



<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz>

### *ResearchSpace@Auckland*

#### **Copyright Statement**

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.

<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback>

#### **General copyright and disclaimer**

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form.

TV Love:  
Television and Technologies of Intimacy

Susan Crozier

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy, The University of Auckland, 2004.

## Abstract

*TV Love* is a study of the emotional and imaginative possibilities summoned and sustained by television programmes, possibilities that are here gathered under the rubric of love. By taking seriously a vernacular claim to love particular television programmes, this thesis intervenes in conventional practices of academic television criticism. It does so in order to develop an approach that would allow a focus on what television programmes make possible for the viewers who love them. I argue that the transactions between viewers and television texts constitute forms of emotional training that not only reproduce social subjectification, but also enable diverse forms of intimate experience. This is especially important for those subjects who struggle to find forms of psychic sustenance in an off-screen context.

The critical approach taken in this thesis is termed reparative, following the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in so far as it describes a process of restoring value to much maligned cultural objects. As a rationale for critical practice, reparation recognises the inadequacy of the social context in which diverse subjects must make a possible world for themselves. In particular, reparation describes the processes by which queer subjects have been able to mark out the terms of their own possibility in the face of difficult social or psychic conditions. The value of reparative criticism is not limited to queer readers or viewers, although queerness frequently demonstrates what is at issue between the conventions of academic television criticism and the alternate mode developed in this thesis. While academic criticism most often focuses on the ideological lessons presumed to be delivered by television programmes, this frequently overlooks the smaller scale emotional work that subjects carry out every day. Television programmes can both enable this emotional work and be the subject of its labours. In order to develop a fuller and more useful practice of television criticism than currently exists, *TV Love* contends that it is necessary to attend to the affectively enlivening potential of television for its viewers.

The first chapter considers television as a technology of intimacy in terms of its domestic location and critically analyses television scholarship that has sought to address the specificity of that context. The second chapter further develops this theoretical overview by examining approaches that more explicitly deal with the affective engagements television allows. It then moves on to outline the particular reparative approach taken in this thesis. Chapter Three considers the series of documentaries that began with *Seven Up* in 1964 and, in a departure from the conventional discussion of class associated with the documentaries, this chapter focuses on the affective training the series carries out over its four decade history. The situation comedy *Bewitched* is the focus of the fourth chapter, which explores the way in which sitcoms can be profoundly imbricated in the very experience of childhood and family life. The repetition of a favourite programme from childhood, even years later, can generate emotional returns that demonstrate this intimate connection. Chapter Five continues the discussion of situation comedy with an analysis of the seventies hit *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. In particular this chapter attends to the reiterations of the Mary Richards character across other textual contexts in order to identify the emotional competencies the Mary character makes possible beyond her seventies context. Chapter Six takes on the heritage criticism that has framed

academic thinking about the serial drama *Brideshead Revisited* and presents an alternate reading in which high-cultural forms serve to connote homosexuality. The final chapter examines a series of programmes about the late Diana, Princess of Wales in order to identify the affective politics those programmes might be seen to enable.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Professor Maureen Molloy for guiding the thesis to completion in a most confidence-inspiring fashion. I am also deeply indebted to Dr. Lee Wallace for her patient and dedicated supervision of this thesis from its inception and for pushing me to achieve more than I would have ever believed possible. Dr. Misha Kavka had a formative hand in the project's evolution and always greeted my work with generous enthusiasm, even to the end.

Thesis writing is often a lonely experience and I can't imagine having done it without the many people who have kept me company along the way: my regular callers Guy Hamling and Dr. Lucy Holmes; members of my PhD writing group and fellow strugglers on the path, Bronwyn Beatty, Mei-Lin Hansen, Lyn Lavery, Kate Prebble and Joanne Whittle; and my friends at the University of Auckland Student Learning Centre, Fiona Gregory and Julie Trafford. Much love and encouragement were extended to me near at hand by Teresa Platt and from afar by Lucy Harvey in Düsseldorf and Michele Paule in Oxford. I am also fortunate to have a loving and supportive family – Michael, June, Simon, Kimberly, Josh and Gaby – who always seem to have faith in me, with or without a completed thesis. My colleagues at Te Tari Awhina have been patiently encouraging as I've laboured to get to the end over these last months and I thank them all.

I am also grateful for the financial support I have received. A University of Auckland Doctoral Scholarship funded two years of my research and a further two years were supported by the generous Doctoral Scholarship from the Foundation for Research Science and Technology, which also allowed me to travel and present my research at a number of international conferences. Funding from the University of Auckland Graduate Research Fund made it possible for me to combine a conference presentation with a visit to the British Film Institute in London, where I was able to watch *Seven Up* and *Seven Plus Seven*. Michael Crozier very kindly subsidised my work for a couple of months when other sources of income had dried up.

Finally, a sentimental sitcom moment is owed to that character Sal Cameron, who has been my stalwart support throughout. She has kept me entertained, watched a lot of television with me, and maintained a steady faith that the ordeal of thesis life would finally come to an end. Our wacky sitcom family sustains me and I look forward to the new episodes that will follow this protracted season.

## Table of Contents

List of Figures	vi
Introduction: TV Love	1
Chapter One	
Television and Intimacy	20
Chapter Two	
Television Repairs: Affect, Love and Reparation	43
Chapter Three	
Getting to Know You:	
Television Documentary as a Technology of Intimacy	70
Chapter Four	
Love on the Rerun:	
Repetition, Retrospection and the Television Sitcom	104
Chapter Five	
How to Make it:	
Ambivalence and Affective Resilience in the New Woman Sitcom	136
Chapter Six	
The <i>Brideshead</i> Sensibility:	
Heritage, Homosexuality and Recovered Feeling	168
Chapter Seven	
Diana TV:	
Television Affect and the Substance of the Political	200
Conclusion:	
The Television Past and Critical Futures	235
Bibliography	244

## List of Figures

3.1	Jackie, Lynn and Sue	81
4.1	Mark Bennett, <i>The Home of Darrin and Samantha Stevens</i>	114
4.2	<i>Bewitched</i> : the domestic interior	125
4.3	Samantha	132
5.1	Mary's beret toss	152
5.2	Mary	162
6.1	<i>New Zealand Listener</i> cover, July 17, 1982	169
6.2	Charles and Sebastian in Venice	195
7.1	Diana, the <i>Panorama</i> Interview	214