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Chapter 7

Crazy About One Direction: Whose Shame Is It Anyway?

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On 13th August 2013 a disturbing hashtag began to trend worldwide on Twitter. *#RIPLarryShippers* appeared to be reporting and mourning the tragic deaths of 42 *Larry shippers*—the One Direction fans that celebrate, fantasize, and sometimes believe in the idea that Harry Styles and his bandmate Louis Tomlinson are in a secret gay relationship. Thousands of fans on Twitter were claiming that the *shippers* had killed themselves as a direct result of the inclusion of some of their homoerotic *Larry* fan art in a documentary I had made for Channel 4, *Crazy About One Direction* (Asquith 2013). Although the program was only officially available on British television, the tech-savvy fandom had copied and shared it globally overnight with astonishing speed. The fandom were furious that I had included *Larry* in my representation of them, and sent hundreds of death and bomb threats to my Twitter account. *#RIPLarryShippers* trended worldwide for 48 hours.

In this chapter, I conduct a reflexive post-mortem on this fandom crisis of my own causing. I have happily extended my immersion in the creative, subversive and globally networked fandom of One Direction to uncover the queer erotic meanings in their *Larry* fan art and investigate the subcultural codes that dictate who can enjoy it and share it. I examine the ethical challenges of television documentary and look at the wider media context in which my documentary was made. The hierarchies, taste policing and internalised shame within the fandom (see Larsen & Zubernis 2012) collide awkwardly with the projected shame and derision that is applied from outside. While my extensive research at the time of broadcast quickly established that the *Larry shipper suicides* were in fact just a rumor, the fans reasons for starting the rumor are important I will argue that in moving *Larry* from Tumblr to television my film may have decontextualized it, but the fears and fury of fans result from their understanding of the total unacceptability of teenage female desire in patriarchal society. Analysis of the fan response to *Crazy About One Direction* must be situated and understood within this climate of shame. It is important to recognize that a fandom that is repeatedly pathologized and derided by the media will have low expectations of any representation. Fan identities are riddled with internalised shame which is consistently reinforced by the performance of distaste, even disgust, that largely male critics and detractors display to them. Schoolboys, their brothers, their fathers, the music press, tabloid journalists, even teachers: all would like to tell girls what music they *should* like, and how they *should* behave around it. This encourages secrecy and the anonymity they are afforded online allows for both free expression and a global audience of like-minds, for the first time in fandom. This is a story that deserves to be told, albeit with careful attention to ethical documentary practice,

which foregrounds the needs of the filmed and recognises the subjectivity of the filmmaker. Documentary theory has dispensed with the idea of objectivity and a single authoritative truth in recent years, and it may be most accurate to say that *Crazy About One Direction* is simply a documentary about what happens when you make a documentary about Directioners. Representing the identity of an entire fandom to their satisfaction may be impossible, but the One Direction fandom is a story of creative female sexuality and international networking that has given 20 million teenage girls a voice, and to ignore it would do them a great disservice.

The One Direction Fandom and Me

I was delighted when Channel 4 asked me to make a documentary about One Direction fans. Fandom has fascinated me since the late 80s when I first tippexed *Siouxsie and the Banshees* on the back of my leather jacket. Perhaps my decision to wear that Siouxsie uniform (despite a secretive musical preference for pop), indicated a desire for subcultural capital: a “cultishness” that pop music didn’t offer me (see Hills 2002a). So it seems I was born to be a *Larry shipper*—a rare deviant space of queer rebellion within a fandom that couldn’t be more mainstream in its musical taste. Professionally, as a documentary maker, I saw a gap that needed filling between what I knew of fandom and the way it has been represented ever since screaming Beatles fans were derided by the media in the 1960s. This simplification of young women’s emotional and cerebral response to an artist or production takes the threat out of the phenomenon, infantilizing them and belittling their emotional experience and overlooking their impressive skills - networking and coordinating large groups in common purpose, producing and distributing creative fan material and gathering intelligence on their chosen subject. Fandoms have always been “stereotyped and pathologized as cultural ‘others’—as obsessive, freakish, hysterical, infantile and regressive social subjects” writes Hills (2007, 463) marked by “danger, abnormality and stillness” (Jensen 1992, in Hellekson and Busse 2015) and thought to engage in “secret lives... without much purpose” (Harris 1998, 11). There is no doubt that *Crazy About One Direction* was commissioned in the wake of yet another fuss about the fandom’s behaviour in the tabloids, and it is undeniable that television commissioners desire their audiences to be both compelled and appalled by the most extreme stories possible. But it is also true that the commissioning editor on this occasion was a One Direction fan herself, and that she and I shared huge admiration for the fandom and an explicitly feminist mission to celebrate this unashamed display of teenage girls’ desire. In 20 years making television documentaries I have learned the value of working in this seemingly fickle medium. Television has the least self-selecting audience in the world - it is possible to bring a story you are proud of into the living room of someone who would never otherwise come across it. The opportunity to celebrate fandom in public was irresistible.

If, as Hills (2002a) says, fans and academics have an uneasy relationship, fans and the media have a completely dysfunctional one (3). Perhaps being a documentary maker I don’t suffer from the type of *imagined rationality* that an academic might project in fan representations (Hills 2002a, 11). Instead I suffer from an imagined “*media-type*”

untrustworthiness, or conversely an imagined *journalistic objectivity*, depending on your perspective. In fact my representation of fans was an entirely subjective one, as I will argue all documentaries are, and I had no dark motive other than to understand what drives the immersed and passionate fan. The reflexivity that Hills employs in his theoretical work acknowledges that his “theories are also stories” (70). Our gender, class, age, sexuality, politics, and sense of self are all players in the stories we tell. This chimes with much recent work in documentary theory on the impossibility of objectivity (see Bruzzi 2000; Pearce 2007, Morris 2013). Neither the academy nor the documentary industry benefit from the invisible or detached researcher. My practice was characterised by a personal, experiential, authored and immersive approach.

Filming Fans

When I arrived at the Manchester Arena in April 2013 there were around 500 teenage girl members of the One Direction fandom waiting outside. Sandra and Becky had been there since 8am and bounced over to my camera and me. They were singing and dancing in the street, not so much waiting for “the boys,” as partying, being together, belonging. Sandra and Becky were extremely keen to be part of the film—as were almost every one of the hundreds of fans I met. Of course having your identity represented on television is a powerful form of recognition and establishes belonging. The performance of the self that occurs when a camera is pointed at someone is a powerful way of working through identity. The camera seems to say *I see you and hear you and you exist and matter* (Piotrowska 2013). Two and a half decades after Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990), the social media generation is accustomed to performing their own identities online and constantly thinking through the way they represent themselves. Every selfie posted on Facebook, every invitation to “ask me anything” on Tumblr, every Instagram photo and tweet invites recognition or offers it to someone else, or both. If love is returned, then all the better, but if criticism, or “hate” is the result, then at least the initial poster has received attention, and has a chance to learn something more about who they are, who they might become, and what their impact and position might be in the world, or in other words, “instigate a transformation” (Butler 2004, 44). In the case of *Crazy About One Direction* the “becoming” they may have wished to solicit was the elevation of self into uniqueness, from “just another fan” into a significant fan, so significant in fact that the band were bound to notice them, and to see oneself projected onto the future, immortalized and made special, making the ordinary extraordinary (see Piotrowska 2014, 268). My job in this context was to make sure I found fans who were emotionally capable of managing this extraordinariness and prepared them psychologically for the impact of broadcast. Their parents were also engaged in this process.

Unsurprisingly there was some pressure from Channel 4 to include the most angry and *hysterical* fans, the *crazy* fans. I resisted this stereotype from the start, but I am also obliged to accept the commercial demands that ultimately fund my programs.

The pre - title sequence and trailers therefore privilege the most extreme moments in order to attract an audience, but as all makers of television documentaries understand, this does not negate or obstruct the documentary itself being subtle, thoughtful, and even warm. However, when it came to the title it is significant that I was not allowed to keep my preferred choice: *I Heart One Direction* was changed by Channel 4 on the very last day of the edit to *Crazy About One Direction*. This news required me to speak personally to all the fans in the film and explain that it wasn't me calling them crazy, and it wasn't the intended message of the program. They took the news well, at that moment accepting more readily than I did that this was their *dramatic* reputation and therefore inevitably the selling point of the documentary.

The Michael Jackson fan documentary *Wacko About Jacko* (Leveugle 2005) was another victim of Channel 4's trick of re-titling its programs at a late stage, with or without the approval of the filmmaker. The problem is, Hills (2007) writes, that *Wacko About Jacko* "undermines fans' moral narratives by linking them to emotivism" but actually *Wacko About Jacko* appears to have been made with genuine affection and respect for the fans. The process of editorial selection, narration, use of slow motion and soundtrack are all mediation on the part of filmmaker Leveugle, but they are not utilized in such a way as to make fun of, or exoticize Jackson fans. The fans are not *wacko* at all, but likable, passionate people who are willing to be led by fantasy rather than behaving in a self-consciously sensible fashion. It would be counter-productive to suggest that a focus on the affective or embodied response should be considered less important, valid, or interesting than a response driven by rationality or cognitive critique. Hills (2007) rightly argues that the film does nothing to *normalize* fandom (468), but many fans I met did not wish to be *normalized*, preferring that their extraordinary passion and creativity be celebrated. The words *Wacko* and *Crazy* are clearly what are considered necessary to draw an audience to a slot. *Wacko* can be seen as a judgment call offered to the audience. Unfortunately, as in the case of *Crazy About One Direction*, the title's impact has the potential to reach far beyond the program's attentive audience, and taken at face value, it can have a stigmatizing effect.

Ethical documentary practice can be an elusive and imprecise target. There are clear ethical guidelines in television that take care of the audience with regard to the truth claims of a documentary (exemplified by the BBC's Safeguarding Trust course to be taken by every producer after 2008). But what about ethical practice with regard to the care of participants in television documentaries? Winston (2000, 1) has claimed it is our relationships with the people we film that are the most important measure of ethical production. In general terms I will argue ethical documentary is made when the filmed person is treated as a collaborator rather than a resource, and fully informed of the intentions of the filmmaker and the ambitions of the film; if attention is not abruptly withdrawn at the end of filming but a meaningful relationship pursued throughout the edit, broadcast and beyond; if participants are shown the rough cut, genuinely consulted on its veracity (not necessarily on editorial decisions); and if they are held in equal regard by the filmmaker as the ratings-hungry executive. In these ideal circumstances a documentary can be a truly rewarding and satisfying experience for those filmed—the film about their life a rare and therapeutic

reflection to be treasured. At the opposite extreme, if those filmed are treated as a commodity by a team of researchers as inexperienced as they are eager to please, lazily commodified as “contributors” (contributors), sweet-talked, flannelled, made to sign release forms within five seconds of the camera rolling, abandoned instantly the camera returns to its bag, ill-informed, misunderstood, then re-fashioned in the edit to fit whatever the broadcaster has been promised, being filmed can be a disastrously disturbing experience of powerlessness and misplaced trust. The reality can fall anywhere between these extremes.

If my filming of *Directioners* was to be ethical, it was necessary I try to make the film in the language of the fans so that they became active collaborators rather than defensive subjects. As Heinrich writes: “in matters of admiration and celebration every request for justification produces a backlash” (in Hills 2002a, 65). By asking a fan to explain their fandom, a filmmaker (or academic) immediately invites defensiveness. I attempted to get around this by participating in fan activities alongside the fans I filmed and allowing their voices to overtake mine. I waited outside the back gates of arenas for hours, spent days on YouTube and Twitter following One Direction themed hashtags, even spent a night on a Dublin pavement with them in pursuit of concert tickets. I also included, with specific individual permission, their YouTube videos, filmed before and during my filming period, and not originally intended for my film. These captured a performance of fandom that was intended for other fans, but they translate well to an outsider audience. The “stalking” of Zayn and Niall in the corridors outside their hotel room is here represented by the fan as tongue-in-cheek comedy as well as evidence of the courage required to get close to the band, an important status booster within the fandom. In the filming period I allowed a space for fans to perform the identities they wanted. Bruzzi (2006) argues that all documentaries are “performative acts, inherently fluid and unstable and informed by issues of performance and performativity” (154). There are many subtle forces at play in their fan performance. It must be sufficiently true to the self that they inhabit, and sufficiently close to the self they wish to project. Documentary maker Errol Morris describes this territory as “a strange limbo land between fantasy and reality” (Vice 2013), and both realms should be welcomed when filming. The self projected must also be the self that they are comfortable offering in the presence of filmmaker and camera. The camera creates a space for feelings to be verbalized, enacted, and shared, and in a complex exchange “a documentary only comes into being as it is performed” (Bruzzi 2006).

There is also an element of performing the behaviors that are expected by the rest of the fandom, and by the wider society. Derrida, in the reflexive documentary about him by the same name, comments “when one improvises in front of a camera one ventriloquizes.” He says he felt obliged while being filmed to “reproduce the stereotypical discourse” (Derrida, Ziering, Koffman and Dick 2002). I found that One Direction fans did this to a point, particularly before they felt confident enough to present a more subtle version of themselves. They were more complex in their performed identities when in the familiar safe space of their own bedrooms, whereas outside in the street, in large groups, they performed more stereotypical fan

identities. It may be most accurate to say that *Crazy About One Direction* is a documentary about what happens when you make a documentary about Directioners. What is recorded is the space between the filmer and filmed, an ever-evolving negotiation resulting in a complex, compromised truth (Bruzzi 2006, 9). Nash (2010) describes a “flow of power” that happens in an ethical documentary relationship; “a contested relationship in which each is acting with the goal of influencing the other” (27). And furthermore, by virtue of their subjectivity, any other filmmaker would have made a different film. As Derrida (2002) says: “the reflector interrupts the reflection.”

There is no doubt that my subjectivity was in play when making this film. It was *my* story about the One Direction fandom. Consequently it is not a definitive version of all fans everywhere. I do not make overt truth claims in my films, but hope instead that the reflexive and interactive aspects of what I do communicate an experiential integrity. As the filmmaker Chris Terrill says: “Our stock in trade has to be honesty; not necessarily truth, whatever truth is—truth is a construct” (in Lee-Wright 2010, 103). Making a documentary involves “endless choices” (Barnouw in Bruzzi 2006, 6) and *Crazy About One Direction* was no exception—the choices of who to film; where to film; what questions to ask; what cuts to make; what music to add; what meanings to convey; were all mine. In addition to the title, some choices were made by Channel 4, such as how long to allow me to make it (six weeks filming and seven weeks editing), how extreme the trailer should be (very), who should record the voice over (not me, it was decided eventually, but the comedian Julia Davis). These choices all result in signifying certain meanings and render the notion of one truth an impossibility.

Watching Fans

On broadcast of *Crazy About One Direction*, it was significantly not the fans I had filmed that objected to my representation of the fandom. By taking care of all the stages of research and production myself, I had been able to be consistent with my participants, keep my promises, and keep them informed and consulted during and after filming. Apart from being ethically sound, the sense of increased power this gives subjects during filming tends to make for a better, more intimate film, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will approve of the final cut. Relationships also affect the reception of a documentary because “the assumptions which the viewer makes about this relationship, on the basis of signals intended or unintended, will inform his [sic] perception of the film” (Vaughn in Austin 2007:104). My relationships with the fans I filmed were strong enough for them to have positive expectations of the film and understand its affectionate humorous tone. For reasons I will explore in this section, their confidence and appreciation was not shared by the majority of the fandom.

Within minutes of the broadcast of *Crazy About One Direction* on 15 August 2013 it was being ripped on Tumblr, viewed (in part at least) and criticized passionately by fans all around the world. One link I found the following day had over a quarter of a million views. There were 368,139 tweets during the hour of transmission, ten times more than *Big Brother* initiated that evening. Twitter was dominated by related hashtags for the next 48 hours, including #RIPLarryShippers, #ThisIsNotUs, #IDWereNotLikeTheseGirlsOnTheDocumentary, and #BeliebersAreHereforDirectioners, touchingly uniting the normally antagonistic Justin Bieber fandom in rare sympathy with the One Direction fandom. Twitter has been used by One Direction fans since the band's first *X Factor* appearance to gather and share intelligence on the boys. Fans use it to collectively protest management decisions, share fantasies, police each others' fan behavior, provide tactical false information and rumors, vote in competitions, and form factions and hierarchies within the fandom. Ultimately each fan covets a tweet or follow from a band member, a high-value chip of cultural capital in the fandom which gives an instant boost to fan status. In the days after the broadcast, tweets were split between hate for *Larry shippers*, who had supposedly embarrassed the fandom by sharing their fantasy, and hate for the producers of the documentary for broadcasting it. There were thousands of bomb threats to Channel 4, death threats to me, and invitations to *Larry shippers* to "Go kill yourself." Following #RIPLarryShippers in real time I watched the number of reported *Larry* "suicides" creep up from 4 to 12, then to 19, to 28 and then 42 in a few hours. It was a huge relief to me to discover the concept "pseuicide" in which an online avatar dies when a Twitter or Tumblr account is deleted, often in protest. Why and how teenagers use suicide as a cultural bargaining tool, or an emotional weapon, is beyond the scope of this chapter, but an analysis of the YouTube rants that were tagged #ThisIsNotUs provides some understanding of the fans' issues with my film.

In the months after the broadcast I took a sample of forty YouTube videos with the intention of analyzing the arguments made in them. Of these, thirty-six are made by US teenagers, two are British, one German and one Danish. Their apparent ethnicities are as follows: twenty-five white, six Hispanic, five black, four Asian. There are thirty-eight girls and two boys, both boys identifying as gay within their channels. Their ages appear to range from 12 to 20. The videos last between three and nine minutes and have many features in common. They are all filmed on either a computer webcam or a mobile phone and they all feature one teenager addressing the camera directly, almost always from their bedroom. The videos share content as well, sometimes seeming to chime together, occasionally using almost the same words to make the same arguments. My current practice involves the purposefully minimal editing of this material to create a new film, which is intended to allow the fandom to contest my representation of them while simultaneously questioning the shame that they have internalised (*This Is Not Us*, Asquith 2016).

Twenty-one fans were critical of the girls who were filmed and said the documentary should have been about "normal fans who have never met the boys and have boring lives" (justalyssa). Eleven of the videos expressed the idea that *Larry shipping* and fan art should not be on television—"that stuff doesn't go on television!" (alanagrace).

Nine said they were ashamed of the fandom “Right now I’m ashamed to show my face!” (6directionerxo) and eight said they were afraid of what the band would think: “The boys are gonna see that! Aaargh!” (iwannabeunicorn). Seven YouTubers worried that *Larry shippers* may commit suicide and five admitted that fans are “sometimes crazy.” Five of the videos were extremely critical of Channel 4, but three admitted they had not seen the documentary yet. Interestingly it was considered acceptable to join the protest against the documentary, in fandom solidarity, without having actually seen it. The actual sequences in the program, which are joyful, proud, creative, often performed in a knowing and comedic fashion, do not get specific mention. The Larry section is one of these, but in the fandom response the noisy fact of its simple existence overwhelms and drowns out the actual content.

What I am arguing here is that the shame these fans describe does not necessarily originate in *Crazy About One Direction*. The meanings carried by a documentary are the result of a complex negotiation between text and context. The reception of a film by its audience is a player in the making of those meanings, arguably as important an influence as the intentions of the filmmaker and the cultural moment it is born into. In this light the defensive reaction of the fandom was unsurprising and even justified in the context of three years of negative and patronizing media representations of Directioners. Just as tabloid journalists might assume that the documentary is about the mass hysteria of silly teenage girls; just as fan sympathizers might connect with the positive aspects portrayed about fandom; Directioners will receive the message they expect, which is one of derision, criticism, humiliation. They have adopted a generalized sense of shame about their fandom, taught to them by a patriarchal society that looks down on expressions of extreme emotion, teenage passion, mainstream pop and female sexuality. *Larry* in private fan spaces is fun, clever and naughty, but seen through the public eye it suddenly feels embarrassing and stupid to fans, not because it is, but because everyone keeps telling them it is.

The *Larry ship* is the biggest and most hotly contended division in the One Direction fandom. Approximately half the fandom *ship Larry*, the other half preferring *Elounor* (the heterosexual relationship between Louis and his girlfriend Eleanor). *Elounor shippers* are deemed homophobic and in opposition to Louis and Harry’s human right to be gay together in public. *Larry shippers* are often accused of invading the band members’ privacy and of being pornographic and morally vacuous. *Larry* is an erotic space in which fans can play out their sexual fantasies unhampered by the dull and limiting sexual identities offered to them as teenage girls. The boys in their artwork are often rendered so androgynous that gender is transcended. They have queered and given emotional and erotic depth to what is on offer to them by the band’s corporate producers making something less blandly fixed in gender roles, and far more desirable and limitless in potential (see Doty 1993; Rand 1995). One of the most intriguing arguments made by the YouTubers in my sample is that including *Larry* meant I had trespassed on their “private” fan spaces. But although the majority of fans use aliases online, they do not prevent outsiders from seeing their productions, which are readily available on Tumblr, Twitter and Youtube. Although all the fan art I included was cleared with individual artists, the fandom assumed they

must have been stolen. They consider Tumblr to be an almost sacred space, in which the *Larry* fandom can be private, and this false sense of obscurity may have prevailed for a few years because outsiders did not know what to look for. As Larsen & Zubernis (2012) write, “The twin cultural biases against overt displays of emotion and (for women) displays of inappropriate sexuality combine to keep fans in the closet.” *Larry* is in the closet and the closet is Tumblr.

So *Crazy About One Direction* outed the *Larry* ship. Jenkins (2012d) describes being asked by fans not to write about real person slash (RPS) for the first edition of his landmark fan studies book *Textual Poachers*, as it was seen as “fandom’s dirty little secret” (xxxiv). But he acknowledges that these secrets are not as easy to keep in digital fandom, raising important questions as yet unanswered about the etiquette of online cultural spaces and the way meanings are altered by context. “What happens when materials produced within a subculture get decontextualized, when slash videos circulate to people who do not have slash reading practices?” (xxxvi). He cites the example of the *Closer* video—a Kirk/Spock slash cut to a *Nine Inch Nails* song, which broke out of the fandom and now has 1.7 million views on YouTube. Jenkins says it received titillated laughter from outsiders, despite being originally intended to make people think about sexual violence. The conclusion that moral codes of slash can only be understood by *insiders* seems rather old fashioned and unworkable; a parochial approach to a cultural practice that is defined by its open-minded, open-source sensibilities. Striking a balance between the invisibility of texts that express female desire and the kind of mainstreaming of subcultural information that causes it to lose its value (Thornton in Hills 2002a), is a challenge. But agreeing not to document some forms of slash at all carries a judgment and only helps perpetuate the perception of *wrongness*.

Conclusion

It is of course impossible to represent all fans at once. They are “not an amorphous mass of hysterical bed-wetters” as Robinson (2014) rightly points out. But neither are they all sensible thoughtful citizens. Fans vary wildly and it is the interaction between them that constitutes fandom. The One Direction fandom are perpetually writing their communal rulebook and trying to pin down the territory and own it, and my documentary trespasses on and meddles with that delicate process. Fans are of course a problematic source on themselves and not a source of “pristine knowledge” (Hills 2002a, 68). As Hills (2002a) writes: “personalized, individual and subjective moments of fan attachment interact with communal constructions and justifications without either moment over-writing or surmounting the other” (xiii). In representing them we should not treat “the ways in which fan identities are legitimated as authentic ‘expressions’ of a group commitment” (xii), but explicitly allow each fan to perform their personal individuality simultaneously alongside their communal fan identity. The individual and the communal are both important parts of Hill’s definition of fandom as a “cultural struggle over meaning and affect” of which

contested descriptions, identities and representations are a large part. Perhaps it was difficult for fandom to accept the individuality of the performances in *Crazy About One Direction*. When Natasha says she got braces because Niall got braces and that Zayn being from a Muslim family has helped her deal with her own identity issues, she is not speaking for the whole fandom. When Pip cries because she can't afford tickets to the stadium tour, or gasps in comedy performance at the hotness of Harry tweeting Louis, she is not speaking for every fan. But because the fandom have committed themselves to the labels that outsiders use to identify them i.e. *Directioners*, they feel as if they are being universally represented, and sadly their expectations of representation are dominated by internalised shame.

Moving *Larry* from Tumblr to television decontextualized it and had a destabilizing effect on the fandom, who were already arguing about its significance. The mainstreaming of *Larry* may have destroyed some of its subcultural authenticity for some fans, who wanted to keep it their little secret. But the various negative responses to its inclusion also importantly highlight the taboo around expressions of teenage female sexuality and the shame that is projected onto One Direction fans. Girls making porn for girls is something they only want each other to know about, aware as they are that the idea is unacceptable in a patriarchal society. I have argued that a fandom that is repeatedly shamed and derided by the media will have low expectations of any representation and therefore respond defensively regardless of the content. I have also shown the necessity of embracing the subjectivities and performances of both filmmaker and fans if the production of a documentary is to be ethical. The seemingly small changes made in service of the commercial pressures of a broadcaster, such as the change of title, should be handled with care as these little details matter and can lead to re-stigmatization. Television shows, and titles in particular, have the power to redefine communities, either challenging stereotypes or re-stigmatizing. But they don't have the power to control the way those messages are received by different audiences, who may project their own shame onto the subject. Despite the "drama" that my documentary caused, even stretching to a commemorative event on the one year anniversary of broadcast, termed "15/8" by fans (it should be noted that fans have a rather blasé attitude towards death threats etc and many describe it as *just entertainment*), it was worth giving the *Larry ship* its place in history and not letting it go unrecorded as a cultural practice. In May 2014 the verb *to ship* was entered in the Oxford English dictionary and it is tempting to think the documentary may have had a hand in that. *Crazy About One Direction* suggests *Larry* is not a source of shame, but something to be celebrated, and deserves a wider audience, just as Barry Manilow fantasies are immortalized by the Vermorels' classic study *Starlust* (1985). That audience however must take a close look at their own response - whose shame is it they are feeling? Shame is in the eye of the beholder.