

TAXI TALK

SOAPIES WET OUR TV SCREENS

by Liz Fourie

Soap operas (soapies) are very popular. Sadly, I think they make people see women as inferior. They present a picture of women as unconfident, weak and emotional.

To illustrate this point, I want to look at a few of the women characters and the way they are portrayed in two well-known soapies, *The Bold and the Beautiful* and *Dynasty*.

In both soapies there is a clear distinction between the "bad woman" and the "good woman".

Caroline in *The Bold and the Beautiful* is an example of the "good woman".

She stayed sexually pure (for her wedding night of course) and is softhearted and gentle. She waits for the man to come to her. Through her patience she earns the most "handsome" man in the soapie, Ridge.

Stephanie is the typical "bad woman".

She has all the strengths of a woman who has learnt to survive in a man's world. She has drive and initiative.

However her role as a "tough" woman is portrayed in a negative way. The soapie gives the idea it is not right for a woman to be so outspoken because it will only bring her unhappiness.

That is what happens to Stephanie. She loses Eric (her husband) to the sensitive, pathetic Brooke. Brooke suffers one heartbreak

after another and wets our TV screens regularly. After all, women do all the crying in this soapie.

In *Dynasty*, it is Krystle who is pure. She finds true love because she waits for her man and has a heart of gold (which also happens to be the colour of her hair).

Alexis is a successful businesswoman but never finds true love or happiness. She fights her way to the top, hurting and even destroying people. But her determination leaves her unhappy and lonely.

The soapies encourage women to think it is right and natural for them to cry and be soft-hearted. Being the "good woman" inevitably means being submissive. Soapies suggest women should know their place and not challenge men. After all, according to the soapies, the only important thing in women's lives is men.

Many of the characters in soapies

are idolised by viewers who want to be like them. I think the soapies play a big role in the continued oppression of women. ❄



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