

This essay plan will attempt to uncover the ways in which people consume televisi...



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David Morley's article 'The framework of family viewing in Great Britain' attempts to interpret the way in which families consume media, in this case through television. The main principles of the text appear to outline the differences between Male and Female media consumption and indeed, why such a difference occurs. Morley puts this difference down to “..

. particular social roles that these men and women occupy within the home,” or in other words gender roles. What this means is that according to Morley, women and men watch television in specific ways relating to social responsibility and gender. For example, Morley states that women multi-task whilst watching television which is due to “..

. their continuing sense of domestic responsibility,” whilst men apparently find it hard to consume television in this way and instead require absolute silence and focus on the program in question. In terms of who decides what to watch and when, it would appear that men are in charge and in most instances the dominant male will have control of the viewing procedures. This would appear to relate very strongly to orthodox interpretations of gender role which suggest the male as head of the household and hence everything in it, including television viewing.

Indeed, it would appear that according to Morley the only time women watch television without multi-tasking is when the household is empty and time can be spent watching alone. If this is the case it would certainly indicate that women have a stronger 'domestic responsibility' and feel 'guilty' when watching television as a sole purpose due to apparently insufficient use of time. Morley concludes that women have accepted a “..

. masculine hegemony that defines their preferences as having low status” and as a result cannot argue for their own preferences as the things their husbands watch are more ‘prestigious.’ This could be interpreted as suggesting that women subconsciously bow down to their male equivalent’s preference and underlines orthodox interpretations of social gender role further. According to my television consumption questionnaire men are more likely to watch television at night whilst women tend to watch in more variable patterns. This could be down once again to social gender roles as men tend to come home from work and watch television at night whilst women are the traditional home keepers. Although this is very dependable on age and as more and more women are working full time it would seem less likely and perhaps more to do so with scheduling.

For example the questionnaire indicates that women generally watch soaps and dramas, which are normally shown during the daytime and early evening whilst men tend to watch films and sports which are generally later on at night during typical weekdays. Unlike Morley’s findings the questionnaire indicates that men are just as likely to multi-task whilst watching television, but in different ways. Whilst women are certainly more likely to be doing domestic duties whilst watching television, it would appear that men simply do other things whilst watching television such as eat or play on computer games. Therefore the evidence would suggest that when men multi-task whilst watching television it is down to entertainment whilst women multi-task whilst watching television in order to perform domestic duties. The questionnaire also suggests that men are more likely to watch

television alone then women, which would link with Morley's suggestion that men prefer to watch television in complete silence.

However much of this data is questionable as both sources came from a small sample and as a result cannot be related to all social groups around Britain and certainly not the whole population. It is also well documented that women tend to overstate whilst men understate which puts into question just how much of a male dominance there is when selecting what to watch. Morley's research also took place some time ago and could be outdated in relation to modern gender roles within the household. In conclusion it would appear that there is a significant difference between the television viewing habits between genders, although just how much and the key differences are debatable.