interests/ employment backgrounds i.e. political parties/ students/ workplaces	No	No
E. Katz and T. Liebes	1990	The Export of Meaning: Cross Cultural Readings of Dallas	Women and men studied	No	No
J. Lull	1990	Inside Family	Families –	No	No

		Viewing	women, men and children studied		
S. Jhally and J. Lewis	1991	Enlightened Racism: the Cosby show, audiences, and the myth of the American dream	Small focus groups – black, white and Hispanic men and women	No	No
V. Walkerdine	1993	Young Girls and Popular Television	Girls	No	No
J. Hallam and M. Marshment	1995	Framing Experience, Case Studies in the Reception of Oranges are not the Only Fruit	Eight women interviewed after viewing the BBC TV adaptation of Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit	Yes	No
E. Hemphill in C.K. Creekmore and A. Doty	1995	“In Living Color” (sic)	Interviews with gay men and women focusing on an American satirical comedy about black gay men	Yes	Yes
E. Seiter	1996	Mothers Watching Children Watching Television	Mothers and children	No	No
T. Austin	1999	Desperate to See it: Straight Men Watching Basic Instinct	Straight and gay men are self-selected in response to advertising in gay and straight publications. Gay men are not discussed in terms of their reactions in the published version of this	Yes	No

			research		
D. Gauntlet and A. Hill	1999	The Export of Meaning : Cross-Cultural Readings of 'Dallas'	Men and Women	Yes	No
L. Thomas	2002	Fans, Feminisms and Quality Media	Telephone interviews, focus groups and questionnaires about the radio and TV dramas	Yes	No
H. Jenkins in W. Brooker and D. Jermyn	2003	Out of the Closet and into the Universe	Gay women and men	Yes	Yes

Notes:

Although I would not claim this list to be exhaustive it does consist of the most often cited publications and is partially derived from Morley's own overview of audience research written for the Museum of Broadcast Communications see:

<http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/A/htmlA/audiencere/audiencere.htm>.

I have added some additional studies through further research which are relevant to this paper particularly Austin's study of Basic Instinct and its viewers, Jenkins and his study of Star Trek fans, Hemphill and his study of the US comedy "In Living Colour" and Hallam and Marshment's study of female viewers of the BBC TV series 'Oranges are not the only Fruit'. These studies are included as rare examples of those which address issues of sexuality but are not often quoted within the new audience research literature. The list is mostly made up of research looking at the viewpoints of research participants in relation to TV although exceptions include Radway's (1987) study of romance novels and Austin's study about audience members of the film Basic Instinct. Radway's study is included because as Ang (2003) notes it is 'one of the most influential studies within the so-called "new audience research"' (226).