

A Show of One's Own: The History of Television and the Single Girl in America from 1960.

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis analyzes the image of the single girl in American history from 1960. The changes made to her lifestyle through technology, politics, education and the workforce are discussed, as is the impact made by the second-wave feminist movement. The evolution seen is traced in detail through five pivotal television series (*That Girl*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Murphy Brown*, *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City*) that displayed to millions of viewers across the nation how unmarried women were building their lives and the challenges that they experienced. These programs were an important part of their female audience's life, highlighting what was possible to achieve, yet they were not always greeted with the highest regard. Judgment of the single women's lifestyle was seen from writers and politicians who commented on their unmarried status, their sexuality and pregnancies outside of marriage. Even television networks and producers would, at times, be unconvinced of the single female's choices. It was through the voices of female writers and producers that authenticity was brought out in the storylines and greater depth in characters created, displaying a necessity for diversity in media that is still required today.

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Table of Contents

Author's Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1.....	9
Chapter 2.....	18
Chapter 3.....	34
Chapter 4.....	63
Chapter 5.....	79
Conclusion.....	96
Bibliography.....	104

Introduction

There is an iconic woman walking down the street of a large city, alone. She can be seen twirling her umbrella, waving hello, tossing her hat in the air or getting splashed by a bus. While it is these images that we conjure up immediately when thinking about the single woman in television, her history has more to show us. She exists not only in her fictional world but is infused into American society, both influenced by it and impacting it through its narrative.

Throughout the twentieth century the lives of women in America changed dramatically in terms of choice, roles and legal rights. In 1920, the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment allowed U.S. citizens the right to vote, no matter their sex. During America's involvement in World War II from 1941 to the war's end in 1945, women were called upon to support men fighting overseas and their nation by entering the workforce in larger numbers to meet the requirements of wartime production. When the war ended, women were no longer needed to the same degree and were expected by society to return to pre-war beliefs of placing importance on marriage, child rearing and housekeeping. Suburban home developments expanded and the average age of marriage decreased.¹ The happy housewife became the image many women strived to achieve and was also one of the most frequent portrayals of American women in advertisements, magazines and television.

The 1960s saw major changes in this postwar lifestyle of women. In 1963, homemaker and freelance magazine writer Betty Friedan published her bestselling book *The Feminine Mystique*, which told women the importance of creating lives outside of the home through employment. Along with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made workplace discrimination due to sex illegal, women were seeing new opportunities presented to them. Additionally, women were participating in the Civil Rights and student activist movements and becoming

¹ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), 12.

aware of the level of inequality their sex faced while fighting for the rights of others. They broke away from organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Students for a Democratic Society and formed their own. This led to events like the picketing of the Miss America pageant in 1968 and the holding of consciousness-raising meetings where women could speak openly about their oppression and realize they were not alone in their suffering. These events, among many others, played a key role in what is labelled the second-wave feminist movement, the first wave being suffrage. The second wave united women across the nation to work towards continuing equality for women in the workplace and education, gaining greater reproductive rights and reducing sexism.

As freedoms opened up for women in the 1960s, the perspective of the single girl evolved as well; the term "single" in this paper refers to those who have never married. In earlier eras she had been a source of pity, a "spinster" unable to find a man and who would experience a lonely life as an old maid. But as a new generation looked around at the lives of their mothers and homemakers, some decided it was not the life they wanted. The aspiration instead was to not rush into marriage but find self-fulfillment through independence, education and careers. Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl* in 1962 was the first of many advice books published in the decade that told women they should move to a big city, live on their own, build a career and have fun socially and sexually without feeling guilty. Along with the release of the birth control pill and the sexual revolution, the image of the swinging single gained popularity in the late 1960s and 1970s. This demographic of unmarried women and men were sought out by companies who marketed singles-only apartments, bars and vacations and even invoked envy from married friends.

For the rest of the twentieth century, single women continued to be a staple of American society as the average age of marriage rose. Products and advertisements were directed solely towards them and news articles were written about their changing lifestyles. Literature of the era, such as *The Group*, *Valley of the Dolls*, and *Bridget Jones's Diary*, featured fictional lives of single women living in a big city and the struggles they faced. Female singers and their lyrics also showed more independence and freedom as seen in music icons Janis Joplin and Madonna. Over the decades songs like Lesley Gore's "You Don't Own Me," Helen Reddy's "I Am Woman," Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun," and Bikini Kill's "Rebel Girl" became anthems for different generations of women who found strength in themselves.

Television, too, has played a considerable role throughout the decades in women's lives. When the annual Miss America pageant was televised in 1968, it was not the contestants that received the media's attention but instead feminists gathered to protest the event's sexism. In 1973, females across the nation of all ages banded together to cheer on Billie Jean King in a "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match, boosting their self-esteem when King defeated her male opponent, Bobby Riggs. In 1991, television broadcasted the hearings of Anita Hill's accusation of sexual harassment by Clarence Thomas, who was nominated to the United States Supreme Court, and vocalized treatment of women in the workplace, making the subject less taboo. Television's fictional programming also has provided the nation with images of the single girl. Series like *That Girl*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Murphy Brown*, *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City* are classics that have captured the imaginations of their viewers. Opening themes announce that the heroine can "turn the world on with her smile" and that "she's everything that every girl should be." But beyond this perfect image, the single girl characters featured a depth that evolved over the television seasons, impacted by changes in real American women's lives. By

showcasing different ways to live as a single woman to an audience of millions, citizens were able to better understand the struggles and successes faced by these females.

It is clear that television is not merely a source of images and sounds that provide entertainment. Television displays conflicts of society and is a source for viewers to make sense of this and the world,² while it blurs the public and private sphere.³ Even though programs created are fictional products, they are able to influence our thinking. It is possible for television situations to be experienced as realistic for the viewer even if they know it is not real.⁴ For some, television can give examples of behaviour and patterning.⁵ Television crosses barriers bringing the same entertainment and message to different people of all social and economic levels who may not be able to access other types of entertainment.⁶ Anthropologist Ted Carpenter stated that, "Television doesn't just wash over us and then 'go out of mind.' It goes *into* mind, deep into mind. The subconscious is a world in which we store everything, not something, and television extends the subconscious."⁷ Therefore, it is imperative that the messages television sends to its viewers be examined to comprehend how it may affect society.

This thesis will be analyzing the single girl protagonist in television since 1960 and how she was received with comparative research on how the lives of real single women in America shifted. As scholar Danielle M. Stern has discussed in her work, there was a feeling of validation

² Margaret J. Heide, *Television Culture and Women's Lives: thirtysomething and the Contradictions of Gender* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1.

³ Charlotte Brunson, Julie D'Acci, and Lynn Spigel, ed., *Feminist Television Criticism: A Reader* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1997), 213.

⁴ Caren J. Deming, "For Television-Centred Television Criticism: Lessons from Feminism," in *Television and Women's Culture: The Politics of the Popular*, ed. Mary Ellen Brown (London, UK: Sage Publications, 1990), 41.

⁵ Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benét, ed., *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 31.

⁶ Brunson, D'Acci, and Spigel, ed., *Feminist Television Criticism*, 217.

⁷ Peter H. Wood, "Television as Dream," in *Understanding Television: Essays on Television as a Social and Cultural Force*, ed. Richard P. Adler (New York: Praeger, 1981), 62.

of her life experiences when being able to see parallels to those of female characters.⁸ Feminist Gloria Steinem has noted that the media helps to create our idea of normal and that for many people "if we can't see it, we can't be it."⁹ Providing images of women living independently with strength and determination motivates girls to do the same and feel less alone. By analyzing five television series featuring protagonists of single women (*That Girl*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Murphy Brown*, *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City*) we can see how the single girl grew attention in the 1960s and evolved until the turn of the century. These specific series have been chosen based on their vast impact on television and American culture. They have been won numerous awards for excellence such as the Golden Globe, the Emmy and the Peabody, and they have obtained millions of faithful viewers during their production and afterwards with syndication and online streaming. The programs have been featured on magazine covers, received frequent attention from journalists and academics and been referenced throughout pop culture. Lastly, they have presented an unmarried female as the focal point of their series and it is this single status and its changes, which are at the core of this thesis. Through the episodes of these series and related reviews and interviews, one will observe not only their relationship with society but also detect the judgment towards the single status that, while improving with time, still remained. While all of these programs have been written and created primarily by males, evidence shows that influences from female producers and writers allowed for more realistic female characters and feminist engaging episodes. By allowing women to play a larger role in media, it will enable more voices to be heard and new narratives to be told. Additionally, we must be aware that by having increased equality in popular culture it will allow for a better

⁸ Danielle M. Stern, "My So-Called Felicity and the City: Coming of Age with and Through Feminist Media Studies," *Sexuality & Culture* 17 (2013): 424.

⁹ Kate Zernike, "Rutgers to Endow Chair Named for Gloria Steinem," *New York Times*, September 26, 2014.

balance of gender, create more realistic portrayals of what is possible to be and perhaps reduce the suspicion and judgment of those living contrasting lives.

The beloved programs discussed here are constructed of images on how the lives of single women have changed over time. As years passed, the fictional portrayals became more realistic. For example, Ann Marie of *That Girl* was a single young woman in the late 1960s and dated the same man for five years but they maintained a chaste relationship. While *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* touched occasionally on gender equality in the workplace and hinted that Mary had a sex life, more precarious topics of the time like abortion, abuse and sexual harassment were not addressed. Not until *Murphy Brown*, which triggered a national debate over her choice to have a baby when unmarried, did the single woman on television become a more accurate representation of what real women experienced. The character Murphy, the show's namesake, also had a tough attitude and displayed that women did not have to be smiling or polite. Ally McBeal, the eponymous young lawyer in a series of the same name, and *Sex and the City's* Carrie Bradshaw, brought about a new standard of emotional authenticity and imperfection to the single woman. They classified themselves and their lives as a mess and made harmful life choices but also finally addressed in detail issues that women had experienced for decades but had not previously been seen on television.

The work in this thesis draws upon multiple areas of historiography: women's history, popular culture, and feminism. The first of these topics focuses on the creation of the second-wave women's movement and its evolution over the decades. In 1979, Sara Evans published *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, which is a history of women who were involved with social issues in the 1960s and became aware of the inequality they experienced due to their sex, leading them to form the women's

liberation movement. Following Evans, in 1989, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* by Alice Echols focused attention on various feminist groups emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s. After these publications, writings arose that took a survey approach to the second-wave women's movement, addressing the histories of professional, political and cultural changes such as Flora Davis' *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (1991), *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* by Ruth Rosen (2000), and *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present* by Gail Collins (2009). A closer look at the single women experience is detailed in Betsy Israel's *Bachelor Girl: The Secret History of Single Women in the Twentieth Century* from 2002.

While survey writings did touch on aspects of popular culture, they did not analyze the topic to the level of detail seen in those that blended communications and history. Susan Douglas' *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* from 1994 and her 2010 follow-up *Enlightened Sexism: The Seductive Message that Feminism's Work is Done* outlined changes in music, television and film, moving from the 1950s to the twenty-first century, and show the evolution of women's image in culture. Katherine Lehman's *Those Girls: Single Women in Sixties and Seventies Popular Culture* (2011) spotlights more specifically the single woman image during a comparatively condensed timeframe.

Aspects of women in television are also dealt with outside of the history field, with a more critical feminist approach and framework. *Feminist Television Criticism: A Reader* from 1997, 2006's *Redesigning Women: Television After the Network Era* by Amanda Lotz and the decades of writings from Bonnie J. Dow, starting in 1990, have brought new analysis to the narrative of television characters.

This thesis follows the narrative most closely used in the writings on popular culture. However, it differs by providing a more substantial look at the history of women during the same era and contributing a detailed analysis of specific television programs rather than an overview of numerous areas. Over the course of this paper, four decades are analyzed, from the 1960s into the 1990s, with the greatest focus on the 1960s and 1970s. It is these two decades that produced a considerable shift in the lives of single woman and created the basis of her lifestyle, which, while always evolving, has maintained many similarities in following years. The ways in which the single girl gained popularity in the United States is explained and how it became a future that women were able to find greater confidence in. Television programs that centered on a single woman are also inspected to understand what was selected in each decade as representative of her. In addition to looking at the episodes of the series, newspaper and magazine articles that discuss the programs are addressed to study the levels of condemnation and admiration expressed by critics and the public.

Chapter 1

During the postwar era in American history, television has played a vital role in reflecting changes in society and influencing the future. In the 1950s, televisions were selling at a rate of over 5 million a year to all social classes, allowing advertising and varying social messages to enter most American homes.¹⁰ This period has as well been one of great transition in the lives of women. No longer has it been the universal expectation to move from the father's home to the husband's, but instead it has been acceptable for a woman to live an independent life of education and career before getting married, if she ever so chooses.

As historian Elaine Tyler May noted in her book *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, "daughters abandoned security and material comfort to follow a more autonomous path that brought them face to face with economic hardship and pervasive discrimination. Yet ... many would say that the struggles were worth it."¹¹ Some of these first young women to push against the life of conformity were beatniks in the 1950s. Despite the sexism found in the Beat community, women were attracted to its freedom, which was not found in domesticity.¹² Those like musician Janis Joplin, who grew up in this era, did not see the appeal of engagement rings and marriage but wanted something more.¹³ A growing number of women saw unhappiness in their own mothers and did not want that same life for themselves.¹⁴ Nonetheless, a fear still lingered of becoming an old maid if one did not marry.¹⁵ In addition to social anxieties linked to being single, it was also difficult in practice. Single women were

¹⁰ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 163.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹² Wini Breines, "The 'Other' Fifties: Beats and Bad Girls," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), 389.

¹³ Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1992), 136.

¹⁴ Betty Friedan, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), 24.

¹⁵ Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable*, 53.

unable to obtain credit cards and bank loans on their own.¹⁶ For employment, help wanted sections were divided into male and female categories and numerous jobs for women would request specific physically attractive appearances.¹⁷

The early 1960s saw significant changes on a political level as well that contributed to greater opportunities for women. The Commission on the Status of Women, headed by Eleanor Roosevelt, founded in 1961 by President Kennedy, issued an influential report in 1963. It found that discrimination against women did exist in America and reforms to laws and practices needed to be introduced to achieve greater equality.¹⁸ The Equal Pay Act in 1963 entitled men and women to receive the same pay for the same work and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 helped to bring about advancements through prohibiting discrimination in employment based on sex.¹⁹ The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established to assist with complaints regarding civil rights and was overwhelmed with mistreatment issues from women, like those faced by airline stewardesses in regards to their employment regulations of age, weight and marital status.²⁰

Two non-fiction books released in the early 1960s dealt with the evolving lives of women and they gained widespread attention and longevity. Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl* in 1962 and 1963's *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan were critically important texts, both of which brought realization to the value of women having their own careers and identities. In Brown's 1964 follow-up, *Sex and the Office*, she minimizes women who do not find the

¹⁶ Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸ Marjorie Hunter, "U.S. Panel Urges Women to Sue for Equal Rights," *New York Times*, October 12, 1963.

¹⁹ Susan M. Hartmann, *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics Since 1960* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 54.

²⁰ Gail Collins, *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women From 1960 to the Present* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009. Kindle edition), 82.

prospect of a career exciting, telling them if they see women's work as something to kill time until a man proposes then they will never have any fun.²¹ These books informed women they could find self-fulfillment based on their own terms with Brown's text strengthening the image of the single girl who was free from the sexual and social conformities seen by her mother while Friedan focused more on the middle class housewife.²² Female independence had been reduced in the Cold War era of containment in the 1950s.²³ The works of Friedan and Brown assisted in revitalizing this independence.

Helen Gurley Brown based her writings on experiences of her own life and that of her friends, having not married herself until she was in her late thirties. Brown found that when women were unmarried after 25 they were viewed as "un-American," often patronized and told they were on their way to hell if having an affair. Her book's aim was to help singles realize they should enjoy their status and not be "slitting their throats or climbing the walls."²⁴ She wanted singles not to be punished for the life they were living.²⁵ The book gained instant attention, selling over two million copies in the first three weeks.²⁶ While *Sex and the Single Girl* was aimed at those around 30 years of age it gained attention by teens even though Brown stated it was not her audience.²⁷ Her message would reach and influence those of varying age.

In *Sex and the Single Girl*, Brown stated that the single female was becoming the era's glamour girl.²⁸ Without having to take care of a husband or children, a single girl is able to spend

²¹ Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Office* (New York: Bernard Geis Associates, 1964), 5.

²² Hilary Radner, and Moya Lockett, ed. *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 10.

²³ May, *Homeward Bound*, 199.

²⁴ Art Buchwald, "Mrs. Brown Speaks Her Mind Frankly," *The Washington Post*, November 4, 1962.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Coontz, *A Strange Stirring*, 137.

²⁷ Buchwald, "Mrs. Brown Speaks Her Mind Frankly."

²⁸ Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl* (Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade Books, 2003), 5.

time improving herself and growing into an interesting person.²⁹ Yet, she does imply that this can be used to obtain a better man.³⁰ Brown told women that they would have to work hard to have a blissful single life and that they should have fashion taste, no roommates, no baby fat, cook well and have an interesting job.³¹ She also told readers that even nice single women have sex lives, often more interesting than those of married people.³² If a girl did not like sex or hated men she was told to seek professional help.³³ Unlike a married woman, a single girl is not known by whom she belongs to but what she does. A job can be her love, make her happy, create a family of friends, and assist in figuring out who she is.³⁴ Children can be had later in life, so Brown wondered why a young woman should give up the chance to create and produce things from her head.³⁵

Brown concluded her book with some sage advice for her readers and their choices for their future. There may be struggles with being single, she concluded, but even those who are married are never fully happy.³⁶ She stated that,

You may marry or you may not. In today's world that is no longer the big question for women. Those who glom on to men so that they can collapse with relief, spend the rest of their days shining up their status symbol and figure they never have to reach, stretch, learn, grow, face dragons or make a living again are the ones to be pitied. They, in my opinion, are the unfulfilled ones. You, my friend, if you work at it, can be envied the rich, full life possible for the single woman today.³⁷

After the success of Brown's books, her background in advertising and lectures on the single girl market, she was named editor-in-chief of *Cosmopolitan* magazine in 1965, which was

²⁹ Ibid., 6.

³⁰ Ibid., 4.

³¹ Ibid., 10.

³² Ibid., 7.

³³ Ibid., 72.

³⁴ Ibid., 89.

³⁵ Ibid., 91.

³⁶ Ibid., 249.

³⁷ Ibid., 267.

retooled to be marketed to young women.³⁸ Brown noted that most women's magazines assumed the reader was married and keeping a home but she wanted to publish material to the large market of women who did not have a husband. The *Los Angeles Times* writer Jerome Cowle, however, saw the new concept directed more to feminine "misfits" and teens as part of early training towards a "new credo."³⁹ Brown did make sure the magazine did not deal with issues that differed from her own; for example, no pieces on children, as she had none, and no forum on abortion, as she supported it and did not want the topic debated.⁴⁰ As the decade progressed so did the activity and protests from women for equal rights and change. Brown said she did support the emerging women's liberation movement but not the "hostile-to-men aspects" she suspected.⁴¹

Brown's body of work, along with men's lifestyle magazine *Playboy*, played a part in the shifting sexual mores of America. The sexual revolution to some was an adjustment more to women's lives than men's. From the 1960s to 1970s those admitting sexual activity prior to marriage had gone from a minority to a large majority and people were becoming more comfortable with their own sexuality.⁴² It was also noted that sexual containment seen in the 1950s "lost its power as a behavioural code, as intercourse outside marriage became the rule."⁴³

In the early 1960s, young women were taking the lead in protecting themselves, carrying condoms and obtaining diaphragms, even though unmarried women were not permitted by law to purchase such items. Some would lie to doctors saying they were about to be married, although

³⁸ "Sex, the Single Girl and a Magazine," *New York Times*, March 17, 1965.

³⁹ Jerome M. Cowle, "Cosmo, How You've Changed," *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1966.

⁴⁰ Ernestine Carter, "Editor Helen Gurley Brown is Anti-Everything --Almost," *The Washington Post*, November 20, 1967.

⁴¹ Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the New Single Girl* (New York: Bernard Geis Associates, 1970), 5.

⁴² Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs, *Re-Making Love: The Feminization of Sex* (New York: Anchor Books, 1986), 2.

⁴³ May, *Homeward Bound*, 211.

many physicians would provide contraceptives without a ruse, and birth control clinics were able to provide for those married and single.⁴⁴ Gael Greene's investigation on the sex lives of girls on college campuses, in the early 1960s, confirmed Gloria Steinem's findings that women were lying to doctors to be prescribed diaphragms, though some did feel too much guilt to obtain birth control.⁴⁵ Generally, Greene found that virgins were seen as "uncool" and possessing a diaphragm would improve one's status.⁴⁶ Being sexually active was described as making the young women feel alive.⁴⁷ With the Food and Drug Administration's approval of the birth control pill in 1960, 750,000 American women had begun to use it as of 1962. The Pill, as it was commonly referred to, had a higher level of effectiveness than other forms of birth control and was used while not engaging in sex, which played less influence during sexual activity than other birth control methods. It was an important aspect to the sexual revolution but not the first or only factor. According to Steinem's study of university women, the removal of fear of social consequences would quickly evolve single women's sex lives and push them to believe what they did was not society's business.⁴⁸

In the mid 1960s, college graduating females were showing a preference for gaining careers instead of marriages. The influence of the Cold War placed value in studies and the idealism of the Peace Corps also played a role in this transition, as did their desire to be their own person, not just in relation to a husband.⁴⁹ With the life expectancy of women rising to 73, it meant women had about 40 years of their life after children left for grade school that would

⁴⁴ Gloria Steinem, "The Moral Disarmament of Betty Coed," *Esquire*, September 1962, 153.

⁴⁵ Gael Greene, *Sex and the College Girl* (New York: The Dial Press, 1964), 197.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁸ Steinem, "The Moral Disarmament of Betty Coed," 155.

⁴⁹ "What Educated Women Want," *Newsweek*, June 13, 1966, 68.

likely be filled with a job outside the home thus it was important for younger women to find a career they could enjoy during their life and obtain the proper education needed.⁵⁰

These women were no doubt also influenced by Betty Friedan's landmark 1963 bestseller, *The Feminine Mystique*. It was a phenomenal success, selling 60,000 hardback copies followed by 1.5 million more once released in paperback.⁵¹ *The Feminine Mystique* outlined ways American women suffered from "the problem that has no name." It was a dissatisfaction women felt from devoting their entire life to the occupation of housewife with no personal identity. The book was inspired from Friedan's own life and the responses she received as part of a questionnaire given to her fellow Smith College graduates in 1957.⁵² Women who did not know who they could be outside of a wife or mother were turning to public images to find identity.⁵³ Friedan concluded her book by asking, "Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves?... It has barely begun, the search of women for themselves. But the time is at hand when the voices of the feminine mystique can no longer drown out the inner voice that is driving women on to become complete."⁵⁴ Her book helped women to question what they wanted from life, outside of being a wife and mother, and who they would become as an individual.⁵⁵

Friedan was asked by *TV Guide* in 1964 to analyze the image of women on television, and for two weeks straight she absorbed a variety of commercials and programs.⁵⁶ It did not take

⁵⁰ Ibid., 71.

⁵¹ Coontz, *A Strange Stirring*, 148.

⁵² Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), 7.

⁵³ Ibid., 65.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 364.

⁵⁵ Betty Friedan, "Angry Letters, Relieved Letters," in *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), 42.

⁵⁶ Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 74.

long for her to conclude that images were disgracefully insulting.⁵⁷ Female characters were absent from many series and when they were actually seen, they lacked any sense of identity or depth.⁵⁸ Friedan wondered, "What does such a denigrating image of real women do to young mothers watching, who are no longer sure who they are, or to girls who don't even know who they can be?"⁵⁹ This question holds further importance when we take into account that as of 1960, there was on average more than one television receiver per household in America and the medium was gaining great influence in people's lives.⁶⁰

When Friedan asked those in the television business why there were not programs centered on women and their lives, responses were varied. One executive said, "If you have a woman lead in a television series, she has to be either married or unmarried. If she's unmarried, what's wrong with her?... For a woman to make decisions, to triumph over anything would be unpleasant, dominant, masculine."⁶¹ Executives also noted that they put more men on television as women control the dial and what they want is to look at potential male sex partners for their fantasies.⁶² If the female audience had to look at numerous female characters they would be viewed as competition and ruin the fantasy.⁶³ When women were prominent in programs they were often seen in comedies. According to writer Madelyn Martin it was because sitcoms turn a woman's "misfortune into a joke."⁶⁴ With these types of messages, Friedan concluded that it was time television contained heroines to help female viewers see themselves more seriously.⁶⁵ This

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Betty Friedan, "Television and the Feminine Mystique," in *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), 76.

⁵⁹ Friedan, "Television and the Feminine Mystique," 83.

⁶⁰ Matilda Butler, William Paisley, Suzanne Pingree, and Robert Hawkins, *Women and the Mass Media: Sourcebook for Research and Action* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980), 54.

⁶¹ Friedan, "Television and the Feminine Mystique," 84.

⁶² Ibid., 78.

⁶³ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 87.

article created a large response from all types of women, also frustrated with what they saw on television.⁶⁶

Despite the importance of television to people's lives, women's authority was lacking within the medium.⁶⁷ It was resistant to career women, often shown as militant and forceful or overly feminine to cover their ambition.⁶⁸ However, through television programming new images of women would emerge. Americans were exposed to a variety of female individuals, gaining knowledge on how single girls were not lonely spinsters or angry feminists, but relatable and inspirational. Historian Ruth Rosen noted that the feminist movement was taken more seriously by the public through showing individuals rather than women as a group, therefore images in popular culture focusing on individual women would resonate more.⁶⁹ It then corresponds that single female characters analyzed here would become a relatable way for Americans to learn about the evolving lives and opinions of women.

⁶⁶ Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, 75.

⁶⁷ Marya Mannes, "Should Women Only Be Seen and Not Heard?" in *Television: Selection of Readings from TV Guide Magazine*, ed. Barry G. Cole (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 276.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁶⁹ Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000), xv.

Chapter 2

In 1960, the typical American watched just over five hours of television a day, according to A.C. Nielsen data, a figure that would rise to almost seven hours by 1975.⁷⁰ At the beginning of the 1960s, television had focused women's role to that of homemaker as seen on classic sitcoms like *Leave It To Beaver* and *Ozzie and Harriett*. This could be damaging to viewers as when young girls only see the image of a housewife they may think that is all they can inspire to as they grow.⁷¹ The homemaker did evolve during the decade though, with Samantha on *Bewitched* using her supernatural powers to assist with her husband's career and the macabre mothers on *The Munsters* and *The Addams Family* taking no interest in baking or the PTA.⁷² But even the fictional Samantha was bored with her television options, shutting it off after finding an abundance of Westerns and soap operas.⁷³ The early 1960s saw a few programs centered on a teenaged female lead such as *The Patty Duke Show* and *Gidget*, before shifting to include independent unmarried women. *That Girl* debuted in 1966 and was one of the first examples of a television program that focused on a single woman who was chasing her dream career in a big city.

The American Broadcasting Company television network (ABC) was looking to create a show for Marlo Thomas, a budding actress and the daughter of comedian and television star Danny Thomas (*Make Room for Daddy*). They sent her numerous scripts but Thomas found

⁷⁰ United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Window Dressing on the Set: Women and Minorities in Television," (United States Commission on Civil Rights, August 1977), 1.

⁷¹ Betty Friedan, "Television and the Feminine Mystique," in *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), 85.

⁷² Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 137.

⁷³ Bernard Slade, "Witch or Wife," *Bewitched*, season 1, episode 9, aired November 12, 1964.

them all to be old-fashioned, with the female leads serving as a wife or secretary.⁷⁴ Thomas wondered if there was a show where she could "be the somebody, not an offshoot of the other person."⁷⁵ Thomas decided she wanted to perform in a series about an inspiring actress that "has a father who doesn't want her to move to the big city."⁷⁶ Thomas went to the network and told them about a new generation of women that did not want to be their mothers or rush into marriage but have careers instead. She even sent an executive a copy of *The Feminine Mystique* and it was soon agreed Thomas could have her vision created.⁷⁷

Originally titled *Miss Independence*, Danny's nickname for his daughter, the show was soon retitled *That Girl*, and not only starred Marlo Thomas but had her in a producing position through her newly formed company, Daisy Productions. This allowed her say in program decisions beyond that of actress. Still, as a female producer in her twenties, it was said that many men had issues with her power on set.⁷⁸ In addition to ABC executives, the show's sponsor Clairol had influence in its production. During the early years of the 1960s, programming switched from more sponsored controlled content to networks overseeing programming and selling advertising time to companies.⁷⁹ Despite this fact, Clairol saw Thomas and a show about a young woman as a good fit for hair products.⁸⁰ The fictional character Ann Marie's flip hair-do would become a focal image of the program and demonstrated that influence from outside sources still wielded some control over the networks.

⁷⁴ Marlo Thomas, "That Show ... That Woman ... The Creation of That Girl," *That Girl*, Season 1 Bonus Features (Shout Factory, 2006), DVD.

⁷⁵ Peter M. Nichols, "Feminism's Unlikely Heroine: 'That Girl' may look awfully perky on video ..." *New York Times*, May 30, 1999.

⁷⁶ Robin Finn, "Who Thought 'That Girl' Would Go There?" *New York Times*, March 17, 2000.

⁷⁷ Thomas, "That Show ... That Woman."

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Window Dressing on the Set," 8.

⁸⁰ Stephen Cole, *That Book About That Girl: The Unofficial Companion* (Los Angeles, CA: Renaissance Books, 1999), 39.

Executive producers Sam Denoff and Bill Persky also helped to create and write *That Girl*, infusing their own experiences of being married to young female performers into episodes.⁸¹ During the second season, Ruth Brooks Flippen joined the show's staff as a writer. She not only brought more female perspective but also was able to support Thomas in her struggles with male writers on what was practical for a female to say or do.⁸² While only a handful of episodes each season would be penned by a female writer, during the first two seasons many were written by male and female writing partners, giving additional women's viewpoints.

Multiple aspects of the storyline in *That Girl* were inspired from Marlo Thomas's life. Thomas had attended the University of Southern California to become a teacher but later decided she needed to pursue her dream of acting instead. Her father said he probably would have been more accepting about Thomas deciding to act if she had been a boy. What he wanted from her instead was for her to marry and have a child that was like herself.⁸³ But despite concerns from her parents, who did not want her to live alone, Thomas moved away on her own at 21. When she did, her mother was very emotional and would often call to make sure she was okay.⁸⁴ This personal experience of Thomas also describes the premise to one of the first *That Girl* episodes. The beginning of the series narrates how throughout the animal kingdom there is a leaving of the nest or home for independence and New York City is where humans today find it. The character Ann Marie is optimistic about leaving, ensuring her parents she is only 40 miles away. As soon as she moves into her own Manhattan apartment, her dad begins calling to check in and her mother comes to stay with her. While Ann's mom says to just go about and do what she would normally do, Ann replies that she does not know yet what that is. Ann works things out between

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 98.

⁸³ B. Rollin, "Marlo Thomas: That Girl is Some Girl," *Look*, October 17, 1967.

⁸⁴ Clay Gowran, "Danny Thomas Has Raised Quite a Girl," *Chicago Tribune*, August 25, 1966.

her parents and calls it her "Independence Day" when her mother leaves. While she understands why they see her as a child, she insists to not wanting to be treated like one.⁸⁵

Thomas not only had to fight her parents to live alone when starting her career, but also had to combat the network to allow Ann Marie to live alone. They had wanted the character to live with an aunt or to be engaged, but it was important for Thomas she be alone to show real independence.⁸⁶ She figured that if *The Fugitive*, a popular series about a man on the run from authorities, did not have a home or family surely Ann did not have to live within a family unit.⁸⁷ Thomas did not feel the need to break all the rules but did believe the rules needed to change. She felt it was no longer acceptable to have people continue to say, "Nice girls don't do that. Nice girls don't live alone."⁸⁸

Visual expressions also played a role in *That Girl's* success. While, like most television programs at the time, *That Girl* was filmed on sound stages in California, most of the exterior shots were filmed on location in Manhattan. This helped viewers picture what life in the big city would look like. Fans of the show have told Thomas for decades that they moved out of their small towns because they watched *That Girl*. Another important factor in the appearance of the program was Ann Marie's wardrobe, Marlo herself having always been fashion conscious.⁸⁹ Previous adult women on television did not seem to care considerably about fashion trends but it was important to Thomas to show how a new generation of women pay attention to the newest looks, like herself who had recently returned from working in London with many mod wardrobe

⁸⁵ Bill Persky, and Sam Denoff, "Good-Bye, Hello, Good-Bye," *That Girl*, season 1, episode 2, aired September 15, 1966.

⁸⁶ Cole, *That Book About That Girl*, 40.

⁸⁷ Emily Shire, "Marlo Thomas Says Girls Should Feel Free to Be Like Hannah Horvath," *The Daily Beast*, April 24, 2014, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/04/24/marlo-thomas-says-girls-should-feel-free-to-be-like-hannah-horvath.html> (accessed June 10, 2015).

⁸⁸ Judy Stone, "And Now - Make Room for Marlo," *New York Times*, September 4, 1966.

⁸⁹ Lydia Lane, "Optimism Pays for Marlo," *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 1966.

pieces. Some were afraid that using the latest fashion would date the show in reruns but as Ann was not a character stuck in the house, it was important for her to wear contemporary clothes out in Manhattan.⁹⁰ While it was questioned how Ann would have been able to afford all these clothes on a struggling actor's pay, it was decided television is a fantasy of wishes, not reality.⁹¹ *That Girl* was about a young woman who while trying to find her place in the world was also aware of the changes taking place and represented a current view. Her variety of clothes and mismatched furniture helped Thomas establish realistic aspects of Ann Marie.⁹² Over the seasons, other fashion trends would find their way into the program, including the braless look. In 1970, it was becoming popular with women in New York, especially those under 30 years of age, to go without a bra in public and even the workplace. Marlo Thomas stopped wearing a bra on *That Girl* and said on the matter, "God created women to bounce, so be it. If I bounce, I'm glad to be a girl."⁹³

Many episodes of *That Girl* dealt with a central situation or problem that had to be solved, usually with confusion from Ann's father or steady boyfriend Donald (Ted Bessell). Don and Ann are young and in love, yet their relationship is rather old-fashioned. One early episode has Don tell Ann to go make him a sandwich. She tells him they must go out to eat as all she has is yogurt, showing no issue with him demanding food.⁹⁴ He also often shows jealousy when she is nice to interested men or wears an outfit he finds inappropriate for one of her many jobs. In one episode, Ann stops at Don's apartment and after finding it a mess, forces him to get a maid. When confusion arises from her accidentally being a live-in maid, Ann must work to find

⁹⁰ Cynthia Lowry, "'That Girl' Rejects New Title on Show," *The Washington Post*, August 22, 1967.

⁹¹ Marlo Thomas, and Bill Persky, "That Girl in New York," *That Girl*, Season 1 Bonus Features (Shout Factory, 2006), DVD.

⁹² Linda Crawford, "Marlo Thomas Bucks Jinx of Being Daughter of the Famous Danny," *Chicago Tribune*, October 16, 1966.

⁹³ Judy Klemesrud, "Braless Look: 2 Years Ago a Daring Fad, but Now It's a Trend," *New York Times*, August 5, 1970.

⁹⁴ Rick Mittleman, "Little Auction Annie," *That Girl*, season 1, episode 8, aired October 17, 1966.

appropriate sleeping arrangements. When Don mistakenly thinks Ann wants him to sleep on her couch she responds by saying, "No, I'm not that mature." The situation is solved when the maid quits and Ann takes over the cleaning of Don's apartment.⁹⁵ Even in the early seasons there were complaints about *That Girl* being too innocent based on the emerging sexual revolution. For instance, in one episode, Ann is shocked when Donald takes off his shoes and seems as if she has never even seen his bare feet before. Thomas's response was, "Well, I just can't play it as if they're having an affair. That's too thick."⁹⁶

This confirmation that Ann and Don are not together sexually is shown often in his leaving her apartment at the end of the evening and her going to bed alone. When Don's co-worker elopes to Connecticut, Ann and Don witness the service. A snowstorm causes the train back to New York to be cancelled and there are not enough hotel rooms available for Ann and Don to sleep apart. After attempting to make the males and females sleep in separate rooms, splitting apart the newlyweds on their wedding night, guilt has Ann and Don stay together, though not sharing the bed. Ann's parents arrive to the hotel in the morning after a confusing answering service message and find them together. Following an initial shock, they say they trust Ann but not Don and demand the full explanation.⁹⁷

The innocence of Ann Marie is addressed in other episodes as well. Ann's father sees a copy of *Playpen* magazine (a fictional version of *Playboy*) where he believes the centerfold is his daughter. He confronts Ann, not knowing they put her head on another girl's body without permission, and tells her moving to the big city ruined her life forever as people will no longer view her as "unspoiled." Ann informs him there is nothing wrong with New York, and while some people would pose nude she is not one of those people. Her father later apologizes for

⁹⁵ Peggy Elliott, and Ed Scharlach, "Kimono My House," *That Girl*, season 1, episode 19, aired January 19, 1967.

⁹⁶ Rollin, "Marlo Thomas: That Girl is Some Girl."

⁹⁷ James L. Brooks, "Rain, Snow and Rice," *That Girl*, season 1, episode 21, aired February 2, 1967.

believing she would ever do that. Additionally, when Ann has an interview for a children's show, the puppeteer thinks she is promiscuous, believing she poses nude, and the situation forces Ann to stand up for herself, calling him a disgrace and losing the job.⁹⁸ In a 1971 episode of *That Girl*, Don is at a stag party and Ann's imagination goes wild about what they might say about her. Ann's friend Ruthie tells her that even if she did something that they might mention, it likely was not so awful to do since they now live in a modern society. Ann becomes offended Ruthie would even think she would have done something like she is hinting at.⁹⁹ The program does not even mention what that something might be. While a few years before this type of worry may have been a legitimate concern for some women, with the sexual revolution and social changes that had taken place it is painfully outdated for 1971.

Ann's father, Lew Marie (Lew Parker), appears in many episodes of the series showing the continuing importance in male influence over a woman. In the first season, Ann decides to change her stage name as her real one creates confusion on auditions. This has her father yell at his "Miss Independence" for even considering such a thing and Ann responds by saying she is not a child, while whining like one. As Ann tries to make her own decision she gives in to her father because of the pain it causes him.¹⁰⁰ Later in the season her father takes her out for a birthday dinner and complains that her dress is too short and that she wears too much makeup. He also shares how he is upset she is an actress and wants her to go back to school to become a dental assistant. Ann questions whether he was upset she was born a girl and he replies he would not have ordered her any other way if he could. He gives Ann a pair of long earrings he had always said she was not grownup enough to wear. This makes Ann happy as they symbolize in

⁹⁸ Ed Scharlach, and Warren Murray, "I Ain't Got Nobody," *That Girl*, season 5, episode 3, aired October 9, 1970.

⁹⁹ Saul Turteltaub, and Bernie Orenstein, "Stag Party," *That Girl*, season 5, episode 21, aired February 26, 1971.

¹⁰⁰ Bill Persky, and Sam Denoff, "What's In a Name?" *That Girl*, season 1, episode 11, aired November 17, 1966.

her mind that he has accepted her as a "whole entire separate person."¹⁰¹ Despite this gesture, Ann's father continues to actively watch over most aspects of her life.

Worry about Ann's life choices comes not only from her parents but also concerned relatives, who are unable to grasp the concept that a nice girl would choose a path other than marriage and children. An aunt shows concern for Ann's life when she comes to visit. Her own daughter has a husband, baby and big house and sees that as perfection. She does not think a girl like Ann should live on her own before marriage, especially in a place like New York City. Ann's father shows a limited acceptance with his daughter's life, however, by telling the aunt that Ann is "alright."¹⁰²

When Ann's family comes to dinner with Don, they confront him on whether he plans to marry Ann because otherwise he should not waste her time. Ann insists that they are fond of each other but marriage is still far from their minds, they want to focus on their careers and gain financial security first. While Ann and Don are happy to not be getting married, Ann confronts Don later about his intentions and they promise to commit to loving each other.¹⁰³ When Don gives Ann a jewellery box a couple episodes later she makes a speech about not opening it. Assuming incorrectly it is a ring, she states she does not want to be tempted as she promised herself time on her own and would not be ready for marriage for awhile.¹⁰⁴

During a televised dating game show, Ann questions three available bachelors. When the first contestant says his perfect wife would sew, cook and clean up after him Ann responds that he needs a mother not wife. Don, secretly the third contestant, is asked if he thinks a woman can successfully support a career and a marriage, he says in some cases a woman might have to make

¹⁰¹ Sydney Zelinka, "Paper Hats and Everything," *That Girl*, season 1, episode 22, aired February 9, 1967.

¹⁰² Barbara Avedon, "Leaving the Nest Is for the Birds," *That Girl*, season 1, episode 25, aired March 2, 1967.

¹⁰³ Milton Pascal, "What Are Your Intentions?" *That Girl*, season 1, episode 23, aired February 16, 1967.

¹⁰⁴ Avedon, "Leaving the Nest Is for the Birds."

a career successful to support a marriage.¹⁰⁵ These episodes provide examples of the changing attitudes towards marriage and single life that was taking place in the 1960s. While the elder generation is concerned about Ann not marrying, in the end they usually support Ann's decisions and trust her judgment. As for Ann and Donald, they see no need to rush into the same lives of their parents. Ann has no desire to be a traditional housewife and enjoys sharing adventure with those she cares for.

In the final season of *That Girl* (1970-1971), Don and Ann celebrate their fourth anniversary of dating and Don proposes. When he asks the question Ann slips off into a daydream of spinning and smiling in slow motion before jumping into his arms and yelling "Oh Donald!" clearly excited and acting like it is the happiest moment of her life.¹⁰⁶ While this at first seems like a disappointment for those who appreciate Ann's independence, the series did not end with the "happily ever after" of love and marriage. In a later episode, Ann shows fear about being married. When she confides in a friend about it, she is told that one-third of marriages end in divorce and that they should see a premarital counsellor. Don and Ann fight over what is bothering them and the situation is quickly resolved when they kiss and make up.¹⁰⁷ Their fears later resurface when, after Ann's bridal shower, Don confides that he has doubts about marrying Ann. This leads to a fight where Ann gives back her engagement ring and cries. Soon Don apologizes for being out of character and she runs back into his arms smiling, only wanting to hear about how much he loves her. Don admits he only had cold feet over the idea of marriage but his fear over being a husband is not as important as having Ann in his life.¹⁰⁸ While Don and

¹⁰⁵ Treva Silverman, and Peter Meyerson, "The Mating Game," *That Girl*, season 1, episode 30, aired April 6, 1967.

¹⁰⁶ Saul Turteltaub, and Bernie Orenstein, "Counter Proposal," *That Girl*, season 5, episode 1, aired September 25, 1970.

¹⁰⁷ Bruce Howard, "Rattle of a Single Girl," *That Girl*, season 5, episode 5, aired October 23, 1970.

¹⁰⁸ Saul Turteltaub, and Bernie Orenstein, "A Limited Engagement," *That Girl*, season 5, episode 16, aired January 15, 1971.

Ann love each other, both confront their fears over the institute of marriage itself. With the rising divorce rate they would not be the only couple at the time to assess whether marriage would bring a happy ending.

In the last few episodes of the series, changing social concerns are addressed in other areas as well. Ann is cast in a stage scene as a Mexican woman and when the Latino cast members and their friends become upset over the scene playing to stereotypes for laughs they, along with Ann, refuse to do it and are fired.¹⁰⁹ We see Ann become even more political in nature when she begins picketing against pollution. When her protest group pickets outside Don's magazine he demands Ann and her friends never rally there again. To please Don's demand and serve her cause, Ann invites Don's boss and wife to dinner to better inform him about pollution and they listen to her advice.¹¹⁰

As the 1960s proceeded, television sitcoms added more realistic material and were becoming more provocative, according to producer Bill Persky. It was believed that without truth audiences would likely watch less comedy, which had a history of dealing with simple and tame plots.¹¹¹ This is seen in the social messages in *That Girl's* final years. Despite the changes in *That Girl* towards the end, the last two seasons of the series saw a sharp decline in the crediting of female writers, with women only writing three of the last fifty episodes of the show. The lack of female writers often left Thomas alone in providing a first-hand feminist message.

In the last episode of *That Girl*, Ann cuts out an article Don wrote on women's liberation and places it in his sandwich, wanting him to eat his words. The piece bothers her as the fictional character in it has her initials and is not portrayed to her liking. Don says he wrote the article

¹⁰⁹ Saul Turteltaub, and Bernie Orenstein, "That Señorita," *That Girl*, season 5, episode 12, aired December 11, 1970.

¹¹⁰ Saul Turteltaub, and Bernie Orenstein, "Soot Yourself," *That Girl*, season 5, episode 23, aired March 12, 1971.

¹¹¹ Hal Humphrey, "Energy & ambition -- that's Marlo," *Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 1968.

about a girl who believes in women's liberation, freedom for women and independence, thinking that it is not Ann but she states she is that girl. Don says Ann is beautiful when mad and she wonders if that is all he cares about, her beauty and not her intelligence. Ann insists Don attend her women's lib meeting before a hockey game, while fixing him a new sandwich to eat. Don says women have it the best possible way already, things are handed to them not held back from them and that Ann needs men. Ann responds she relies on him from habit and would be fine if she was without him. When they arrive to the meeting late, due to being stuck in an elevator, they find no other men came and it has been rescheduled for the following week. Ann assures Don she will bring and protect him when they come back.¹¹² Ending the series leaving Don and Ann still engaged but fighting over differing opinions leaves viewers to decide themselves whether they might stay together forever or not.

To create this type of ending for a popular sitcom resulted in conflict. Thomas faced resistance from the network, sponsors and her writing staff who all wanted to end the series with a wedding. This was not an option for Thomas, who had the feeling millions of girls were watching Ann closely and if she married it meant that it was the only happy ending. Instead, by taking Don to a women's liberation meeting, Ann was working to educate him to her way of thinking and not giving up a part of herself. This ending upset those who had been opposed to it, but left Thomas feeling proud.¹¹³

Thomas also remained single through the height of her fame, saying, "There's the conflict of being a girl and being well-versed in a subject and being forceful. There's the conflict

¹¹² Saul Turteltaub, and Bernie Orenstein, "The Elevated Woman," *That Girl*, season 5, episode 24, aired March 19, 1971.

¹¹³ "Marlo Thomas: First Single Working Woman on Television," *Makers* video, 3:20, 2015, www.makers.com/marlo-thomas.

about how do you ever get married when you're so involved with life."¹¹⁴ Thomas could be easily seen as an ambitious young woman, putting in long days and overseeing numerous details of the show. Nevertheless, reporters still found it odd she was not trying to wed, describing her as "apathetic" to discussing it.¹¹⁵ Thomas never understood the excitement of friends in college over engagements and their rush to marry. "I used to feel I'd never get married. That I would lose my Self if I did. Then I felt guilty. I figured there was something wrong with me - not the institution or our attitudes - just me."¹¹⁶ With time Thomas became open to the idea, thinking people should do what makes them happy without judgment, though still looking at a male reporter "rather sternly" when probed about her own possible marriage.¹¹⁷ Growing up, Thomas saw many unhappy wives and thought that the only options were to marry and have kids or to be successful in a career, but never both.¹¹⁸ As she grew older, she did not comprehend why women had to choose between a career and family when men could have both. One of the reasons she became involved in the feminist movement was to make women aware of their rights, show them that they are not alone and that there is nothing wrong with them for wanting a better life.¹¹⁹ She never expected to be rescued but instead was her own resource in life. These options left reporter Jack Slater to describe her "as The New Women, fettered, it is said, by nothing or no one."¹²⁰

Part of *That Girl's* appeal was that her lifestyle was seen as less threatening due to her glamour, fashion, comedy, innocence and monogamous relationship.¹²¹ American feminist Gloria Steinem has said, *That Girl* "has been very influential in shaping girls' dreams of what and

¹¹⁴ Stone, "And Now - Make Room for Marlo."

¹¹⁵ Joyce Haber, "Marlo Thomas: Danny's Girl Knows What She's After," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1968.

¹¹⁶ Katie Kelly, "Marlo Thomas: 'My Whole Life I've Had My Dukes Up,'" *New York Times*, March 11, 1973.

¹¹⁷ Earl Wilson, "Marlo Thomas Guards Her Privacy," *The Hartford Courant*, February 7, 1971.

¹¹⁸ Jack Slater, "A Conversation with ... Marlo Thomas' No. 1 Resource," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1977.

¹¹⁹ Aleene MacMinn, "From Womlib to Politics: That Girl Speaking Her Mind," *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 1972.

¹²⁰ Jack Slater, "A Conversation with ... Marlo Thomas' No. 1 Resource," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1977.

¹²¹ Katherine J. Lehman, *Those Girls: Single Women in Sixties and Seventies Popular Culture* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 86.

who they could be."¹²² It was a program that was "pioneering TV feminism" as you could not find young women on television shows that were not obsessing over marriage.¹²³ Steinem noted that, "When you are living a certain kind of life but you never see it reflected in the mass media, you feel that perhaps you are alone or crazy. And so even though millions of women are leading that life, to see it finally reflected made a big difference."¹²⁴ The program could see this inspiration and shift in the response it received. There would be 3,000 to 5,000 pieces of fan mail per week sent from a variety of demographics. Single girls would write in, expressing how happy they were to show their parents another girl who did not want to get married and how she was neither crazy nor a freak.¹²⁵ Some letters would also ask for advice in their own lives and state a disconnection from their parents.¹²⁶ Pregnant girls would even write in requiring advice and Thomas realized that if they are turning to her they must not have anywhere else to turn, in addition to seeing the program as credible.¹²⁷ In Thomas's efforts to respond, she discovered the lack of services to recommend to women needing help and this pushed her to become involved in the emerging women's movement, politicizing her as a feminist.¹²⁸ After the completion of *That Girl*, Thomas became more involved in the feminist movement, as well as campaigning for George McGovern's presidential bid and representing California as a delegate at the 1972 Democratic Convention.¹²⁹ Thomas also toured American colleges, speaking for women's rights.¹³⁰ She described to others that she had felt like a feminist forever, only she did not know how to describe it. She was happy that other women were speaking out and turning to each other

¹²² Cole, *That Book About That Girl*, 35.

¹²³ Gloria Steinem, "'That Girl's': Ann Marie Pioneer," *New York Times*, August 27, 2006.

¹²⁴ Cole, *That Book About That Girl*, 88.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹²⁶ Kimmis Hendrick, "Marlo Thomas: 'A natural high'," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 13, 1970.

¹²⁷ Carol Kramer, "'That Girl' Recalls They Left Out the Resident Hillbilly," *Chicago Tribune*, March 16, 1971.

¹²⁸ Nichols, "Feminism's Unlikely Heroine."

¹²⁹ "That Woman," *Newsweek*, March 19, 1973.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

so they no longer had to be alone in their struggles.¹³¹ A journalist wondered how Thomas could be a liberated woman yet appear so feminine. Thomas explained that one should just be themselves as "anything else would be just phony. Feminine to me is merely gender. I feel that I am feminine in all that I do because I am a woman."¹³²

Even though *That Girl's* Ann Marie holds many temporary jobs while trying to become an actress, she remains positive throughout the series and does not let her failures deflate her drive for success.¹³³ Her work also held importance as viewers were given a woman character involved in a public life.¹³⁴ As Ann Marie worked to support herself and achieve her dreams, real women across the nation wanted to do the same. Advice books geared to women and careers preferred leaning towards a feminine approach to single living. *Sex and the Office*, for instance, said that ideally it would be great to use one's brains to get ahead but in the real world one has to be ladylike by giggling and flirting to rise without causing much objection from men.¹³⁵

Books like *The Single Girl Goes to Town: A Knowing Guide to Men Maneuvers Jobs and Just Living for Big City Women*, published in 1968, gave advice and encouragement to young women to leave lives of safety and security in their hometowns and move to a major city. By doing this, they are told they will find more unmarried men, be able to meet people from all social circles, have more job opportunities, be who they want, have privacy, prove they can take care of themselves, develop as a person and be happy.¹³⁶ While these are opportunities that Ann

¹³¹ Kelly, "Marlo Thomas."

¹³² Lauren D'Alessandro, "Active, Free, Involved, That's That Girl Marlo," *The Hartford Courant*, March 17, 1974.

¹³³ Moya Lockett, "Sensuous Women and Single Girls: Reclaiming the Female Body on 1960s Television," in *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s*, ed. Hilary Radner, and Moya Lockett (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 294.

¹³⁴ Hilary Radner, and Moya Lockett, ed., *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 28.

¹³⁵ Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Office* (New York: Bernard Geis Associates, 1964), 3.

¹³⁶ Jean Baer, *The Single Girl Goes to Town: A Knowing Guide to Men, Maneuvers, Jobs and Just Living for Big City Women* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), x-xiii.

Marie found in New York, chapters also dealt with issues of real urban single girls of the time like how to date married men, psychoanalysis and having a sex life on the Pill, topics not addressed on *That Girl*. More wholesome advice was given, however, with suggestions on how to land a job, decorate an apartment, create a wardrobe, stay thin and host parties.

Published in 1969, *Why Isn't a Nice Girl like You Married? Or How to Get the Most Out of Life While You're Single* took to giving slightly more conservative advice for single girls like not to live with a man before marriage, not to get pregnant before marriage as you can obtain birth control, to keep contraceptives hidden from sight of houseguests and if you are on the Pill it does not mean you have to say yes to sex.¹³⁷ Its author, the single *Women's Day* editor Rebecca Greer, gave guidance in hope to prove that happiness when single was possible. She said the book was about finding oneself instead of a husband.¹³⁸ Greer had thought she would be an old maid if she was still unmarried at 25. But during the 1960s, she began to see opportunities of single life like being able to do what she pleased. While marriage would always be an option, single years would not and, therefore, it was important to make the most of it while one could.¹³⁹

Other writings of the time exposed problems faced by women. Feminist writer Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* noted that a woman's success should not be measured by how well she finds a man to marry her. Choosing a different life, she argued, is not always easier but it can be more interesting and nobler to find one's self.¹⁴⁰ Some still believed if a woman stayed unmarried she "must have missed her chance, lost her boy in the war or hesitated and was

¹³⁷ Rebecca E. Greer, *Why Isn't a Nice Girl Like You Married? Or How to Get the Most Out of Life While You're Single* (London, UK: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 104, 153.

¹³⁸ Barbara Lewis, "Single is happy, maybe happier," *Chicago Tribune*, April 20, 1969.

¹³⁹ Greer, *Why Isn't a Nice Girl Like You Married*, 2.

¹⁴⁰ Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (London, UK: Paladin, 1971), 19.

lost."¹⁴¹ Women, according to Greer, need to refuse marriage to help bring about change. By marrying she was agreeing to a system of free work and poor conditions for life.¹⁴²

Sex and the New Single Girl, in 1970, noted that in only a few short years women were able to more openly discuss their sex life as there were less fears with the Pill. Additionally, there was also more pressure for single women to be sexually active to a "near nymphomaniac" level.¹⁴³ In 1969, there were 8.5 million women on the Pill, with population growth fears, poverty and the Great Society allowing for it to also become more accessible for single women.¹⁴⁴ In 1970, 60 percent of adult women were either on the Pill, an intrauterine device or sterilized, giving greater separation between sex and the risk of pregnancy.¹⁴⁵ The publishing of *Human Sexual Response* by Masters and Johnson, in 1966, and *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, in the early 1970s, assisted to bring knowledge of female bodies and sexuality across the nation and isolate fact from fiction.

In 1969, Caroline Bird noted some of the reasons for women's gained opportunities in society in her book, *Born Female*. They were the invention of the Pill, which gave control over pregnancy, medicine, which created longer lives for work outside of child-bearing years, technology, which allowed less women's work to be confined to the home like sewing and new workplace technology and machines, which created less physical labour allowing the positions to be done by women.¹⁴⁶ These reasons, along with social change, would bring forth greater freedom for single women in the 1970s.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 198.

¹⁴² Ibid., 319.

¹⁴³ Helen Gurley Brown *Sex and the New Single Girl* (New York: Bernard Geis Associates, 1970), 4.

¹⁴⁴ Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 105-107.

¹⁴⁵ Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking, 2005), 254.

¹⁴⁶ Caroline Bird, *Born Female: The High Cost of Keeping Women Down* (Richmond Hill, ON: Simon & Schuster of Canada, Ltd., 1969), 200.

Chapter 3

The 1960s saw the beginnings of the women's liberation movement, which sought to change the lives women were instructed to enjoy, fighting for gender equality. Not all women adjusted to the ideas of women's liberation during the 1960s, though. In 1968, approximately two-thirds of young women still aspired to become full-time homemakers.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, over the decade there was a rise in the age of marriage and birth of first child due to occupational and social changes. This meant more women had time for personal fulfillment.¹⁴⁸ This self-gratification was seen in the late 1960s growth of the emerging swinging singles demographic. Apartment complexes and bars were advertising specifically to them and seeing high demand for their services, as were singles clubs with membership fees and singles vacations. With the single person's life containing no partner or children, they had a larger disposable income to spend on goods. The National Industrial Conference Board estimated that singles were a \$60 billion market with advertising agency BBDO overwhelmed by the amount of ads that were aimed to the swinging singles.¹⁴⁹

The lifestyle of the swinging single was gaining further popularity. T.G.I. Friday's was created in 1965 by an unmarried New York City male to meet stewardesses and soon became a sensation with young singles, along with other singles directed businesses.¹⁵⁰ Single clubs, meet-and-greets and membership organizations were created to cater to this growing demographic.¹⁵¹ Sex games also took place amongst some of these groups, though some found disappointment in

¹⁴⁷ Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking, 2005), 249.

¹⁴⁸ William H. Chafe, *Women and Equality: Changing Patterns in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121.

¹⁴⁹ Felix Kessler, "Ads and Services Aim At Swinging Singles And Would-Be Singles," *Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 1967.

¹⁵⁰ "Games Singles Play," *Newsweek*, July 16, 1973, 52.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

rejection. Others would quickly grow tired of this way of living and express a desire for marriage, children and a home, which would be mocked by fellow singles.¹⁵²

In a few short years, from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s, the single lifestyle had become respectable. The term "single" had been connected with being lonely or a loser but had evolved into a way of enjoying life to the fullest. As *Newsweek* called it, singlehood was a "glittering end in itself" and a "prolonged phase of post-adolescence."¹⁵³ A Columbia professor explained that, "it is finally becoming possible to be both single and whole. For the first time in human history the single condition is being recognized as an acceptable adult life-style for anyone."¹⁵⁴ Of the 48 million single Americans in 1973, 12.7 million were between 20 and 34 years of age, which was 50 percent higher than in 1960. The economic and sexual liberation of more women was a theory for this change, in addition to people placing greater importance on self-identity than the search for a spouse.¹⁵⁵ The economic freedoms, however, did not evolve as quickly as sexuality. In the early 1970s, single women were likely to be denied loans as they were seen as poor risks, it being assumed they would soon be married and stop working.¹⁵⁶ The Equal Credit Opportunity Act was passed in 1974 after lobbying by feminists, finally granting improved liberation.¹⁵⁷

The 1970s saw an increased popularity in being single for both sexes. With these previously mentioned shifts, society became more accepting of single women. In a 1957 survey, 80 percent of those questioned agreed with a statement saying those who chose not to be married

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁵⁶ Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (Toronto, ON: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 148.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

were "sick" and "neurotic," while in 1977 only 25 percent surveyed agreed.¹⁵⁸ Statistically, people were putting off marriage as well. In 1960, of women aged 20 to 24, 28 percent were never married. In 1977, this increased to 45 percent of women of the same age range.¹⁵⁹

As the second-wave feminist movement gained support during this same period, women's organizations worked towards not only political equality but equality within culture as well. In 1966, Betty Friedan played an important role in the founding of the National Organization for Women. The organization would work to influence change in numerous aspects of women's lives, among which was media images. Their statement of purpose noted, "In the interests of the human dignity of women, we will protest and endeavor to change the false image of women now prevalent in the mass media ... Such images perpetuate contempt for women by society and by women for themselves."¹⁶⁰

A 1970 A.C. Nielsen report showed that Americans watched six hours of television a day on average, with females watching more than males.¹⁶¹ Another study from the same year found that onscreen female characters were usually dependent on a male, playing the role of his girlfriend or wife.¹⁶² When women were shown as employed it was often in secondary occupations like a nurse or "subprofessional" jobs like a secretary.¹⁶³ Some prominent feminist activists shared their outlook on television programs with *TV Guide* in 1970. Robin Morgan found that women were shown as either brainless, passive (defined based on their relationship

¹⁵⁸ Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 186.

¹⁵⁹ Sherrie A. Inness, "'Impress a New Love with Your Culinary Prowess': Gender Lessons in Swinging Singles' Cookbooks," in *Disco Divas: Women and Popular Culture in the 1970s*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 106.

¹⁶⁰ Betty Friedan, "The National Organization for Women Statement of Purpose," in *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), 129.

¹⁶¹ Jonathan Gutman, "Self-Concepts and Television Viewing Among Women," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (Oct. 1, 1973): 388.

¹⁶² Marvin Wexler, and Gilbert Levy, "Women on Television: Fairness and the 'Fair Sex'," *Yale Review of Law and Social Action* 2, no. 1 (1972): 59.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 60.

with a male figure like a husband) or lastly, an oversexed liberated woman of male fantasy.¹⁶⁴ Shulamith Firestone believed women on television were not shown as fully human: "They're not portrayed as thinking or feeling beings."¹⁶⁵ A 1973 *TV Guide* article by Letty Cottin Pogrebin noted how she grew up imitating the women she saw on television in the 1950s who were trying to obtain male approval. It left viewers like her believing in their youth that they had no other choice but to grow up into the mothers they saw. By the early 1970s, however, she thought television should show girls that they could grow up to be free.¹⁶⁶

In 1970, the television network Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) announced that it wanted to add new programming that featured "reality and social awareness."¹⁶⁷ During April 1970, Women's Liberation Front members in San Francisco shouted outside a CBS stockholder's annual meeting that the images of women in programming and commercials were derogatory.¹⁶⁸ In August of that year, a CBS memo stated that, "Television must show a new image of a woman as a doer, as an educated, serious-minded individual person."¹⁶⁹ One of the network's new additions that fall was *The Mary Tyler Moore Show (TMTMS)*, which was described as a "series about a single girl who is not a virgin." One of the program's creators and executive producers, Jim Brooks, former *That Girl* writer, explained that they would be incorporating aspects of how real people were living. Centering the series on a woman in her thirties who was single also meant to Brooks that she would, like real life women, be encountering "a lot of losers."¹⁷⁰ Reporters on the upcoming program also revealed that being single was still not fully respected

¹⁶⁴ Edith Efron, "Is Television Making a Mockery of the American Women?" *TV Guide*, August 8, 1970, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Serafina Bathrick, "*The Mary Tyler Moore Show: Women at Home and at Work*," in *MTM 'Quality Television'*, Jane Feuer, Paul Kerr, and Tise Vahimagi, ed., (London, UK: BFI Publishing, 1984), 103.

¹⁶⁷ Carol Kramer, "CBS Lifts Curtain on 'Reality and Social Awareness'," *Chicago Tribune*, March 11, 1970.

¹⁶⁸ Efron, "Is Television Making a Mockery," 7.

¹⁶⁹ Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 114.

¹⁷⁰ Kramer, "CBS Lifts Curtain."

with one description noting the series was about a "30-year-old spinster, a career girl with marriage on her mind but not man-crazy."¹⁷¹

Mary is introduced to her audience as coming from a failed long-term relationship. She is confident in remarking that she made the decision to end it to take care of herself and calls herself lucky to have realized what her life would have been if she stayed with him.¹⁷² The first episode of the series shows Mary finding a bachelor apartment to live in, located in a large old house converted into apartments. It is there where we meet her neighbours, fellow single girl Rhoda and homemaker Phyllis. An early description of the show in the *Los Angeles Times* indicated that Mary was living in a building with "bloodthirsty, man-eating, single females."¹⁷³ While creators had originally wanted Mary to be divorced, the network rejected the idea. But the single career girl ended up being a more radical approach, according to co-creator Allan Burns.¹⁷⁴ Burns noted that they had Mary just end a relationship as "It tells you a little bit about our own lack of awareness of the women's movement at that time, which was just starting, but our feeling was that if a girl was over thirty and unmarried, there had to be an explanation for such a freak of nature as that."¹⁷⁵ Fred Silverman, who worked for programming at CBS said before *TMTMS* hit the air that, "You can't have this loser woman remain unmarried," in hopes that they would soon wed Mary on the show.¹⁷⁶

Author Caroline Bird worried about the subliminal messages 13-year-old girls would receive from television in 1971. She did not see *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* in its first season

¹⁷¹ Cynthia Lowry, "The Return of Mary Tyler Moore," *The Hartford Courant*, August 30, 1970.

¹⁷² James L. Brooks, and Allan Burns, "Love is All Around," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 1, episode 1, aired September 19, 1970.

¹⁷³ Cecil Smith, "Mary Delighted by CBS Shuffle," *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1970.

¹⁷⁴ Paul Kerr, "The Making of (The) MTM (Show)," in *MTM 'Quality Television'*, ed. Jane Feuer, Paul Kerr, and Tise Vahimagi (London, UK: BFI Publishing, 1984), 75.

¹⁷⁵ Todd Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 214.

¹⁷⁶ Robert S. Alley, and Irby B. Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (New York: A Delta Book, 1989), 30.

as being a strong positive influence. She noted that Mary cared more about men than her career, as she only took the job when her relationship failed and she had no other options. Mary also was uncomfortable with the idea of being the boss of men. Bird wrote that the lack of liberated women in the television landscape even found its way to animals, with the female dog *Lassie* being played by a male dog.¹⁷⁷

Clearly equality was still not given in the television environment. Studies, in the mid 1970s, found on average that only 28 percent of characters shown were female and 21 percent of all employed drama characters were women.¹⁷⁸ Yet A.C. Nielsen data in 1975 found that women preferred watching programs featuring women.¹⁷⁹ This perhaps is why *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* gained such a large following. Mary Richards also began to appeal to both sexes being "every man's dream and every woman's best friend."¹⁸⁰ A *New York Times* article in 1974 quoted a male network Vice President of Programming, Perry Lafferty, as saying that Mary was popular because she was like a lost little girl, vulnerable and beautiful without being threatening or sexy and he would not accept the idea that her success had anything to do with the women's movement. The same article, conversely, had a female University of California professor note that it was one of the only television programs that was not offensive from a feminist view.¹⁸¹

Diane Rosen wrote in *TV Guide* that as a 27-year-old single woman she lacked a real reflection of herself on television.¹⁸² The reality program *The Dating Game* featured singles yet she described it as a "freak show."¹⁸³ *That Girl* was too bizarre and unbelievable, with Ann

¹⁷⁷ Caroline Bird, "What's Television Doing For 50.9% of Americans?" *TV Guide*, February 27, 1971.

¹⁷⁸ Matilda Butler, William Paisley, Suzanne Pingree, and Robert Hawkins, *Women and the Mass Media: Sourcebook for Research and Action* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980), 78, 81.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 267.

¹⁸⁰ Wayne Wargo, "Times Woman of the Year: 'What You See Is Who I Am'," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1975.

¹⁸¹ Tracy Johnston, "Why 30 Million Are Mad About Mary," *New York Times*, April 7, 1974.

¹⁸² Diane Rosen, "TV and the Single Girl," *TV Guide*, November 6, 1971, 13.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 14.

Marie going to bed at night with false eyelashes and waking up perfect. She also seemed incompetent in many areas of life, though the men in her life, Donald and Daddy, found this endearing. While not mature enough for Rosen, she did admit her 10- and 15-year-old cousins were enamoured with the program.¹⁸⁴ By contrast, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* was the most realistic show she could find, with the setting in Minneapolis, instead of the standard New York or Los Angeles, adding to the realism.¹⁸⁵ Mary's optimism and Rhoda's cynicism kept the program balanced.¹⁸⁶ Their dialogues also felt like how two good friends in real life would converse. While Mary did seem like a secretary at her workplace, despite holding the title of associate producer, Rosen was left unsure if that was a realistic portrayal of sex discrimination in the business or not. She also felt that when sex and men were dealt with Mary seemed "unnerved," which felt out of line for the era and her age.¹⁸⁷ As with *That Girl*, women were expressing in the early 1970s a lack of realistic portrayals of women's sex lives.

Marlo Thomas commented on the series that, "Mary Tyler Moore is making it with a woman alone because we broke the way. I think it's a kind of triumph for women's lib."¹⁸⁸ Mary Richards was seen as more realistic than the glamorous Ann Marie, wearing more affordable outfits, often repeatedly.¹⁸⁹ *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* did not follow much of Mary's love life, with Moore saying that it worked well for *That Girl* but was not right for their show. By not showing much of a love life, however, Mary Richards was accused of not having a sex drive. Yet Moore thought that Mary was not afraid of sex, she just had other things on her mind.¹⁹⁰

Executive producer Allan Burns said that the relationship between Donald and Ann on *That Girl*

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 16.

¹⁸⁸ Cecil Smith, "Marlo Makes a Point for Womlib," *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1971.

¹⁸⁹ Joyce Haber, "Mary Tyler Moore ... Girl Who Takes Care of Herself," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1971.

¹⁹⁰ Marilyn Beck, "Mary Tyler Moore Show Nixes Expansion," *The Hartford Courant*, March 12, 1972.

was like Ken and Barbie: extremely chaste. By contrast, on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, they may have never displayed Mary in bed with others, but Burns said they made it apparent she had a sex life.¹⁹¹ Some complained when it was implied Mary spent a night with a boyfriend, finding the suggestion offensive.¹⁹² This last incident led to rival producers to nickname Mary as "the dirty Doris Day."¹⁹³ *Time* reported that Ann Marie's *That Girl* independence seemed like a cute phase with mom and dad nearby, but Mary Richards was a more realistic woman on her own, though more lovely and funny than most. She had interest in men "but not in an obsessive, husband-trapping way."¹⁹⁴

Viewership for *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* was over 30 million, becoming a huge television success and allowing Americans to see how a fictionalized single woman may choose to live. The producers and writers did not want to create a show where the world was perfect, yet they preferred the issues and messages they tackled to be done subtly and not upfront.¹⁹⁵ Conflicts of the women's movement were turned by television into a non-threatening format like Mary Richards who could appeal to a variety of viewers with less radical beliefs.¹⁹⁶ During the 1970s, television became a source for Americans to analyze new gender realities and fantasies.¹⁹⁷ *TMTMS* appealed to both feminists and antifeminists. It showed improved job responsibilities, better confidence and themes of independence over the years of the series.¹⁹⁸ On the other hand, it also struggled with dating, humiliation and had the relatability of a small-town girl. Numerous

¹⁹¹ Sandra Salmans, "Marlo, Mary et al," *New York Times*, May 17, 1987.

¹⁹² Susan Nelson, "Mary's garden will grow some weeds next season," *Chicago Tribune*, July 18, 1975.

¹⁹³ Cecil Smith, "MTM - Hail and Farewell," *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1977.

¹⁹⁴ Lance Morrow, "Goodbye to 'Our Mary'," *Time*, March 14, 1977.

¹⁹⁵ Johnston, "Why 30 Million Are Mad."

¹⁹⁶ Charlotte Brunson, Julie D'Acci, and Lynn Spigel, ed., *Feminist Television Criticism: A Reader* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1997), 10.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁹⁸ Ella Taylor, *Prime-Time Families: Television Culture in Postwar America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 123.

women depicted in the media during this period were not feminists fighting for change, but often women outside of the movement whose lives were evolving in smaller ways.¹⁹⁹ While this would allow the program to appeal to a larger number of Americans, it was not perfectly received. Some criticized Mary for not suffering from common issues real women in her position would have faced like loneliness and unstable finances and career.²⁰⁰

Still, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* did assist in bringing liberal feminism of the decade into the mainstream.²⁰¹ Unlike *That Girl*, Mary does not have a long-term boyfriend throughout the series. One short relationship showed Mary dating and breaking up with a man played by the same actor who was Ann Marie's boyfriend Donald on *That Girl*. To some this was seen as throwing away the idea that a single woman needed to have a man.²⁰² Feminism is briefly mentioned early in the series when on a date, Mary helps build a snowman outside of the office of a women's liberation organization. Her companion comments how its members will love watching him melt.²⁰³ Additionally, in 1972, unmarried women were legally allowed to obtain the birth control pill.²⁰⁴ This was subtly hinted at in an episode where Mary's mother reminds her father to take his pill but Mary assumes she was reminding her and awkwardly admits to having a pill to be taking.²⁰⁵ The Pill, according to historian Sara Evans, made the link between

¹⁹⁹ Katherine J. Lehman, *Those Girls: Single Women in Sixties and Seventies Popular Culture* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 2.

²⁰⁰ Andrea L. Press, *Women Watching Television: Gender, Class, and Generation in the American Television Experience* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 37.

²⁰¹ Anthea Taylor, *Single Women in Popular Culture: The Limits of Postfeminism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 51.

²⁰² Mary Ann Watson, "From My Little Margie to Murphy Brown: Women's Lives on the Small Screen," *Television Quarterly* 27, issue 2 (1994).

²⁰³ Lloyd Turner, and Gordon Mitchell, "Toulouse-Lautrec Is One of My Favorite Artists," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 1, episode 7, aired October 31, 1970.

²⁰⁴ Beth Bailey, "She 'Can Bring Home the Bacon': Negotiating Gender in Seventies America," in *America in the Seventies*, ed. Beth Bailey, and David Farber (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 108.

²⁰⁵ Steve Pritzker, "You've Got a Friend," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 3, episode 11, aired November 25, 1972.

sex and marriage weak.²⁰⁶ This would lead to sex before marriage becoming less frowned upon by society.²⁰⁷ *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* writer and producer Jim Brooks told *TV Guide* in 1973 that there were restrictions on what they could address regarding sex in 1970. However, in just three years, morals had changed and they were able to deal with more explicit sex themes.²⁰⁸ In one episode, Mary's parents, who are rarely mentioned, are upset when they discover their daughter is not home until morning but she lets them know she is over thirty and does not need to explain the reason to them.²⁰⁹ This is a more progressive and adult response than when Ann Marie must explain her life to overbearing parents and perhaps a retort to viewers that were judgmental about Mary's sex life.

The Mary Tyler Moore Show was, during its production, one of the most accessible television programs for female writers. Networks were struggling to understand how to use women in shows that tended to still follow old-fashioned formulas. *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* script writer Susan Silver noted that networks had "preconceived notions and they're not sure that the audience is ready to see a strong or liberated woman on television yet."²¹⁰ Silver, a former member of the National Organization for Women, brought some female perspective to the scripts; however, the program did not deal with issues they deemed too radical, like abortion.²¹¹ Writer Treva Silverman liked to manage social changes on the program subtly, as audiences were able to still see Mary Richards as a "good girl" influenced by society but not actively

²⁰⁶ Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* (New York: The Free Press, 2003), 21.

²⁰⁷ Inness, "Impress a New Love," 106.

²⁰⁸ Jane Feuer, "MTM Enterprises: An Overview," in *MTM 'Quality Television'*, ed. Jane Feuer, Paul Kerr, and Tise Vahimagi (London, UK: BFI Publishing, 1984), 7.

²⁰⁹ Steve Pritzker, "Just Around the Corner," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 3, episode 7, aired October 28, 1972.

²¹⁰ "TV Accepting Women As Comedy Writers," *The Hartford Courant*, January 23, 1973.

²¹¹ Don Shirley, "Sexism on Television Crumbling in Laughter," *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1973.

forcing change herself.²¹² The *Los Angeles Times* stated that by adding reality to television's women and reducing sexism it may not guarantee a gain in quality but would make programs more interesting.²¹³ Silverman was a regularly used writer on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and won two Emmy Awards in 1974 for her work.²¹⁴ It soon would be labelled "The Year of the Woman" due to the high number of female writers in television who won awards that year.²¹⁵ Silverman found it wonderful to be able to write about her own life as a single woman,²¹⁶ and saw herself as a typical single woman of the 1970s.²¹⁷ She would also question male writers for putting in sexist dialogue and over the years became increasingly careful about what was appropriate for equality.²¹⁸ Silverman noted, "women on the Mary Tyler Moore show are allowed to have a sense of their own intelligence ... It's only then that real breakthroughs for women can be made in television."²¹⁹ Outside of *TMTMS*, contrarily, only token positions were given for female characters. For example, writer Susan Silver noted that if a show were written about a single woman, producers would say there is already Mary Richards and would find the addition of a similarly themed show unnecessary.²²⁰

Female writers were seldom hired in Hollywood, due in part to the conventional wisdom of the time that it might make male writers uncomfortable in their process.²²¹ In the early 1970s, the Writers Guild of America had a sparse 13 percent female membership. Of programs with

²¹² Melissa Frederick Morrison, "Mary Go Round: What Happened to TV's Independent Women?" *Bitch*, Winter 2006, 110.

²¹³ Shirley, "Sexism on Television."

²¹⁴ Dick Adler, "Female Stars, Writers Win: Emmy Night: It's Woman's World," *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1974.

²¹⁵ Ellen Sherman, "Femme Scribes Cop Top Jobs," *Ms. Magazine*, December 1974, 84.

²¹⁶ Morrison, "Mary Go Round," 79.

²¹⁷ Alley, and Brown, *Love Is All Around*, 45.

²¹⁸ Morrison, "Mary Go Round," 79.

²¹⁹ Sherman, "Femme Scribes Cop Top Jobs," 87.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

women writers, most were sitcoms as they were seen as the area best suited for the sex.²²² Women wrote 22 percent of *TMTMS* episodes, which was higher than most programs at the time.²²³ Over the series run, fifteen female writers were credited on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. In 1973, half of the filmed scripts for *TMTMS* were written by women, with Silverman as the head story editor, one of the only females holding this position in the business.²²⁴ This remarkable achievement did not last, however. Setbacks for women involved with the show included, a massive decrease in female writers used during seasons five and six, Silverman's departure, and not a single female writer being credited during *TMTMS*'s final season. It may not be a coincidence that the final seasons had fewer episodes that dealt with women's liberation and frank female conversations and increased sexual shaming through the character Sue Ann Nivens. Betty White's Sue Ann had an affair with Phyllis' husband, constantly flirted with men and is bold with her desire for sex, which became an easy target for ridicule by her co-workers.

Treva Silverman, as well as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* actress Valerie Harper, became involved in the women's liberation movement during the series and this added development and emotion to Harper's character, Rhoda, and less use of the self-deprecating personality she displayed in the early episodes.²²⁵ Writer Stan Daniels said he did not actively think about the women's liberation movement but working for the program increased his awareness to issues and found it was important because if they were "writing about a woman who had a job in the early seventies, and that kind of a woman would, herself, have had to be politically aware."²²⁶

Therefore, they needed to show her as politically informed, but not to push a message, just to be

²²² Ibid., 87.

²²³ Alley, and Brown, *Love Is All Around*, 54.

²²⁴ Sherman, "Femme Scribes Cop Top Jobs," 87.

²²⁵ Alley, and Brown, *Love Is All Around*, 41.

²²⁶ Ibid., 63.

realistic.²²⁷ The program began at a time when feminists were speaking out for equality. While some Americans found the movement off-putting, Mary still had femininity and charm while coping with a career, which made her relatable for more viewers.²²⁸ Many viewers were drawn to Mary Richards, yet others found her to be unreal and too perfect, believing she should be displayed with further flaws or with a stronger will like Gloria Steinem or television's Maude Findlay.²²⁹

Mary Richards was not the only single woman on the program. Valerie Harper's Rhoda Morgenstern gained a lot of attention as well, with Harper believing it was because of Rhoda's honesty and the audience's connection to her "loser" qualities.²³⁰ Reporters often described Rhoda as plain and man-chasing, as well as commenting on her slightly heavy weight in the earlier episodes. Harper did not share in Rhoda's single status, being married and happy not to deal with "all those creeps" singles must encounter. Her lack of affection to the single life could also be seen in her describing *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* as having wide appeal and not being just for "30-year-olds or singles or kooks or weirdos."²³¹ Looking back at a time when she was single and living in New York, Harper noted her own single life would have been more enjoyable if she had not spent it hunting so hard for a husband.²³² In addition to acting, Harper was also active in the social movements, writing telegrams in protest of federal government decisions she was displeased with like the pardoning of former President Nixon by President

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Judith Frutig, "Mary and the Single Viewer," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 14, 1977.

²²⁹ Nelson, "Mary's garden will grow."

²³⁰ "TV's 'Rhoda' Is Different In Real Life," *The Hartford Courant*, December 19, 1972.

²³¹ Norma Lee Browning, "Hollywood Today: If You Enjoy Rhoda, You'd Love Valerie," *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 1972.

²³² "TV's 'Rhoda' Is Different In Real Life."

Ford.²³³ Harper's own series *Rhoda* aired 1974 through 1978, but quickly married the title character on the series, losing her trademark single status.

Mary Richards left a lasting impression on many Americans. When *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* began, Moore did not think it would make much of an impact but through its production saw people become less worried about their single status.²³⁴ The single woman went from an unnatural spinster to an attractive character of intelligence, vitality and independence.²³⁵ Mary made it okay to be single, over 30 and independent. She was a role model for those who did not find a husband right after school, declaring she was not weird for having an atypical life and making women feel more accepted to come into their own.²³⁶ She compelled female viewers to feel better about themselves and made Saturday night at home fashionable.²³⁷ Parents who watched *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* began to understand the lives of single adult children better, legitimizing their decisions.²³⁸

Several celebrities also connected with *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Journalist Barbara Walters found the program had believability, especially in Mary's apologetic way of speaking that was also done by many women in the news industry.²³⁹ Mary Richards and Mary Tyler Moore were seen as amazing Cosmo girls, feminine yet still successful in their career, according to Helen Gurley Brown.²⁴⁰ Brown's philosophies are even shown within the program when the

²³³ "Rhoda and Mary - Love and Laughs," *Time*, October 28, 1974.

²³⁴ "Mary Tyler Moore, at Series' End, Can Now Savor Its Innovations," *New York Times*, February 3, 1977.

²³⁵ John J. O'Connor, "TV Weekend," *New York Times*, March 18, 1977.

²³⁶ Joyce Purnick, "The Legacy of Mary Richards: A Compelling Symbol With Barbie Doll Looks," *New York Times*, February 20, 1991.

²³⁷ Morrow, "Goodbye to 'Our Mary'."

²³⁸ Frutig, "Mary and the Single Viewer."

²³⁹ Nora Ephron, "Mary Tyler Moore Show," *Esquire*, February 1977, 75.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

character Rhoda admits she gets some of her ideas on life from Helen Gurley Brown."²⁴¹ The program also impressed Gloria Steinem because it featured a woman who lived alone and had affairs, while dealing with the issue of equal pay in one episode and inspiring the creation of two other programs featuring strong female leads (*Rhoda* and *Phyllis*).²⁴²

Writer Nora Ephron (*Silkwood*, *Sleepless in Seattle*) began watching *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* in 1973. It meant a lot to her to be alone on Saturday nights and see Mary alone too. The program made it so others staying home did not feel like they were missing out on anything. Mary did not seem to be bothered by being single, and always having friends drop by. While Mary was often in-between boyfriends, it upset Ephron when there would be the same boyfriend for more than one episode, as she never found them good enough for Mary.²⁴³ Betty Friedan believed that *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* gave "the happy human image of a woman as an independent person that several generations of young (and not so young) women alone stopped suffering if they didn't have a date on Saturday night."²⁴⁴

Unlike her character of Mary Richards, actress Mary Tyler Moore was not single. She married her first husband at the age of 17 to get out of her family home, though later divorced and remarried.²⁴⁵ She viewed her current husband as having the dominant role in their marriage and did not show worry with this opinion.²⁴⁶ It was her second husband, Grant Tinker, who produced *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* through his and Moore's company, MTM Enterprises. Moore said that she understood the new thinking regarding some aspects of women's liberation

²⁴¹ Treva Silverman, "The Six-and-a-Half-Year Itch," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 2, episode 11, aired November 27, 1971.

²⁴² Ephron, "Mary Tyler Moore Show," 79.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁴⁴ Betty Friedan, "The Old Images Can Still Be Seen But the Media Increasingly Reflect the Various Realities of Women," *The Washington Post*, April 20, 1978.

²⁴⁵ "Rhoda and Mary - Love and Laughs."

²⁴⁶ Robert Kerwin, "Can you find the boss in this picture?: Mary Tyler Moore, then and now," *Chicago Tribune*, November 24, 1974.

but was not emotionally connected to it. She supported, however, those speaking for women's rights that she saw as having clear heads like Gloria Steinem and co-star Valerie Harper.²⁴⁷ Aggressive feminism did not appeal to her, as she believed women should be able to compete in the job market with men without having to take on their masculine qualities.²⁴⁸ Moore hoped that unisex trends would not cause women to lose their sexuality. She did note, though, that Mary Richards is not equal to the men in the show, Moore seeing Richards as a second-class citizen in some ways who is subservient to the boss and still hopeful to maybe get married.²⁴⁹ Rather reluctantly Moore was talked into directing an episode of her show. Yet by gaining experience, she became excited about it and hoped that the cast and crew would "forget all about my being a woman and think of me only as the director."²⁵⁰

While both Mary Tyler Moore and Mary Richards were affected by the changing workplace environment for women, the fictional Mary had the added experiences that came with remaining single, aging while dating and becoming an independent woman. Mary refers to herself as young in the first season, though is corrected by her boss Lou (Ed Asner), who tells her young is 18 to 29 and Mary is 30. Her neighbour, Rhoda, says her mother began calling her an old maid at 21 when she was still unmarried. Mary responds that the only thing worse than being single is talking about it and suggests they talk about more pleasant things like pollution. Mary later gets the nerve to be an adult and call a man to ask him out on a date, something she grew up never doing, as it had always been the boy who was to call.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Wargo, "Times Woman of the Year."

²⁴⁸ Cecil Smith, "Mary Tyler Moore to host-narrator of 'We the Women' special," *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1974.

²⁴⁹ Kerwin, "Can you find the boss."

²⁵⁰ Smith, "Mary Tyler Moore to host."

²⁵¹ Treva Silverman, "Today I Am a Ma'am," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 1, episode 2, aired September 26, 1970.

Mary continues to struggle with her new single status early in the series after ending her long-term relationship, when being solo is often not what she desires. When Lou asks what Mary's dream is for her life, she answers she wants to be a wife and mother.²⁵² Mary regularly complains about the way singles are treated. She says even if she discovered the secret of immortality people would still say, "Look at that single girl!" It is easier for her to lie and say she is divorced than explain to people why she is still single.²⁵³ Mary also fears that if she lets a man know on the second date she wants to be kissed, he will think she is promiscuous.²⁵⁴ In a high school reunion newsletter it gives an update on Mary saying how she is still single, a "career gal" and producing a show when she should be producing children. At her high school reunion she is made fun of for still having her maiden name.²⁵⁵ When Phyllis (Cloris Leachman), an educated homemaker, has difficulty finding a job she says it is the era of the single girl who is "free, independent, self-sufficient." Contrarily, Mary says it is not all wonderful, and that it does come with loneliness.²⁵⁶

It is not all horrible, though; when her father asks if she is lonely, Mary responds that she has a good life.²⁵⁷ In one episode, a young co-worker wants to sleep with Mary and tries to get her interest by saying she does not want to spend another night lonely. She insists that being thirty and single does not make her desperate.²⁵⁸ When a boyfriend looks like he might propose, Mary is unsure how she feels about it. She asks Lou for advice and he tells her that the head over

²⁵² Kenny Solms, and Gail Parent, "We Closed in Minneapolis," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 1, episode 19, aired January 30, 1971.

²⁵³ Treva Silverman, "Divorce Isn't Everything," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 1, episode 4, aired October 10, 1970.

²⁵⁴ Treva Silverman, "Howard's Girl," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 1, episode 15, aired January 2, 1971.

²⁵⁵ Allan Burns, "Didn't You Used to Be ... Wait ... Don't Tell Me," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 2, episode 7, aired October 30, 1971.

²⁵⁶ Stan Daniels, and Ed. Weinberger, "Phyllis Whips Inflation," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 5, episode 18, aired January 18, 1975.

²⁵⁷ Pritzker, "You've Got a Friend."

²⁵⁸ Bob Rodgers, "He's All Yours," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 1, episode 13, aired December 12, 1970.

heels feeling she could be waiting for may never happen. Mary tells her boyfriend she is not ready for marriage and later reveals to Rhoda she surprised herself in realizing she is not living her life in constant search of a man to marry.²⁵⁹

While Mary and Rhoda do not label themselves as swinging singles, the popular lifestyle is mentioned often in the program. When looking for the perfect sunny winter holiday Mary and Rhoda are briefly interested in a swinging singles Caribbean cruise until they learn the price, which is more than they can afford.²⁶⁰ Rhoda watches a television documentary about swinging singles that illustrates they should be on hayrides or skiing and thinks it is too depressing because she is alone and too busy to do those things.²⁶¹ Ted (Ted Knight), the news station anchorman who is older than Mary, is mentioned as living in a swinging singles apartment building in one episode.²⁶² Later when Ted's steady girlfriend catches him kissing another woman, she decides she wants to run off to a singles resort, date lots of guys and be wild and free, until she forgives Ted and they get back together.²⁶³ Later in the series, after Lou has divorced, he and Mary visit a singles bar for a report but feel clearly out of place.²⁶⁴ Additionally, Mary does not like to show displays of affection in public, saying she is not open and free. When she discovers a man she is falling in love with is dating other women at the same time, she feels she must leave him.²⁶⁵ At the end of one date, Mary's companion comes into her apartment and takes off his shirt. Mary is

²⁵⁹ David Pollock, and Elias Davis, "The Courtship of Mary's Father's Daughter," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 3, episode 15, aired December 23, 1972.

²⁶⁰ Allan Burns, "He's No Heavy ... He's My Brother," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 2, episode 3, aired October 2, 1971.

²⁶¹ David Davis, and Lorenzo Music, "Don't Break the Chain," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 2, episode 10, aired November 20, 1971.

²⁶² Pritzker, "Just Around the Corner."

²⁶³ Ed. Weinberger, and Stan Daniels, "Almost a Nuns Story," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 4, episode 14, aired December 15, 1973.

²⁶⁴ Treva Silverman, "I Was a Single for WJM," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 4, episode 24, aired March 2, 1974.

²⁶⁵ Ed. Weinberger, and Stan Daniels, "Mary Richards Falls in Love," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 6, episode 11, aired November 22, 1975.

offended that he assumes something would happen when they hardly know each other. He is confused thinking she must never get out. Mary admits she is sick of all the dating rituals and playing the game when the right guy may not even exist.²⁶⁶

Relationships, other than the traditional family or romance, were often covered on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Mary and Rhoda showcased a strong female friendship, being there for each other during crises big and small and sacrificing their own desires for their friend.²⁶⁷ While the program focuses on a newsroom instead of a nuclear family, the characters had a surrogate family in the workplace and took on traditional family roles, like Lou being a dominant father figure.²⁶⁸ When a male co-worker with a family is scheduled to work Christmas Eve and Mary does not have enough time off to go to her parents, he guilt trips her into working his shift, as she does not have kids. She is unhappy and complains she has no family, which is why she is alone at work on the holiday. Soon after, though, her closest co-workers arrive to surprise her with a late night Christmas celebration.²⁶⁹ By creating family-like relationships with Mary and her friends at work and apartment building, the series was able to present to America an alternative way to live and that relationships and happiness could be found outside of the nuclear family and suburban home.

Discrimination in the workplace is also experienced by the female staff at the news station, a common experience of real female workers at the time, although less witty. Ted thinks he should get to attend a convention instead of Mary because it will be a group of men having fun and that would be wasted on her. Additionally she, like other women, cannot even have

²⁶⁶ David Lloyd, "Lou Dates Mary," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 7, episode 23, aired March 12, 1977.

²⁶⁷ Lynn C. Spangler, "A Historical Overview of Female Friendships on Prime-Time Television," *Journal of Popular Culture* 22, issue 4 (Spring 1989): 17.

²⁶⁸ Kathryn Weibel, *Mirror Mirror: Images of Women Reflected in Popular Culture* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1977), 66.

²⁶⁹ James L. Brooks, and Allan Burns, "Christmas and the Hard-Luck Kid II," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 1, episode 14, aired December 19, 1970.

credit cards.²⁷⁰ He shortly finds out television host Sue Ann makes more money than him and says he is not a male chauvinist but thinks a woman should get paid what she is worth, though that would never be more than a man. He also tells Sue Ann that she would be more attractive if she did not earn as much money.²⁷¹ Later, Ted says he thinks a secret organization of "chicks" is going to take over the world.²⁷² Even the more sympathetic male character Murray (Gavin MacLeod) quips Mary was hired only to be the token woman after Lou quickly dismisses a female interviewing for an anchor position.²⁷³

Rhoda tells Mary she has the type of job Gloria Steinem wants women to have, with responsibility and excitement, a real *Ms.* job.²⁷⁴ After a couple years in the newsroom, Mary begins to feel pressure that she represents women everywhere, with the station manager always pointing her out as their women executive. Perhaps this was the way the program's writers were feeling with the media pointing to *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* as the representation of the single career woman. Soon after in the episode, Mary discovers the former associate producer made more money than she is receiving, despite her doing a better job. When she confronts Lou about the difference, he explains it was because the old producer was a man and had to support a family. Mary counters that financial need has nothing to do with what one gets paid, as single men do not receive less than men with three kids. After dropping the issue, Lou eventually offers Mary half of the raise she was hoping for. She refuses to accept or negotiate and Lou insists he

²⁷⁰ David Lloyd, "What Are Friends For?" *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 5, episode 10, aired November 16, 1974.

²⁷¹ Richard M. Powell, "A Reliable Source," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 6, episode 22, aired February 21, 1976.

²⁷² Bob Ellison, "One Producer Too Mary," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 7, episode 6, aired October 30, 1976.

²⁷³ Steve Pritzker, "And Now, Sitting in for Ted Baxter," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 2, episode 9, aired November 13, 1971.

²⁷⁴ Marilyn Suzanne Miller, and Monica Johnson, "Best of Enemies," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 4, episode 19, aired January 26, 1974.

will find the full amount somehow.²⁷⁵ Mary soon discusses whether she should try for a promotion at work with her friends. Phyllis has strong opinions that Mary should reach for more, not just for herself, but for all women. Phyllis says she was part of the system that had defined roles for boys and girls and it led her to be a housewife. She does not want her daughter Bess or Mary to be a part of that system too. In the end, the promotion is given to Murray and not Mary, as she is a woman.²⁷⁶ Mary does continue to work over the seasons to improve herself. Lou receives a memo telling that they are not to ask the female staff to do monotonous little jobs like make coffee anymore. Mary states that the memo was her suggestion.²⁷⁷ She also negotiates a higher wage with Lou, attends college classes on television journalism, takes on added responsibilities at work and eventually becomes a television producer not just an associate producer.

The series ends with Mary, Murray and Lou getting fired when new management takes over. Unlike many programs before it, the audience is not shown a romantic conclusion but follows the workplace and the family of friends it creates. The episode closes with Mary saying, "Sometimes I get concerned about being a career woman. I get to thinking my job is too important to me and I tell myself the people I work with are just the people I work with and not my family. And last night I thought 'What is a family anyway?' They're just people who make you feel less alone and really loved and that's what you've done for me. Thank you for being my family."²⁷⁸ As Helen Gurley Brown stated in *Sex and the Single Girl*, a job can be a woman's

²⁷⁵ Allan Burns, and James L. Brooks, "The Good Time News," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 3, episode 1, aired September 16, 1972.

²⁷⁶ Martin Cohan, "Who's In Charge Here?" *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 3, episode 3, aired September 30, 1972.

²⁷⁷ Don Reo, and Allan Katz, "I Gave at the Office," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 4, episode 13, aired December 8, 1973.

²⁷⁸ James L. Brooks, Allan Burns, Ed. Weinberger, Stan Daniels, David Lloyd, and Bob Ellison, "The Last Show," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 7, episode 24, aired March 19, 1977.

love, make her happy, give a family of friends and assist in figuring out who she is.²⁷⁹ It is in Mary Richards that this was proven.

As the face of women on television evolved in the 1970s with *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, the activism directed towards the media grew stronger. In 1972, the National Organization for Women (NOW) membership was 15,000.²⁸⁰ By 1974 it had grown to 48,000.²⁸¹ Members visited television stations across the country, giving consciousness-raising sessions to introduce the feminist point of view to those who create and present images of women. NOW chapters also began to take part in a national media-monitoring project to use the findings to challenge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations for broadcasting licences.²⁸² The FCC, in 1971, incorporated some of NOW's demands for television stations to have affirmative action programs to hire more women.²⁸³ NOW also found that a lot of television programming portrayed women poorly, showing women as dependent on men for emotional or financial support and having women who were involved in the women's movement seem bizarre. This led the New York chapter of NOW to file a petition against a local news station for its inability to have programs that addressed women's need and not showing both sides to stories regarding gender.²⁸⁴ In 1974, NOW created the Media Reform Task Force, replacing their previous Image of Women Task Force, working for fairer treatment of women in media programming and

²⁷⁹ Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl* (Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade Books, 2003), 89.

²⁸⁰ Susan M. Hartmann, *From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics Since 1960* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 69.

²⁸¹ Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 165.

²⁸² Aileen Hernandez, and Letitia P. Sommers, ed., *NOW The First Five Years 1966-1971*, August 1, 1972, 17.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁸⁴ Judith Adler Hennessee, and Joan Nicholson, "NOW Says: TV Commercials Insult Women," *New York Times*, May 28, 1972.

employment and analyzing new television programs with female leads. NOW believed that the "negative image of women in the media is one of the biggest roadblocks to women's equality."²⁸⁵

The National Organization of Women was not the only group actively linking issues between the media and women. The *Media Report for Women* began publishing newsletters in the early 1970s, with its editor Donna Allen remarking that it was their role to provide truthful information that was not always easy to find and allow readers to form their own opinions.²⁸⁶ The United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women, in 1972, adopted resolution regarding the "influence of mass communication media on the formation of a new attitude towards the role of women in present-day society." They also noted the media potential to educate women on topics like birth control and abortion.²⁸⁷ The Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Women's Conference Committee, in 1974, found a male domination in primetime. In starring roles on the three major networks, ABC, CBS and NBC, over 70 percent were male. A study by SAG of 10,000 viewers found over 80 percent did not identify with women on television and almost 70 percent wanted to see women in more positions of authority.²⁸⁸

A report completed by the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights, published in 1977, sampled television programs from 1969 until 1974. It found that, compared to men in television programs, women were younger, more frequently unemployed and seen more often in comedies.²⁸⁹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),

²⁸⁵ Donna Allen, ed., *Media Report to Women: What Women Are Doing and Thinking About Communications Media* Vol. 2, no. 7 (July 1, 1974): 8.

²⁸⁶ Winifred D. Wandersee, *On The Move: American Women in the 1970s* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 97.

²⁸⁷ Donna Allen, ed., *Media Report to Women: What Women Are Doing and Thinking About Communications Media* Vol. 2, no. 3 (March 1, 1974): 1.

²⁸⁸ Donna Allen, ed., *Media Report to Women: What Women Are Doing and Thinking About Communications Media* Vol. 3, no. 1 (January 1, 1975): 9.

²⁸⁹ United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Window Dressing on the Set: Women and Minorities in Television," (United States Commission on Civil Rights, August 1977), 148.

in 1980, commissioned a book to study internationally how women were portrayed in media and their level of participation in the field as part of the United Nations Decade for Women.²⁹⁰ They found that television lacked topics on the women's movement and feminist characters in the early 1970s, though they did gain progress in this area over the decade. By the late 1970s, alternatively, they noticed that this growth was being replaced by having women seen as sex objects, with several programs centered on women falling into the category of "jiggly" entertainment.²⁹¹ Class-action suits against networks over the decade, however, did create more opportunities for women on both sides of the television screen, making various types of women visible in the industry and not solely housewives and secretaries.²⁹²

According to writer Gail Rock, the television industry remained dominated by white men and their own arrogant view of society.²⁹³ Of 62 television programs with lead characters, 48 had a male lead, 8 had male and female leads and only 6 featured a female lead, which were *Here's Lucy*, *Diana*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Maude*, *The Carol Burnett Show* and *The Snoop Sisters*. Rock commented that sitcoms starring women always had a dominant male, ensuring that "Women are never independently in charge of their own lives."²⁹⁴ Mary Richards was a change to the scene who was "unmarried and not the least in a panic about it, actually appears to have a sex life, and is neither stupid or helpless."²⁹⁵ There were issues with the program, nonetheless, with character Lou Grant's dominance and Mary, despite being an associate producer, is often seen answering phones and taking dictation. Yet Mary remained the most

²⁹⁰ Margaret Gallagher, *Unequal Opportunities: The Case of Women and the Media* (Paris, FR: The Unesco Press, 1981), 5.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁹² Friedan, "The Old Images Can Still Be Seen."

²⁹³ Gail Rock, "TV: Same Time, Same Station, Same Sexism," *Ms. Magazine*, December 1973, 24.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

identifiable woman on television.²⁹⁶ Mary's friend Rhoda also displayed progress transitioning from chasing men to having them chase her.²⁹⁷ Of the 62 programs studied by Rock, there was not one female executive producer, no regular female directors and few female writers. This led her to state that the three commercial networks were guilty of discrimination against women.²⁹⁸

While *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* may have stayed away from tackling political issues directly, the series *Maude* (1972-1978) - a spin-off of the popular series *All in the Family* - did not. After the program decided to have its lead character (portrayed by Bea Arthur) get pregnant and obtain an abortion, networks received negative and positive phone calls. While it was not the first time a program dealt with an abortion, (*The Defenders* in 1962, for instance, covered the trial of an abortionist) this did come at a time of immense debate, preceding the national legal right to abortion in 1973, *Roe v. Wade*.²⁹⁹ The episodes gained such attention that NOW filed a class-action lawsuit against a Champaign, Illinois television station for not airing them. The court refused the suit as it was not declared an urgent matter and the station stated it did not think abortion was a topic to be addressed through comedy.³⁰⁰ *Maude* creator Norman Lear received photographs of aborted fetuses by those opposing the act. Lear had to fight CBS to make the episodes addressing abortion, believing it is important to evoke feeling in an audience, even if to some it is negative.³⁰¹ Hundreds of people protested local television stations for airing the episodes, while NOW and other groups picketed to show support for those stations that aired the controversial material and for protection of freedom of speech. Over thirty stations were reported

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 25.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 28.

²⁹⁹ Bailey, "She 'Can Bring Home the Bacon'," 108.

³⁰⁰ "NOW Suit Over Maude Abortion Shows Denied," *Los Angeles Times*, November 25, 1972.

³⁰¹ Aljean Harmetz, "Maude Didn't Leave 'em All Laughing," *New York Times*, December 10, 1972.

to give in to pressure and not the air the episodes.³⁰² Viewership did rise, however, for the series when the abortion episodes were aired.³⁰³

Another one of Lear's sitcoms, *All in the Family*, also broke a taboo regarding women's bodies, by having an episode concerning menstruating in 1973. It created heated viewer response with even comedian Jackie Gleason telling the *New York Times* he felt it was not a laughing matter.³⁰⁴ Not long after *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* made reference to menstruation as well. Mary is read a line from Rhoda's old diary saying that her mother had just come in and told her a wonderful thing was going to happen to her once a month.³⁰⁵

Other television series during the 1970s, like *Charlie's Angels*, *The Bionic Woman* and *Wonder Woman* also emerged featuring single female leads. While often criticized for their focus on skimpy outfits and "jiggle," they also portrayed women who had power, traveled and were important because of their differences. Some found strength in these characters sexuality, seeing it as another source of power they could use to achieve their goals.³⁰⁶ Betty Friedan wrote that while they may be sex objects, she was pleased at least they were strong, smart and adventurous.³⁰⁷ The women were not passive sex objects or silently waving goodbye but were acting courageously in their own world.³⁰⁸ The trend was also copied in programs that featured very little clothing and substance, which were nicknamed "TV cheesecake" and "jiggly

³⁰² Marjorie Hyer, "240 Picket WTOP over Abortion," *The Washington Post*, August 22, 1973.

³⁰³ Harmetz, "Maude Didn't Leave 'em."

³⁰⁴ Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton, and Emily Toth, *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation* (New York: A Sunrise Book, 1976), 123.

³⁰⁵ Karyl Geld, "Rhoda's Sister Gets Married," *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, season 4, episode 3, aired September 29, 1973.

³⁰⁶ Watson, "From My Little Margie."

³⁰⁷ Friedan, "The Old Images Can Still Be Seen."

³⁰⁸ Betty Friedan "Television and the Feminine Mystique," in *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), 75.

programming" like *Three's Company* and *Police Woman*. Some saw it as a regression for women in television and a curse to the women's movement.³⁰⁹

While momentum rose to support women's causes during the 1970s, the battle to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) regained strength. The proposed amendment to the United States Constitution to guarantee equal rights to women was supported by many of television's female stars. Mary Tyler Moore told *Ms. Magazine* she supported it, as did her co-star Valerie Harper, who donated money and time in effort of the amendment.³¹⁰ Marlo Thomas took part in parades for support and lobbied legislatures. She worried some opposed it because they thought it was against femininity.³¹¹ Candice Bergen, prior to starring in *Murphy Brown*, supported the ERA. She had been labelled a feminist before she considered herself one due to the life she led of "working and traveling and supporting herself."³¹² She also had attended a right to abortion rally. She felt that she did not have a lot of life experiences to speak on behalf of problems with the ERA but that it should have been passed long ago.³¹³

Not everyone, however, championed for the ERA, resulting in its failure to be ratified by enough U.S. states to pass. By traveling to Middle America, reporter Michael Korda found that there seemed to be more ordinary women opposed to the women's liberation movement than those like Gloria Steinem, pushing for the ERA in urban centers. But while it appeared they were against the style taken by the movement, they supported messages of women's strength, hard work and opportunities. They feared, instead, the demands and rules that could come out of making women equal to men.³¹⁴

³⁰⁹ Gary Deeb, "Cheesecake now nightly mania on TV," *Chicago Tribune*, March 26, 1978.

³¹⁰ "Hollywood Mobilizes for the ERA," *Ms. Magazine*, June 1978, 55, 57.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 53.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ Michael Korda, "Liberation, U.S.A.," *Newsweek*, July 16, 1973.

Outside of the television industry, the women's movement and popular singles scene, women wrote about their own feelings regarding their experiences of being unmarried. Carol Kramer noted that in the early 1970s she saw the single girl transition from a source of pity to a swinging single envied by married friends but that "neither image was ever valid," in her perception. She was always the same single person except others viewed her differently.³¹⁵ Novelist and journalist Rona Jaffe did not see the need for marriage and did not think she ever would. She observed women acting as if they were auditioning for men in order to convince them they deserved to receive his love and hand in marriage. Nonetheless, she did not see herself as a "Women's Libber" as she held these views before the movement came to be and noted, "If I'd waited for Women's Lib I would probably have committed suicide by now."³¹⁶ Jaffe accounted fewer drawbacks to being single in the early 1970s, as ten years prior people wanted you to prove you were not a freak for still being single.³¹⁷

In 1977, Jaffe wrote how marrying is an easy thing to do in life but that staying single is hard because of pressures from others and one's self. Being single, alternatively, brought a freedom not to fake who you are or what you want to do. She saw that women used to sacrifice everything for the men they married but now singles debate whether it's worth giving up their life for men.³¹⁸ Jaffe wrote, though, that single women were still viewed by others as either failed in love, neurotic or lesbian despite it usually being because of her priorities and ability to gain money for herself, not only through marriage.³¹⁹

As the 1960s and 1970s progressed, the single girl became an image of both charm and danger. Advertising found success with the liberated woman icon, like the Virginia Slims'

³¹⁵ Carol Kramer, "Women without husbands: not really such a bleak fate," *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 1973.

³¹⁶ Richard Natale, "The Luxury of Being a Single Woman," *Chicago Tribune*, August 27, 1972.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Rona Jaffe, "The Joy of Staying Single," *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1977, 149.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 92.

cigarette slogan "You've Come a Long Way, Baby" and Revlon's Charlie perfume campaign that featured confident and successful women. The success of such campaigns' led to continued use of women's independence in ads, as well as her glamour.³²⁰ Nonetheless, while the single girl images were making progress and gaining equality, violence towards them continued. The 1963 double homicide labelled the "Career Girls Murders," the 1964 stabbing murder of Kitty Genovese in New York, the 1966 rape and murder of 8 nurses in Chicago and the 1973 murder of New York's Carol Hoffman all brought media attention to the dangers of women living alone in a big city.³²¹ The New Year's Day 1973 murder of schoolteacher Roseann Quinn, by a man she met at a singles bar, led to news reports and judgment of her sexually active lifestyle and inspired the novel and feature film *Looking for Mr Goodbar*. Women were blamed for their action of casual sex and any consequences that came from it.³²² In the 1970s, birth control had become, according to Linda Gordon, a key element of "a woman's right, as a tool for woman's advancement, sex equality, and sexual freedom; or as a modern convenience which must be closely restricted lest it become destructive of social cohesion and morality."³²³ While reproductive rights had been gained, the opposition against them also became greater as the 1980s approached.³²⁴ With as much progress that had been made for the opportunities available to single women and the acceptance of their choices, the 1970s still saw a lack of true equality.

³²⁰ Lehman, *Those Girls*, 126.

³²¹ Betsy Israel, *Bachelor Girl: The Secret History of Single Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 227.

³²² Lehman, *Those Girls*, 209.

³²³ Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 398.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

Chapter 4

By the early 1980s, there was a clear transformation in American society due to the women's movement, with many women planning for careers rather than marriage. As Gloria Steinem outlined: "Now, we are becoming the men we wanted to marry. Once women were trained to marry a doctor, not be one."³²⁵ By 1980, half of American women aged 20 to 24 were unmarried compared to 25 percent in 1960.³²⁶ Reasons women gave for never having married included a need for space and time alone, the freedom to make their own choices and the resolve to control their own finances.³²⁷ According to Betty Friedan, hardworking young women were appreciating the opportunity they had to obtain careers. Unfortunately, some found it unattainable to also marry and raise children.³²⁸

While more women were choosing to stay single during the 1980s, there were also more women attempting to have it all. This meant successfully attaining and balancing a career, marriage and children. Some people, like Marlo Thomas, had put off marriage during the women's movement but found the institution evolving for their needs. Thomas had spent her life explaining why she was not married and then had to explain why she did. At age 42 she married talk show host Phil Donahue, seeing that their commitment could be constructed to best fit each other's needs.³²⁹ Even Helen Gurley Brown began writing not only to singles, but to married women as well.

³²⁵ Gloria Steinem, "Words and Change," in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (New York: A Plume Book, 1984), 149.

³²⁶ Gail Collins, *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women From 1960 to the Present* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009. Kindle edition), 307.

³²⁷ Nancy L. Peterson, *Our Lives For Ourselves: Women Who Have Never Married* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1981), 256.

³²⁸ Betty Friedan, *The Second Stage* (New York: Summit Books, 1981), 16.

³²⁹ Marlo Thomas, "Why I Got Married Now," *Ms. Magazine*, March 1981, 47.

In 1982, Brown published her latest advice book, *Having It All: Love, Success, Sex, Money ... Even If You're Starting With Nothing*, which dispensed an outline on how to get to the top of one's career and gain power and money. She also provided a lengthy overview on how to find a husband and ways to make a marriage succeed. Brown added, however, that one should not marry for sex, or for children, as the judgment of having either while single had decreased in recent years.³³⁰ Support for her expected single readers was also shown, noting that women were enjoying single life and the freedom it allowed.³³¹

While Brown recognized that children were an essential aspect of having it all for many Americans, she personally did not agree.³³² Brown thought, though, it was possible to balance a career and children successfully. She acknowledged that the nation had changed and it was no longer possible to be fired or refused employment because of pregnancy or motherhood. While Betty Friedan said women were gaining successful careers instead of being successful housewives, Brown concluded women should be able to balance both with hard work.³³³ Her book outlined that if a woman wants to have it all, she must be "willing to pay the price" through determination and perseverance.³³⁴ Conversely, Betty Friedan's 1981 book *The Second Stage*, warned that the superwomen trying to have it all were under so much pressure that younger women in the future may be intimidated from balancing a career, marriage and children.³³⁵

³³⁰ Helen Gurley Brown, *Having It All: Love, Success, Sex, Money ... Even If You're Starting With Nothing* (New York: Simon and Schuster/Linden Press, 1982), 301.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 303.

³³² *Ibid.*, 89.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 90.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

³³⁵ Friedan, *The Second Stage*, 73.

Younger women, during this time, moved away from group feminism and instead focused on their needs as individuals, along with their own careers.³³⁶ Additionally, there was an emerging postfeminist demographic who did not feel connected to the struggles of the women's liberation movement.³³⁷ They expected equal rights but would not label themselves as feminists, viewing them as angry and masculine.³³⁸ Marlo Thomas found these young women's outlook upsetting as she was afraid they were going to give up the fight for women's rights.³³⁹

The celebration of singlehood that had flourished in the 1970s had shifted towards a desire in the 1980s for committed personal relationships, often followed by growing families. While a trend was seen in marriage, people were waiting longer before committing to the institution. This can be seen in 1983, when the amount of women never married rose to 13 percent in the 30-to-34-age range. Some aging women were becoming anxious about marriage after dating for so many years. They were very particular about who they would be with, wanting perfection after what they saw as a long wait.³⁴⁰ This refusal to settle was a characteristic seen by the protagonists of *Murphy Brown* and *Sex and the City* years later.

During the 1980s, the progress of the earlier decade did not seem to continue with regards to women's roles on television. As of 1987, 65.4 percent of characters were male on fictional television programs, with only 34.6 percent female.³⁴¹ In 1989, the Screen Actors Guild noted

³³⁶ Gloria Steinem, "Why Young Women Are More Conservative," in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (New York: A Plume Book, 1984), 215.

³³⁷ Eloise Salholz, "Feminism's Identity Crisis," *Newsweek*, March 31, 1986.

³³⁸ Claudia Wallis, "Onward Women!" *Time*, December 4, 1989.

³³⁹ Susan Dworkin, "Marlo Thomas: What I Know now that I didn't then about sex, true love, politics and Phil," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1984, 32.

³⁴⁰ Patricia Morrisroe, "Born Too Late? Expect Too Much? Then You May Be ... Forever Single," *New York Magazine*, August 20, 1984.

³⁴¹ Donald M. Davis, "Portrayals of Women in Prime-Time Network Television: Some Demographic Characteristics," *Sex Roles* 23, no. 5 (Sep 1, 1990): 329.

that of 40,000 acting roles, only 35.4 percent were for females.³⁴² A majority of women were shown as white, young and working in clerical type jobs or assisting men. The National Commission on Working Women and Women in Film commissioned a study that revealed a low presence of females at major television networks in the roles of producing, directing and writing. Of the major networks, FOX had the highest percent of female producers, at 26, while ABC only had 8 percent.³⁴³ The Writers Guild of America reported that only 1 in 5 of its members were female, with 80 percent of television being written by "white males under 40."³⁴⁴ In the 1980s, even sitcoms, which normally utilized women, saw less female leads. Two-thirds of fictional children had only a male parent or guardian instead of a mother, as seen on *Full House*.³⁴⁵ Programs that did feature women often had them divorced or widowed, like *Designing Women* and *The Golden Girls* and were set in the home rather than office. Programs with female leads, such as *Cagney and Lacey*, also existed, but had married women with children balancing out the single status females.

Two new sitcoms debuted in 1988, *Roseanne* and *Murphy Brown*. They featured strong women who helped bring female-centered programs back into popularity. While *Roseanne* focused on the nuclear family of the title character, her unmarried sister Jackie (Laurie Metcalf) played an important role as well. Her single life lacked glamour and excitement, and consisted of reluctantly going to singles dances, being set up on dates, often changing careers in hope of finding happiness and dealing with boyfriends who treated her unwell. During one episode it is even revealed that her boyfriend was physically abusing her. The series also briefly touched on

³⁴² Daniel B. Wood, "How TV Treats Women," *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 13, 1990.

³⁴³ Sharon Bernstein, "A No-Progress Report on Women in TV," *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1990.

³⁴⁴ Wood, "How TV Treats Women."

³⁴⁵ Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 143.

the third-wave feminism Riot Grrrl movement in a 1995 episode when Roseanne and Jackie pick up a hitchhiker and learn about the movement's music and message of personal expression.³⁴⁶

On the other end of the spectrum was a sitcom that featured a single woman who reached mass success in her field, *Murphy Brown*.³⁴⁷ Despite her personal issues, Murphy is able to remain one of the top television journalists, interviewing world leaders and traveling to war zones. The character soon became a modern icon for independent women with careers.³⁴⁸ Susan Douglas, a professor of communications, has noted that by watching strong female characters like those on *Roseanne* and *Murphy Brown*, one is able to connect with the power they exude in their bitchiness, a fantasy of "speaking truth to the patriarchy."³⁴⁹ Murphy Brown would rather use anger to get her way than kindness.³⁵⁰ Murphy was definitely not like Ann Marie or Mary Richards.

While centering the series in a newsroom, *Murphy Brown* was quick to draw comparisons with *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.³⁵¹ It was said star Candice Bergen brought the onscreen style of Moore, acting out ridiculous situations while remaining elegant.³⁵² While both have co-workers forming family-like relationships, Mary Richards and Murphy Brown are very different single women. One has even characterized Murphy as "Mary Tyler Moore on steroids."³⁵³ Series creator and writer Diane English described Murphy as having more edges than Mary, with Murphy having a "crusty" attitude like Lou and her boss Miles (Grant Shaud) representing the

³⁴⁶ Cynthia Mort, "The Getaway, Almost," *Roseanne*, season 8, episode 7, aired November 14, 1995.

³⁴⁷ While Murphy Brown is revealed to be divorced in season 1, she was married for less than a week in 1968 to a man she had just met at a protest. Having been such a short period of time of her youth, Murphy's life has been built on the experiences of a single woman, not a divorcee, and why she is treated as single in this thesis and most other works.

³⁴⁸ Daniel Cerone, "Now 'Murphy' Faces Real Pregnancy Test," *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 1991.

³⁴⁹ Susan Douglas, "Sitcom Women: We've Come a Long Way. Maybe," *Ms. Magazine*, November 1995, 78.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁵¹ Michael E. Hill, "'Murphy Brown' FYI, We Like Your Show, Sort Of," *The Washington Post*, February 26, 1989.

³⁵² John J. O'Connor, "Review/Television; The Vices and Virtues of a Star TV Reporter," *New York Times*, November 14, 1988.

³⁵³ Ellen Goodman, "Farewell, Ms. Brown," *The Washington Post*, May 16, 1998.

softer balance, like Mary.³⁵⁴ *Murphy Brown* producer and writer Korby Siamis watched *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* when she was young and was influenced personally by it. She thought the characters on the show seemed like real people.³⁵⁵ Murphy's friends tease her for not being able to host a good party, a trait also seen by Mary Richards who hosted numerous disastrous gatherings. Later in the series, Miles yells at Murphy telling her she has to cover real news stories, as they are not on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.³⁵⁶

Murphy is known for her forwardness, competitiveness, tough attitude and political protesting. Through conversation, we learn Murphy was present at the Democratic Convention protests in Chicago in 1968. She has held on to the spirit and activism of the 1960s through her groundbreaking news stories and desire to save the planet.³⁵⁷ Diane English noted that television was becoming a place where women could say what they want instead of worrying about being "nice and sweet."³⁵⁸ As the show premiered, Murphy was described as "Mike Wallace in a dress" as well as a nightmare for single women because achieving great success brought her an addiction to alcohol and lack of personal life.³⁵⁹ Murphy was even characterized in 1989 as being "unsuited for motherhood."³⁶⁰ Lead actress Candice Bergen said that Murphy at the beginning of the series had no time for a boyfriend or child, and she thought a lot of women could relate to that life.³⁶¹

Murphy Brown was described at the time as one of the only primetime programs to have a single female centered in the workplace. Single women were often shown as either emotional

³⁵⁴ Joy Horowitz, "On TV, Ms. Macho and Mr. Wimp," *New York Times*, April 9, 1989.

³⁵⁵ Robert S. Alley, and Irby B. Brown, *Murphy Brown: Anatomy of a Sitcom* (New York: A Delta Book, 1990), 70.

³⁵⁶ Adam Belanoff, "I Don't Know You From Madam," *Murphy Brown*, season 6, episode 7, aired November 1, 1993.

³⁵⁷ Alley, and Brown, *Murphy Brown*, 21.

³⁵⁸ Harry F. Waters, and Janet Huck. "Networking Women," *Newsweek*, March 13, 1989, 48.

³⁵⁹ James Endrst, "The women of TV '88-89," *The Hartford Courant*, September 7, 1988.

³⁶⁰ Waters, and Huck. "Networking Women," 48.

³⁶¹ Kim Heron, "Candice Bergen Tries a Sitcom, Just for Laughs," *New York Times*, November 20, 1988.

and depressed spinsters or cold and career driven.³⁶² In 1989, *Newsweek* wrote that programs like *Murphy Brown* were showing America it was acceptable to be a career woman and to be single, without being desperate about the situation.³⁶³ The article noted the feminization in television was not taking place because of feminism but because of demographic changes of network viewers in primetime and additional female writers and producers in the industry.³⁶⁴ In addition to Diane English and Korby Siamis, numerous other female writers were employed on *Murphy Brown*. While males wrote about 63 percent of episodes, the rest were written by females or collaborated on by both sexes. But the program did showcase that its male staff could brilliantly approach topics relating to gender through quality writing of episodes centered on sexual discrimination.

While Murphy has many traits often qualified as feminist, some found that those qualities lacked seriousness, often being the source of jokes and reasons characters dislike her.³⁶⁵ Though English did not see herself as a feminist attached to political action, she wanted females to be respected and for herself to be known as a great writer and not singled out because of her gender. Unlike English, Murphy clearly was connected to the women's liberation movement when she was younger and still maintains those beliefs. For instance, when Murphy's baby brother is crying she does not want to pick him up, telling him women do not have to give boys what they want and cites Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan as her reason.³⁶⁶

In addition to Murphy being modeled from second-wave feminists, the program drew a lot of its inspiration from real news media. Despite the common comparison to *The Mary Tyler*

³⁶² Faludi, *Backlash*, 159.

³⁶³ Waters, and Huck. "Networking Women," 48.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Andrea L. Press, *Women Watching Television: Gender, Class, and Generation in the American Television Experience* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 41.

³⁶⁶ Diane English, "Brown Like Me (Part 2)," *Murphy Brown*, season 2, episode 11, aired November 27, 1989.

Moore Show, English only saw a few episodes of the program while it was on the air. Instead, she was inspired by real news topics. For instance, a *Murphy Brown* storyline was based on a bonding experience Barbara Walters had with a Soviet newswoman.³⁶⁷ In the episode, Murphy and a foreign journalist discuss problems many career women at the time would face, like their common loneliness of the job, their thoughts about wanting children and their inability to sustain relationships.³⁶⁸ In the final season of *Murphy Brown*, breast cancer was the main focus of storyline, as the title character has a lump discovered in a routine mammogram. NBC News' Betty Rollin had spoken publically about her breast cancer in 1976, as did reporter and newscaster Linda Ellerbee in 1992.³⁶⁹ Early in the series, it was rumoured that Murphy was modeled after Ellerbee, though English stated that Murphy was based on a combination of various women not one individual.³⁷⁰

Parallels were seen in fashion as well. In the late 1980s, the tailored suit look was the current trend of career women, including those in journalism. Murphy Brown also wore this style on her fictional news show *FYI*, though usually with shorter hemlines and longer hair. The character of Murphy also wore real pieces sold in department stores from designers like Anne Klein and Donna Karen.³⁷¹ Real broadcasters were additionally guided by Murphy's outfits and would wear similar items on the news.³⁷² *60 Minutes* even tried to hire Candice Bergen as a correspondent, thus further blurring further lines between fact and fiction.³⁷³

³⁶⁷ Joanna Elm, "What's TV's Real Newswomen Think of Murphy Brown," *TV Guide*, December 23, 1989, 4.

³⁶⁸ Sy Dukane, and Denise Moss, "Moscow on the Potomac," *Murphy Brown*, season 1, episode 16, aired March 13, 1989.

³⁶⁹ Peggy Orenstein, "Scheduling Breast Cancer in Prime Time," *New York Times*, September 28, 1997.

³⁷⁰ Elm, "What's TV's Real Newswomen Think," 6.

³⁷¹ Anne Marie Schiro, "Role models: The business attire of today's TV heroines mimics that of their real-life counterparts," *Chicago Tribune*, March 22, 1989.

³⁷² Charlotte Brunson, Julie D'Acci, and Lynn Spigel, ed., *Feminist Television Criticism: A Reader* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1997), 335.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

During the decade of *Murphy Brown's* debut, the media focused attention on women's changing personal and public commitments. Having it all was more difficult than expected, as the work system was designed for men who had a wife to care for the house and children. When women tried to do it all, it could be overwhelming. Meanwhile, the single women who had instead focused on making professional gains were realizing they may have missed their chance to have kids and were becoming lonely in their midlife.³⁷⁴

The media latched on to these fears and exploited them. A 1986 study by Yale's Dr. Neil Bennett and Patricia Craig and Harvard's Dr. David Bloom, outlined the statistics on college-educated white women. It reported that if one was unmarried at 25 they had a 50 percent chance of never marrying, and if unmarried at 35 a 95 percent chance of not marrying.³⁷⁵ If one made it to 40 without being married, there was a 97.4 percent chance they would remain that way, which led to the media report you were "more likely to be killed by a terrorist" than wed.³⁷⁶ While the quote regarding terrorists was actually a joke made by a reporter, it was relayed in press articles as fact.³⁷⁷ This data caused a crisis among single women who assumed it would be easy to find a husband when they were ready. Others were frustrated by the way it made being single seem meaningless compared to being married. Though media outlets misunderstood the study's figures, they continued to be reported as news. Stories emerged on the topic, showing how successful women felt the pressures of their biological clock. Others took a new route, displaying how women were adopting children and buying homes by themselves.³⁷⁸ Jeanne Moorman from the U.S. Census Bureau analyzed the data on a larger scale and found the Yale study's statistics

³⁷⁴ Salholz, "Feminism's Identity Crisis."

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Eloise Salholz, "Too Late for Prince Charming?" *Newsweek*, June 2, 1986.

³⁷⁷ Faludi, *Backlash*, 100.

³⁷⁸ Salholz, "Too Late for Prince Charming."

were nowhere near as extreme as proclaimed.³⁷⁹ Additionally, in 1982, *The New England Journal of Medicine* reported women after the age of 30 had a 40 percent chance of being infertile, creating more concern by women regarding their biological clocks.³⁸⁰ While a 1985 study presented women aged 30 to 34 in fact only had a 13.6 percent risk of infertility, the preoccupation to plan kids early had already influenced Americans.³⁸¹

It is from this culture that the pregnancy on *Murphy Brown* would have been inspired. After briefly dating an old boyfriend from her youth, Murphy soon realizes she is pregnant. At the age of 42, she had witnessed friends obtaining fertility treatments and it did not occur to her she would get pregnant so easily. Murphy worries she will lose her edge if she becomes a mother and fears she would not excel at motherhood. She does not think a child should have to live a disappointing life because she made one mistake.³⁸² When she confronts the baby's father about her pregnancy, he does not believe they would be able to both give up their lives to raise a child and remain happy. Murphy mentions she could raise a child alone and he laughs at the thought of a brash woman being an adept mother.³⁸³ When network executives hear Murphy is going to be a single mother, they tell her she should marry for damage control. When she refuses they try to take her off the air as they fear a negative public reaction and that she will not meet the demands of the job while pregnant. After much argument, however, they agree to let her prove she can work at the same level as before.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁹ Faludi, *Backlash*, 11.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁸² Diane English, and Korby Siamis, "Uh-Oh (Part 2)," *Murphy Brown*, season 4, episode 1, aired September 16, 1991.

³⁸³ Diane English, and Korby Siamis, "Uh-Oh (Part 3)," *Murphy Brown*, season 4, episode 2, aired September 16, 1991.

³⁸⁴ Steven Peterman, and Greg Dontzig, "I'm As Much of a Man as I Ever Was," *Murphy Brown*, season 4, episode 3, aired September 23, 1991.

English found Murphy's pregnancy to be an exciting plot development, as some people think by the time one is in their forties they cannot change.³⁸⁵ Early in the series, Murphy thinks she wants to have a child and at the age of forty feels like she might not have a chance again. She visits a sperm bank before asking her best friend Frank (Joe Regalbuto) if he will donate. Murphy ends up not going through with the plan, as she holds on to the idea of a white dress and a man she loves fathering her kids.³⁸⁶ Later in the series, it was decided that adding a husband and child would have been too much change for Murphy but incorporating a baby gave new challenges while finding ways to balance independence.³⁸⁷ Some viewers expressed it was not extraordinary to show an out of wedlock pregnancy as it was happening more commonly in America than before. Others were worried how a smart woman could allow herself to be in that situation, especially with the AIDS crisis.³⁸⁸

The series' popularity continued to rise when Murphy Brown became the first major network lead character on a sitcom to have a baby out of wedlock.³⁸⁹ When Murphy's labour brings her great pain, she asks Corky (Faith Ford) to smother her with a pillow in the name of sisterhood and Betty Friedan. Once she delivers the baby, she tells the newborn that she will not be like other moms, as she does not cook or sew and she will make many mistakes. Then she sings "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" to the infant, overcome with emotion.³⁹⁰ Over 38 million viewers tuned into *Murphy Brown* to watch her give birth on May 18, 1992, yet only a handful called with complaints about Murphy being unmarried.³⁹¹ Following this event,

³⁸⁵ Carla Hall, "The Mothering of 'Murphy': Sitcom Creator Says Pregnancy Won't Take the Bite Out of Brown," *The Washington Post*, October 28, 1991.

³⁸⁶ Korby Siamis, "Baby Love," *Murphy Brown*, season 1, episode 6, aired December 12, 1988.

³⁸⁷ Hall, "The Mothering of 'Murphy'."

³⁸⁸ Rick DuBrow, "'Murphy' Pregnancy: A 90s Cliffhanger," *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1991.

³⁸⁹ Tom Shales, "'Murphy Brown's' Baby Boon," *The Washington Post*, May 11, 1992.

³⁹⁰ Korby Siamis, and Diane English, "Birth 101," *Murphy Brown*, season 4, episode 26, aired May 18, 1992.

³⁹¹ Bill Carter, "CBS Is Silent, but Then There's the Next Season," *New York Times*, May 21, 1992.

Vice President Dan Quayle gave a speech regarding riots and how poverty, drugs and broken homes were reasons for these societal issues. He declared that people join gangs in search of a father figure they did not have in their life, and lamented that a high amount of single mothers lived below the poverty line. Quayle then went on to say that it "doesn't help matters when prime-time TV has *Murphy Brown* - a character who supposedly epitomizes today's intelligent, highly paid, professional woman - mocking the importance of fathers by bearing a child alone and calling it just another lifestyle choice. I know it is not fashionable to talk about moral values, but we need to do that."³⁹² The media responded with headlines like the *New York Daily News*' "Quayle to Murphy Brown: You Tramp!" and editorials about Quayle being almost comical for believing that if the poor improve their moral values they will be rewarded.³⁹³ Conversely, conservatives at the 1992 Republican Convention wore buttons exclaiming, "Dan's Right, Murphy's a Tramp."³⁹⁴ In the first episode of *Murphy Brown* after the media drama, they used real headlines regarding Quayle's speech on the show.³⁹⁵ Murphy watches the news and sees a clip of Dan Quayle saying she sets a poor example not needing a man. Murphy says she agonized over her choice and worried what it would do to her and her baby and is upset by Quayle's comments.³⁹⁶ She uses the following episode of *FYI* to give a speech on family values and noted if one family is not traditional it does not mean they do not have love.³⁹⁷ *Murphy Brown* also

³⁹² John E. Yang, "Clinton Finds New Voice of Emotion; Quayle Decries 'Poverty of Values'," *The Washington Post*, May 20, 1992.

³⁹³ "Dan vs. Murph," *The Washington Post*, May 21, 1992.

³⁹⁴ Goodman, "Farewell, Ms. Brown."

³⁹⁵ Tom Shales, "Murphy Brown's Quayle Shoot: Season Opener a Sanctimonious Letdown," *The Washington Post*, September 22, 1992.

³⁹⁶ Steven Peterman, Greg Dontzig, and Korby Siamis, "You Say Potatoe, I Say Potato (Part 1)," *Murphy Brown*, season 5, episode 1, aired September 21, 1992.

³⁹⁷ Steven Peterman, Greg Dontzig, and Korby Siamis, "You Say Potatoe, I Say Potato (Part 2)," *Murphy Brown*, season 5, episode 2, aired September 21, 1992.

used real life single parent families in the episode's closing, blurring yet again fiction and reality.³⁹⁸

For months, Vice President Quayle's speech continued to spark controversy. Bergen concluded that he raised good points about family values, yet disagreed with his reference to *Murphy Brown*, seeing it as ignorant and conceited.³⁹⁹ She also stated that Murphy did not "glamorize single motherhood or disparage the role of a father in raising a child."⁴⁰⁰ Diane English also spoke out concerning Quayle, saying if he did not like Murphy's decision to be a single mother "he'd better make sure abortion remains safe and legal."⁴⁰¹ In response to this backlash, Quayle later remarked, "Hollywood doesn't get it. Abortion is not the reason why we have a poverty of values gripping our inner cities."⁴⁰² Murphy's decision to raise a child herself would have been unthinkable in earlier programs; however, for her to have an abortion was still not an acceptable option. English speculated that if an abortion were written into the plot, the show would have been cancelled due to opposition from viewers and sponsors.⁴⁰³

The writing on *Murphy Brown* revealed that the program defended both abortion and single parenthood. Characters never argued the issue of the fetus' right to live, but instead addressed that Murphy needed to make a choice that was best for her. Nevertheless, the producers of the program had always planned to show Murphy have the baby, with it being a plot idea from near the series' beginning. Executive Vice President at CBS, Peter Tortorici, was asked

³⁹⁸ Lauren Rabinovitz, "Ms.-Representation: The Politics of Feminist Sitcoms," in *Television, History, and American Culture: Feminist Critical Essays*, ed. Mary Beth Haralovich, and Lauren Rabinovitz (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 76.

³⁹⁹ Judith Michaelson, "10 Season's as Murphy: It's a Wrap," *The Washington Post*, May 17, 1998.

⁴⁰⁰ Candice Bergen, "Murphy Brown's Values," *New York Times*, June 23, 1998.

⁴⁰¹ Carter, "CBS Is Silent."

⁴⁰² Yang, "Clinton Finds New Voice of Emotion."

⁴⁰³ Jeff Silverman, "TV's Creators Face a New Creator," *New York Times*, December 8, 1991.

if the network would have allowed Murphy to have an abortion if the writers intended it. His response: "I don't even want to think about it. It would have been a very difficult decision."⁴⁰⁴

While plots regarding female-specific problems were not a constant on *Murphy Brown*, the title character would encounter harassment over the years and react in unique ways. Murphy reveals that when she graduated from school, she thought she would be the best journalist right away because of her talent. Instead, she was complimented on her appearance and told she was not talented enough to make it. She learned to go after what she wanted, even if difficult.⁴⁰⁵

When Murphy is rewarded with an evening news anchor position, she soon realizes it was because she is a woman. She turns the offer down, saying she fought against sexism her entire career and to be given something because of her sex is not how she wants a promotion.⁴⁰⁶ Years later, when a network executive touches Corky and tells her she can host an event if she sleeps with him, she goes to Murphy to discuss her problem. Murphy confronts the man and threatens to harm him if he continues the behaviour, which leads him to file a sexual harassment suit against Murphy. Corky saves Murphy by filing a similar suit against the executive, who gets fired when he tries to bribe Corky to drop the claim.⁴⁰⁷

During the final season of the series, Murphy is diagnosed with breast cancer but is afraid to admit it to herself. Another patient in the hospital reveals her story to Murphy, saying she feels she can talk to her because Murphy has been in her living room so often through television.⁴⁰⁸ This ability to bring the topic into people's homes also became an influence for those living in America. After *Murphy Brown* explored the topic of breast cancer, there was a 30 percent

⁴⁰⁴ Rick DuBrow, "When Does TV Cross the Line?" *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1991.

⁴⁰⁵ Tom Palmer, "The Bummer of 42," *Murphy Brown*, season 3, episode 9, aired November 26, 1990.

⁴⁰⁶ Eugene Stein, "Anchor Rancor," *Murphy Brown*, season 4, episode 14, aired January 6, 1992.

⁴⁰⁷ Adam Belanoff, "Specific Overtures," *Murphy Brown*, season 7, episode 17, aired February 6, 1995.

⁴⁰⁸ Norm Gunzenhauser, and Tom Seeley, "Operation - Murphy Brown," *Murphy Brown*, season 10, episode 4, aired October 22, 1997.

increase in mammograms reported.⁴⁰⁹ Murphy receives a clean bill of health at the end of the series and also a marriage proposal from friend Eldon (Robert Pastorelli), who is very relieved when Murphy turns him down. His need to assist her is managed when it is agreed he can help by repainting her home and continue being a friend to her and her child, Avery.⁴¹⁰ The final season of *Murphy Brown*, by dealing with a dominantly women's health issue, brought forward female perspectives that had been missing in the later seasons of the series. It was during this final season of *Murphy Brown*, over half the episodes were written either in full or in part by women.

By the end of the series in 1998, Murphy Brown was turning fifty and many of her life choices were not those that connected to the younger generation. New programs with single female leads were beginning to emerge. While *Murphy Brown* had increased content regarding women's issues more than *That Girl* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, it would seem minor compared to what was to come. Murphy Brown, with her obsession over her career and experiencing only failed relationships, led the way for shows like *Ally McBeal*.⁴¹¹ Some noted, though, that Murphy was ambitious, whereas Ally was simply ambivalent.⁴¹² The strong single woman who was required to be tough to make it no longer existed in the same way after *Murphy Brown* went off the air. At the completion of the series, Diane English commented that women were no longer becoming workaholics like Murphy but feeling burdened by the pressures faced.

⁴⁰⁹ Kelly Woo, "Breast Cancer Awareness Month: TV Characters Who Fought the Disease," *The Huffington Post*, October 1, 2010, <http://www.aoltv.com/2010/10/01/breast-cancer-awareness-month-tv-characters-who-fought-the-dise/> (accessed July 26, 2015).

⁴¹⁰ Diane English, "Never Can Say Goodbye," *Murphy Brown*, season 10, episode 22, aired May 18, 1998.

⁴¹¹ Caryn James, "All Right, Goodbye Already!: Parting Is Such Sweet Sitcom," *New York Times*, May 12, 1998.

⁴¹² Goodman, "Farewell, Ms. Brown."

Therefore, they were simplifying their lives by no longer having it all, but the decisions on what to focus on were not easy ones.⁴¹³

⁴¹³ *ibid.*

Chapter 5

As of 1997, 98 percent of American homes had a colour television, allowing greater numbers of viewers to observe the stories of women.⁴¹⁴ It was during this period that more female-centered programs were shown on network television. New networks were also created, among which were those specifically targeted to a female audience. While the subject matter they covered was not always the most progressive, they did create a variety of narratives and increase the content of material directed towards women.⁴¹⁵ Both *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City (SATC)* premiered at this time and had multiple female leads, in addition to a central female character. This allowed for different representations of women on a single program.⁴¹⁶ Having this variety permitted viewers to connect with the individual that appealed most to them and led women to label themselves as a "Carrie" or a "Charlotte" based on character similarities.

The single independent woman became even more appealing to companies and viewers during this time. Advertising giant Young and Rubicam began labelling single women as the new yuppie of the era, with its very powerful consumer market.⁴¹⁷ In 1960, of American women aged 25 to 29, one tenth were single, but by 1998 this had risen to almost 40 percent.⁴¹⁸ Regarding all adult women in 1970, 16 percent were never married while in 1996 it was 23 percent. Some women were becoming more comfortable with the idea of being single than unhappy in a marriage. Popular culture, however, still heavily portrayed images of desperate

⁴¹⁴ Edith Pavese, and Judith Henry, *TV Mania: A Timeline of Television* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1998), 135.

⁴¹⁵ Amanda D. Lotz, *Redesigning Women: Television after the Network Era* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 7.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴¹⁷ Tamala M. Edwards, "Flying Solo," *Time*, August 28, 2000, 48.

⁴¹⁸ Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking, 2005), 264.

singles.⁴¹⁹ The television business continued to be male-dominated with many of the women writers and producers having male partners.⁴²⁰ While there were more comedy shows being created by women and increases in female staff, the extreme popularity of *Roseanne* and *Murphy Brown* also had men drawn to the trend by creating multiple new female-lead programs. Unlike *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* before them, Jim Brooks said that female characters in the 1990s did not have to embody a movement or "have an obvious destiny. It's all up for grabs."⁴²¹

As feminism evolved in the 1990s, so did the type of single women portrayed on television. A new generation of women had grown up with equal opportunity based on sex as commonplace. They were able to live a life that second-wave feminism had allowed them.⁴²² Characters on *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City* were not fighting for opportunities but instead attempting to find ways to balance careers, sex lives and friendships while agonizing if they were happy and really wanted to have it all like the previous generation. They also embraced femininity and romance while existing in a time of heightened consumer culture.⁴²³ These programs additionally featured women who were not perfect role models. Ally McBeal sees herself as a mess, despite being a successful lawyer. When her roommate recommends she visit a therapist, Ally says that even if she solved her problems she would just gain new ones. She likes being a mess - it is who she is.⁴²⁴ *Sex and the City's* Carrie Bradshaw describes New York and all its single women inhabitants as unable to find real romance and happiness, asking the question in

⁴¹⁹ Kirsten A. Conover, "Savoring the Single Life," *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 22, 1998.

⁴²⁰ James Sterngold, "Strong Women in TV? They'd Sure Better Be," *New York Times*, December 18, 1997.

⁴²¹ Hilary deVries, "In Comedies, Signs of a New Women's Movement," *New York Times*, February 25, 2001.

⁴²² Bonnie J. Dow, "Ally McBeal, Lifestyle Feminism, and the Politics of Personal Happiness," *The Communication Review* 5, no. 4 (2002): 261.

⁴²³ Angela McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2009), 21.

⁴²⁴ David E. Kelley, "Forbidden Fruits," *Ally McBeal*, season 1, episode 16, aired March 2, 1998.

the pilot episode "How the hell did we get into this mess?"⁴²⁵ The media often showed single women as fearing their state, wanting something more in life, like a husband or child. A single woman who did not show this fear was seen as a "glitch."⁴²⁶ Women shown were balancing characteristics of strength and weakness like Ally McBeal.⁴²⁷ Creator David E. Kelley said that the formation of Ally was to show someone not afraid to be weak.⁴²⁸

The new woman on television in the late 1990s was seen as smart and ambitious, yet still drawn to feminine and "girly" things and sex.⁴²⁹ Writer Ruth Shalit saw Ally McBeal as an insecure "child-woman" who had more in common with a teenager than fellow single woman Mary Richards.⁴³⁰ She saw these new single women as the male fantasy of what feminism was, making them seem safe, sexy and marketable.⁴³¹ Ally became a "defining image of prosperous, pre-millennial America" showing where her generation was. That appeared to be a place of gender, sex and appearances, with the show receiving most viewer letters regarding the topics of Ally's skirts and the fictional law firm's unisex bathroom.⁴³²

Ally McBeal became a program that co-workers would bond over and discuss the following day at work. Weekly house parties were also hosted among friends to watch episodes together. Viewers saw Ally as trying to accomplish all the milestones people and society had told her to. She is successful in her career, but has an imperfect social life, which audiences found

⁴²⁵ Darren Star, "Sex and the City," *Sex and the City*, season 1, episode 1, aired June 6, 1998.

⁴²⁶ Anthea Taylor, *Single Women in Popular Culture: The Limits of Postfeminism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 17.

⁴²⁷ Gloria Goodale, "Super women: Gusty young females are the stars driving some of today's most successful TV shows," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 5, 1999.

⁴²⁸ Bill Carter, "The Unintended Career of TV's Prolific Writer," *New York Times*, March 2, 1998.

⁴²⁹ Ruth Shalit, "Canny and Lacy: Ally McBeal and the Betrayal of Postfeminism," *The New Republic*, April 6, 1998, 27.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴³² Sharon Waxman, "America Follows His Script: The Brains Behind 'Practice' and 'Ally'," *The Washington Post*, February 22, 1998.

relatable.⁴³³ She could appear scatterbrained yet still win her cases and give inspiring speeches in the courtroom. Ally lacked a tough front but her nakedness of self was fresh.⁴³⁴ Unlike Mary Richards, Ally does not want to make it on her own. As a postfeminist woman, she has had career advantages so focuses instead on her love life. Women in their twenties could relate, as they also placed high expectations on their relationships.⁴³⁵ Part of the appeal may be the openness viewers get into Ally through the use of flashbacks and voiceovers.⁴³⁶ Some single women, contrarily, did not connect to the lonely and desperate characters of Hollywood, as they were happy with their lives, even if they do not find a man to love in the end.⁴³⁷

In the late 1990s, single women generally faced different options than previous generations, and were trying to find their own way. The image of the happy single woman seemed to be suppressed by that of happily married couples.⁴³⁸ There was a shift from women trying to break the glass ceiling to worrying about the glass slipper. *Ms.* Foundation for Women president Marie Wilson believed shows like *Ally McBeal* were making progress by showing intelligent women in the workplace, but were too stereotypical when it came to relationships and body image.⁴³⁹

Media reaction to these programs and their female characters were mixed, however. In 1998, *Time* featured the face of Ally McBeal alongside Susan B. Anthony, Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, and asked the question, "Is Feminism Dead?," while other critics obsessed over Ally's micro miniskirts and thin appearance.⁴⁴⁰ Writer Ginia Bellafante criticised current

⁴³³ Lonnae O'Neal Parker, "'Ally McBeal,' Insecurity Blanket," *The Washington Post*, February 16, 1998.

⁴³⁴ Karen Durbin, "Razor Thin, But Larger Than Life," *New York Times*, December 20, 1998.

⁴³⁵ Veronica Chambers, "How would Ally do it?" *Newsweek*, March 2, 1998.

⁴³⁶ Kimberly Stevens, "Ally, the Talk Around the Water Cooler," *New York Times*, November 23, 1997.

⁴³⁷ Kim Campbell, "Beyond 'Bridget', a fuller view of single women," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 12, 2001.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Veronica Chambers, and Cheech Marin, "Ally McBeal," *Newsweek*, October 13, 1997.

⁴⁴⁰ Ginia Bellafante, "Feminism: It's All About Me!" *Time*, June 29, 1998.

feminism as being too closely connected with celebrity culture and self-obsession and for being flighty, as participants no longer see its goals as relevant. She quoted Betty Friedan and Susan Brownmiller as saying there was too much attention given to sex within the women's movement. Ally McBeal is the main source of complaint for Bellafante due to her "frazzled," "ditsy," and "self-absorbed" characteristics. To her, Mary Richards was level-headed, yet Ally appears unable to do anything herself. Bellafante did not think the character of Ally McBeal should be shown as an archetype of single women. Creator David E. Kelley admitted that Ally is not a strong feminist but does believe in women's rights.⁴⁴¹ *Ally McBeal* actress Calista Flockhart, in regards to the *Time* cover, noted its ridiculousness, as Ally is only a fictional character.⁴⁴² *The Washington Post* reported that the article missed the mark by focusing on cultural events and narcissist writers and not the actual political movement where feminism was alive and in action. When Bellafante mentions NOW, for example, she ignores that it has been involved in daycare activism for decades despite her argument to the contrary.⁴⁴³

This media drama was addressed in an episode of *Ally McBeal* when Ally dreams that the Women for Progress has nominated her as a professional role model. While Ally insists she does not want to be a role model, she is told she has no choice. She will, though, have to change the way she dresses and fatten up so that young girls do not glamorize thinness, in addition to losing her emotional void without a man outlook. After the dream, she tells her friend John (Peter MacNicol) that she has failed as a woman because she craves dependency.⁴⁴⁴ When a fictional feminist tries to tell Ally her life is not empty without a man, Ally is still broken-hearted and

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Maureen Dowd, "She-TV, Me-TV," *New York Times*, July 22, 1998.

⁴⁴³ Judy Mann, "An Unfair Assessment of Feminism," *The Washington Post*, June 26, 1998.

⁴⁴⁴ David E. Kelley, "Love Unlimited," *Ally McBeal*, season 2, episode 12, aired January 18, 1999.

calls in sick to wallow in her loneliness.⁴⁴⁵ While *Ally McBeal* was often politically incorrect in its character's actions and dialogues, it appears to some analysis to be an intentional undertaking by the show's writers.⁴⁴⁶

At the turn of the millennium, fashion trends included very short skirts and dresses as well as tops resembling lingerie, with the *New York Times* noting that provocative was chic.⁴⁴⁷ Ally McBeal was a character that definitely embraced the short skirt trend. Mary Richards, comparatively, wore short skirts but with thick tights and comfortable shoes, while Ally has bare legs and shoes that constantly make her fall. Ally rarely wears a pantsuit, despite the fact real trial lawyers could not function in short skirts with their leaning over tables and being on display of juries.⁴⁴⁸ When Renee (Lisa Nicole Carson) tells Ally men at the courthouse talk about her short skirts, she seems flattered by it.⁴⁴⁹ Later, when a judge commands Ally not to appear in his courtroom wearing a short skirt again, she refuses to listen and is thrown in jail for contempt. Her fellow associate defends her in court by arguing that women are told by the media to be sexy but then presumed they are not smart or good at their jobs if they are and this compels the judge to change his rule.⁴⁵⁰ According to one reporter, both *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City* helped influence skimpier clothing and the idea one could have a career and dress like a "sex kitten" in professional settings.⁴⁵¹

During *Ally McBeal*'s height of popularity, the heavily publicized sex scandal involving President Bill Clinton and White House intern Monica Lewinsky dominated the news. The often-

⁴⁴⁵ David E. Kelley, "I Know Him By Heart," *Ally McBeal*, season 2, episode 23, aired May 24, 1999.

⁴⁴⁶ Rosalind Gill, *Gender and the Media* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007), 241.

⁴⁴⁷ Jenny Lyn Bader, "All That's Bare Is Fit to Wear, So Why the Stares?" *New York Times*, July 2, 2000.

⁴⁴⁸ Jennifer Steinhaver, "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying On a Suit," *New York Times*, September 28, 1997.

⁴⁴⁹ David E. Kelley, "They Eat Horses, Don't They?" *Ally McBeal*, season 2, episode 2, aired September 21, 1998.

⁴⁵⁰ David E. Kelley, "It's My Party," *Ally McBeal*, season 2, episode 4, aired October 19, 1998.

⁴⁵¹ Leslie Kaufman, "More of Less: Scantier Clothing Catches On," *New York Times*, June 27, 2000.

sexist character Richard (Greg Germann) would frequently reference President Clinton's sex life. Comparisons were made between Lewinsky and Ally, both being described as ambitious, sexual, insecure and always wearing short skirts. One described the affair as taking the White House "from Camelot to 'Ally McBeal'."⁴⁵² In some instances, Clinton's sexual exploits made women more publically vocal in their wish for powerful men to find them desirable.⁴⁵³ This focus on sexuality is often brought up on *Ally McBeal* as the law firm represents numerous cases of sexual harassment and issues of consent, human nature and control. Furthermore, the press that attacked both Ally McBeal and Monica Lewinsky revealed that women's sexuality was still a topic deserving of ridicule and shame when discussed publically.

The character of Ally McBeal did not set out to be a lawyer but followed her boyfriend to Harvard Law School and describes herself as a victim of her choices after he transfers to another state and ends up marrying someone else. She is sexually harassed at her law firm by a senior staff member and this leads her to take a job at the firm her ex-boyfriend practices law. Ally reflects on her life and says, "The real truth is I probably don't want to be too happy or content 'cause then what? I actually like the quest. The search, that's the fun. The more lost you are the more you have to look forward to."⁴⁵⁴

Despite the positive aspects to Ally's life, she rarely seems content. Ally tells her ex-boyfriend Billy (Gil Bellows) that she had wanted to be rich, successful and have three children and a husband, but she currently does not even like her hair.⁴⁵⁵ Billy later reveals to Ally that she will always be unhappy with life so felt his love was wasted on her and that is why he left.⁴⁵⁶

When asked for love advice, Ally describes herself as the last person who should be giving it.

⁴⁵² Maureen Dowd, "Betty Made Him Do It: From Monroe to McBeal," *New York Times*, March 8, 1998.

⁴⁵³ Maureen Dowd, "In All His Feathered Glory," *New York Times*, July 8, 1998.

⁴⁵⁴ David E. Kelley, "Pilot," *Ally McBeal*, season 1, episode 1, aired September 8, 1997.

⁴⁵⁵ David E. Kelley, "The Kiss," *Ally McBeal*, season 1, episode 3, aired September 22, 1997.

⁴⁵⁶ David E. Kelley, "Sideshow," *Ally McBeal*, season 2, episode 15, aired February 22, 1999.

"Look at me. I am a strong, working career girl who feels empty without a man. The National Organization for Women they have a contract out on my head."⁴⁵⁷ She holds on to the idea that her true love is out there, a hopeless romantic.⁴⁵⁸ John later tells Ally that she is probably less afraid of being alone than most, even if it does not seem that way.⁴⁵⁹ Ally later recalls that she has usually been the loneliest when someone was sitting beside her.⁴⁶⁰

Though Ally is often compared most to Mary Richards, both positively and negatively, *Ally McBeal* channels *That Girl* in a few different episodes. On one date, Ally gets her fingers stuck in a bowling ball and it remains there until the next day.⁴⁶¹ A similar incident happens in season 1 of *That Girl* when Ann gets her toe stuck in a bowling ball. In another episode, Ally, while walking down the street, stops at a bridal store window display and waves and winks at the mannequin, just like the opening credits of *That Girl*.⁴⁶² When John begins to date Ally's former classmate, who labels herself extremely virtuous and chaste, she brings her mother along to chaperone, who is played by Marlo Thomas.⁴⁶³ This was no doubt a nod to Thomas' virtuous Ann Marie and raises the point of how much of a misfit a similar woman would appear in a more contemporary setting.

One aspect that made *Ally McBeal* unique among other television programs is that almost all of its episodes were written entirely by its creator, David E. Kelley. While some episodes were written jointly, fewer than 11 percent of all 112 episodes had female writers credited. *Sex and the City*, alternatively, had the highest number of female writers used of the five programs explored here in length. Of its 94 episodes, 46 were written by females, 43 by males and 5 by

⁴⁵⁷ David E. Kelley, "The Promise," *Ally McBeal*, season 1, episode 6, aired October 27, 1997.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ David E. Kelley, "Love's Illusions," *Ally McBeal*, season 2, episode 22, aired May 17, 1999.

⁴⁶⁰ David E. Kelley, "Sex, Lies & Second Thoughts," *Ally McBeal*, season 4, episode 1, aired October 23, 2000.

⁴⁶¹ David E. Kelley, "You Never Can Tell," *Ally McBeal*, season 2, episode 9, aired November 23, 1998.

⁴⁶² David E. Kelley, "Hope and Glory," *Ally McBeal*, season 3, episode 20, aired May 15, 2000.

⁴⁶³ David E. Kelley, "'Tis The Season," *Ally McBeal*, season 4, episode 6, aired November 27, 2000.

both sexes. Executive producer Michael Patrick King has noted that he was surrounded by single female writers when working on the show, and their lives were used to bring truth to the episodes.⁴⁶⁴ While both *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City* received media attention during their airing, the latter has had a longer impact culturally.

Sex and the City was based on a book of the same name by Candace Bushnell, who also wrote a New York City newspaper column about her life. This enabled a real woman's experiences to be the inspiration of the series. Like *Ally McBeal*, *Sex and the City* used voiceovers, allowing viewers to hear the thought process of the lead character, Carrie Bradshaw (Sarah Jessica Parker). Voiceovers are utilized on *SATC*, as Carrie writes a newspaper column and must analyze her and her friend's lives for greater depth and context. Female viewers of the show connected to the struggles faced by the program's characters, as they tried to balance careers, friendships and family, according to Professor L.S. Kim of the University of California at Santa Cruz.⁴⁶⁵ This often-present confusion on whether they can have it all is brought up in one of Carrie's columns when she asks, "Since birth modern women have been told that we can do and be anything we want... There aren't any rules anymore and the choices are endless... But is it possible that we have been so spoiled by choices that we have become unable to make one... Are we a generation of women who can't choose just one from column A, did we all have too much to handle, or was Samantha right, can we have it all?"⁴⁶⁶ A couple years later, Carrie is given advice on the subject from a mentor, portrayed by *Murphy Brown*'s Candice Bergen. Her

⁴⁶⁴ "HBO Farewell Tributes," *Sex and the City*, Season 6: Part 2 Bonus Features (HBO Video, 2004), DVD.

⁴⁶⁵ Dinitia Smith, "Real-Life Questions In an Upscale Fantasy," *New York Times*, February 1, 2004.

⁴⁶⁶ Jenny Bicks, "All or Nothing," *Sex and the City*, season 3, episode 10, aired August 13, 2000.

character, Enid, discloses that the key to having it all is to no longer expect it to look like what you thought it would.⁴⁶⁷

Sex and the City featured glamorous and sexually liberated characters that made being single chic and frank sex talk the norm. As character Samantha (Kim Cattrall) states in the first episode, women in Manhattan can now have as much power and money as men and this allows them to live and have sex like them, which challenged gender role expectations.⁴⁶⁸ Some critics have denounced the program's obsession over finding men, with even the character Miranda (Cynthia Nixon) lashing out at her friends for talking too much about men and relationships.⁴⁶⁹ Nevertheless, many viewers responded in admiration of the topics discussed and of its portrayal of women speaking about men the way men were seen discussing women in the past.⁴⁷⁰ Sexual aggressiveness in men is often seen as normal, yet for women they are labelled a "slut" or "nymphomaniac."⁴⁷¹ The active sex lives on *SATC* worked to change this attitude. As seen in the growing third-wave feminism in the 1990s, some women were embracing a sex positive attitude. Character Samantha was always honest about her sexuality, not letting society or her friends affect her sexual relationships with men or women. Despite its progressiveness, the program was criticised for focusing on materialistic aspects of the character's lives like shopping and cocktails. Careers seemed more like backdrops than the focus of their energies, which created a lack of cause and substance to some.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁷ Cindy Chupack, "Plus One is the Loneliest Number," *Sex and the City*, season 5, episode 5, aired August 18, 2002.

⁴⁶⁸ Star, "Sex and the City."

⁴⁶⁹ Michael Patrick King, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," *Sex and the City*, season 2, episode 1, aired June 6, 1999.

⁴⁷⁰ Nancy Hass, "'Sex' Sells, in the City and Elsewhere," *New York Times*, July 11, 1999.

⁴⁷¹ Gloria Steinem, "Erotica vs. Pornography," in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (New York: A Plume Book, 1984), 220.

⁴⁷² Catherine Orenstein, "What Carrie Could Learn From Mary," *New York Times*, September 5, 2003.

Throughout the airing of *Sex and the City*, debates were triggered on its realism, or - to some detractors - a lack thereof. Political commentator Ann Coulter did not think it showcased how women talked to each other, not even how women would let men talk if around.⁴⁷³ Others believed the characters acted like stereotypical gay men, as women would not be that guilt-free about their sexuality.⁴⁷⁴ Conversely, *New Yorker* writer Ariel Levy did see similarities to real self-involved New York women.⁴⁷⁵ Levy also saw women of this era less worried about objectification, using themselves and other women as sex objects, as some viewed this as equal rights.⁴⁷⁶ Erica Jong, whose book *Fear of Flying* in 1973 dealt with female sex, enjoyed that there was a new generation of women that had comfort in sexuality with less guilt. Though she did feel that the sexual freedom shown by Carrie Bradshaw also pointed to how the sexual liberation failed because women like her are not going to gain positions of power in politics.⁴⁷⁷ Real women's sex lives were not usually like the characters on *SATC*, some going long periods without relationships and others partaking in casual flings.⁴⁷⁸ While the characters of *Sex and the City* have active sex lives, they are also shown occasionally going longer periods without dating.⁴⁷⁹ Marlo Thomas commented on sex-focused programs like *SATC* and *Ally McBeal* saying, "In our day, Donald always went home. Boys and girls then were certainly enjoying sex, but the comedy of the time was not honest about it. 'Sex and the City' is just phenomenal in its

⁴⁷³ Ariel Levy, *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 171.

⁴⁷⁴ Alan James Frutkin, "The Return of the Show That Gets Gay Life Right," *New York Times*, January 6, 2002.

⁴⁷⁵ Levy, *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, 171.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁴⁷⁸ Edwards, "Flying Solo," 51.

⁴⁷⁹ Michael Green, and Michael Patrick King, "The Drought," *Sex and the City*, season 1, episode 11, aired August 16, 1998; Michael Patrick King, "The Big Journey," *Sex and the City*, season 5, episode 7, aired September 1, 2002.

honesty. And 'Ally McBeal' is important. In my show, everybody loved the girl ... But seeing a girl get rejected is healthy for a young audience."⁴⁸⁰

It was in these programs of the late 1990s that viewers could finally see aspects of a single woman's life that were discussed in advice books like *Sex and the Single Girl* decades before. While *That Girl* was not able to present possibly shocking behaviour like premarital sex, visiting a psychiatrist, having plastic surgery, discussing abortions or having an affair with a married man, *Sex and the City* was able to confront all these topics, finally portraying a more complete image of the single girl on television.

Like some single women on television, real women were not waiting around for Prince Charming to make big life decisions. In 2000, the women aged 20 to 24 who had never married rose to 69 percent from 50 percent two decades before and was 22 percent for those aged 30 to 34.⁴⁸¹ Women wanted to finish school, start a career and save money before marriage or children. They also saw it more easily accessible to adopt children on their own or to conceive through sperm banks.⁴⁸² Of the approximately 30 million American women that lived alone, around 57 percent owned their own place. Home manufacturing and home improvement stores began catering to these female customers.⁴⁸³ Buying property was not the only activity they were doing alone either. There was a 15 percent birthrate increase, during the 1990s, of single women in their thirties.⁴⁸⁴ Additionally, the number of children born to single women jumped from one in twenty in 1960 to one in three by the end of the century.⁴⁸⁵ *Sex and the City* addressed these

⁴⁸⁰ Stacey D'Erasmus, "Single File: Why do the sexy, savvy new heroines want nothing so much as rings on their fingers?" *New York Times*, August 29, 1999.

⁴⁸¹ Gail Collins, *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women From 1960 to the Present* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009. Kindle edition), 366.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Julie V. Iovine, "Castle First, Prince Later: Marketing to Ms," *New York Times*, October 21, 1999.

⁴⁸⁴ Edwards, "Flying Solo," 49.

⁴⁸⁵ Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, 264.

issues through the character of Miranda. In the second season of the series, she buys her own apartment in New York. The real estate agent and mortgage brokers question whether she has a boyfriend moving in with her or a father giving her the money for the down payment but she must reply over and over that it is "just me."⁴⁸⁶ Later in the series, Miranda is the character who, after having sex with an old boyfriend, finds herself pregnant and decides to have and raise the child on her own, claiming she is in her thirties and may not get another chance.⁴⁸⁷

Since the women's liberation movement, women had gained possibilities for their lives and some did not want to lose certain freedoms to be married.⁴⁸⁸ Women wanted relationships that challenged them, were fulfilling and not solely about gaining wealth, affection or protection.⁴⁸⁹ This could be seen in the trepidation Carrie has about marriage when she gets engaged to Aiden who wants to wed quickly and settle down and how Samantha has trouble allowing her boyfriend Smith to become a serious part of her life when she prefers relationships without commitment. Not everyone displayed an understanding of these views, however. Carrie writes that no matter how progressive society claims to be, there are still expectations to marry, have children and have your own home. Due to her negative reactions to these achievements, she is left wondering whether there is something wrong with her.⁴⁹⁰ Miranda notes that married women look at her single status with either fear or pity and a married friend of Carrie's says those who stay single too long are in a state of stunted adolescence.⁴⁹¹ When Carrie is photographed for a magazine cover titled "Single and Fabulous?" with a story questioning how fun single life will still be as one ages, she is upset that the piece concentrates on the negative

⁴⁸⁶ Jenny Bicks, "Four Women and a Funeral," *Sex and the City*, season 2, episode 5, aired July 4, 1999.

⁴⁸⁷ Jenny Bicks, "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda," *Sex and the City*, season 4, episode 11, aired August 5, 2001.

⁴⁸⁸ Edwards, "Flying Solo," 50.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁹⁰ Julie Rottenberg, and Elisa Zuritsky, "Change of a Dress," *Sex and the City*, season 4, episode 15, aired January 20, 2002.

⁴⁹¹ Michael Patrick King, "Bay of Married Pigs," *Sex and the City*, season 1, episode 3, aired June 21, 1998.

aspects of being single instead of the fabulous. According to Miranda, it is a cautionary tale to scare young women into marriage.⁴⁹² Even the character Charlotte (Kristin Davis) advises Carrie to take more risks in dating to ensure she does not wind up an old maid.⁴⁹³ One 2006 study found that single people were still stigmatized in society. This can be seen, for example, with the word unmarried that labels them for what they are not.⁴⁹⁴

The late 1990s was for others, a period in which women aspired to a fantasy marriage instead of desiring to stay single. Katie Roiphe wrote about how she dreamt of an old-fashioned man to take care of her, despite being successful and able to care for herself. She saw it as a fantasy other women were currently coveting, even if they felt they could not say it. This, in part, stemmed from the difficult relationships had with men who were not as successful as the women.⁴⁹⁵ Actress Sarah Jessica Parker noted that she did not really believe that singles had better lives than those who were married in real life, like herself, but hints at it "to make single people feel better" and enjoyed her more traditional family structure that was a clear contrast to her character Carrie.⁴⁹⁶ The publishing of *The Rules: Time-Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right* in 1995, and its quick success, also showcased the need some women felt for a husband. The advice book listed ways women could gain committed relationships, many of them painfully dated to a time prior to the sexual revolution that allowed men to be the aggressor. These viewpoints could be seen in Charlotte's hunt for a husband and Ally McBeal's desire for a nuclear family. The urban single woman who focused her attention on finding love

⁴⁹² Michael Patrick King, "They Shoot Single People, Don't They?" *Sex and the City*, season 2, episode 4, aired June 27, 1999.

⁴⁹³ Julie Rottenberg, and Elisa Zuritsky, "Luck Be an Old Lady," *Sex and the City*, season 5, episode 3, aired August 4, 2002.

⁴⁹⁴ Bella DePaulo, *Singled Out: How Singles Are Stereotyped, Stigmatized, and Ignored, and Still Live Happily Ever After* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 3.

⁴⁹⁵ Katie Roiphe, "The Independent Woman (and other lies)," *Esquire*, February 1997.

⁴⁹⁶ Edwards, "Flying Solo," 52.

and marriage gained popularity in not only television but film and literature. Often these women who appeared liberated were unhappy, due to the lack of marriage prospects, showing, for some at least, that feminism was dead.⁴⁹⁷

Sex and the City's producer and lead actress, Sarah Jessica Parker, noted that half of viewers begged her for Carrie to marry her ex-boyfriend, Big (Chris Noth), at the end of the series. Others wanted the contentment of having friends as one's surrogate family to be the fulfillment, not a man. All of the writers working on the program's final season were unmarried and, therefore, did not see marriage as the only happy ending for Carrie. They wanted to end on a hopeful note, yet not tie everything up perfectly.⁴⁹⁸ In the end, Carrie and Big take a more significant step in their relationship without marriage, deepening their commitment to each other. The finale earned 10.6 million viewers with the previous highest rated episode netting 7.7 million. This was a huge rating for the cable channel Home Box Office (HBO), which reached approximately 30 percent of homes in 2004, unlike broadcast network channels that reach almost all households.⁴⁹⁹

As an HBO program, *Sex and the City* could be customized towards its desired market segment, which were white females of affluence.⁵⁰⁰ Yet, the show appealed to a number of demographics including teenage girls, with whom it made a cultural impact. Numerous parents of teen viewers were upset, however, with what they saw as unrealistic portrayals of adulthood. Nonetheless, *Sex and the City* was rewarded by the Media Project for its accurate and honest handling of abortion.⁵⁰¹ The always controversial issue came to the fore when Miranda

⁴⁹⁷ D'Erasmus, "Single File."

⁴⁹⁸ Emily Nussbaum, "Carrie Bradshaw's Final Reckoning," *New York Times*, January 4, 2004.

⁴⁹⁹ Bill Carter, "Record Ratings for Final Fling With 'Sex'," *New York Times*, February 25, 2004.

⁵⁰⁰ Jane Arthurs, "Sex and the City and Consumer Culture: Remediating Postfeminism Drama," *Feminist Media Studies* 1, no. 1 (2003): 84.

⁵⁰¹ Sarah Hepola, "Her Favorite Class: 'Sex' Education," *New York Times*, June 22, 2003.

announces her unexpected pregnancy and considers an abortion, which leaves Carrie to remember the abortion she had a decade earlier and imagine her life had she not had the procedure.⁵⁰² Producer Michael Patrick King noted that there was still a lot of shame in the world regarding sex and he hoped the show would add lightness and laughter to the topic.⁵⁰³ The show's popularity by both sexes led other networks anxious to find the next similar hit, casting more female leads to appeal to viewers.⁵⁰⁴

The program also was highly influential on elevating New York City's status, using real locations for numerous scenes. Michael Patrick King referred to the city as the fifth character of the show. Many of the restaurants and bars used for filming gained popularity after being shown. High-end shoe designer Manolo Blahnik, loved by Carrie, even became a house-hold name.⁵⁰⁵ The HBO website featured information on the designer fashion worn and locations in the city where scenes were filmed.⁵⁰⁶ Through the show people across the nation and world even fell in love with New York and were inspired to move there.⁵⁰⁷ Visitors to the city could even hop on a *Sex and the City* motor coach tour, which ran daily even a decade after the program ended, and see famous locations used in the series. Unlike numerous shows filmed on a sound stage in California, the program and episodes were very New York detailed. It became accepted in non-major cities, despite worries that New York would be off-putting to non-locals. Instead, New York grew into a welcoming travel location and the sex shown became less taboo.⁵⁰⁸ Some New York locals did complain about the overwhelming amounts of *Sex and the City*-type women with

⁵⁰² Bicks, "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda."

⁵⁰³ Hepola, "Her Favorite Class."

⁵⁰⁴ deVries, "In Comedies, Signs of a New Women's Movement."

⁵⁰⁵ James Barron, "Even Sex Must End, But City Goes On," *New York Times*, February 5, 2004.

⁵⁰⁶ Julia Chaplin, "I'm Stylish, I'm Single and I'm Not Carrie Bradshaw," *New York Times*, August 26, 2001.

⁵⁰⁷ Patrick Healy, "Fans Toast 'Sex and City' As Cable Hit Ends Its Run," *New York Times*, February 23, 2004.

⁵⁰⁸ Hass, "'Sex' Sells, in the City."

similar style, fashion and behaviour of the characters seeming to multiple in their city.⁵⁰⁹ While the program was based on columnist Candace Bushnell and those she met, some women who lived similar lives in New York before the show felt like they had been reduced to stereotypes and were judged for trying to be like the *SATC* characters.⁵¹⁰

Like Carrie Bradshaw, Julia Allison moved to New York City in 2004, inspired by *Sex and the City*, and lived a similar life of bar hopping, high heels, dating and writing about her single experiences. However, it became increasingly difficult to have the same lifestyle as before. Rent in Manhattan had soared in the early 2000s, with Brooklyn being a slightly more realistic option for the young. Technology also played a role in changing the lifestyles of new singles. Those like Allison, writing publically about relationships, found dates could quickly read their work before meeting and when break-ups occurred they could retaliate online with vicious comment posts.⁵¹¹ With the changes in the economy and technology, single life would not remain indistinguishable in the twenty-first century.

⁵⁰⁹ Chaplin, "I'm Stylish, I'm Single."

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Leslie Kaufman, "Channeling Carrie," *New York Times*, March 30, 2008.

Conclusion

As the 1960s began, the single female was viewed as "sick" and "neurotic," likely on her way to becoming a spinster. Within a few years, new opinions were voiced on what being single meant. Betty Friedan spoke out about the unhappiness that came from being a housewife and encouraged women to obtain careers. Helen Gurley Brown told women to have confidence in their single status, preaching the message of its adventure, independence and self-fulfillment, while being able to climb the career ladder.

These social changes soon found their way into the important medium of television. Producer and actress Marlo Thomas played a vital part in the creation of one of the first independent single women on television. Like Thomas' experiences, Ann Marie faced challenges having family accept her decision to live on her own. Even *That Girl's* network struggled with Ann not living with family. Thomas, however, fought for Ann's freedom and ability to end the series not with a wedding but a women's liberation meeting. Viewers responded to the series with fan letters of support and gratitude, while critics were usually concerned with Thomas also being unmarried in real life.

As the swinging single lifestyle became popular in the late 1960s, more single women were portrayed in the media. *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, which ran from 1970 to 1977, dealt with a woman in her thirties, who rarely had a steady boyfriend but found success and happiness in her strong female friendships, a career she worked hard at and a family of friends at her workplace. Many viewers felt connected to Mary Richards and saw ways to build a similar life without a spouse. A higher number of female writers on the series than typical at the time helped to create added depth to the characters during the first few seasons and not the "spinster" or "bloodthirsty, man-eating" singles critics thought early on they would be. While larger women's

issues and sexuality were handled in a subtle way, the writing staff became aware of the emerging women's liberation movement and included aspects like equal pay into episodes.

During the 1980s, a growing number of American women were trying to balance having it all: husband, children and a successful career. However, in 1988, the fictional character Murphy Brown sacrificed a personal life to become one of the most respected journalists on television. Murphy was charged by the real media in America and characters on the show as unsuited for motherhood due to her brash attitude. When the character decided to have a baby, without the child's father playing a role, Vice President Quayle spoke out about the poor message it sent to America, with single motherhood being a cause for social problems, in his opinion. The creator and writer of *Murphy Brown*, Diane English, may have distressed some Republicans but millions of viewers were drawn to the program and saw that a single woman could support herself and child, be in control of her recovering alcoholism, battle cancer, say what she wanted without being sweet and still be renowned in her career.

After ten years on the air, *Murphy Brown* ended and two new television shows following single women dominated the media's attention. *Ally McBeal* instantly became a phenomenon, being enjoyed by viewers but attacked by the press. The fact Ally's life was a self-proclaimed mess, obsessed with romance and affection for micro miniskirts, had *Time* declare she was killing feminism. A fictional television character was able to capture the frustrations of the media with the new generation of women who did not have to fight to gain equality in education or careers, and instead placed value in their love lives and questioned if having it all in life would make them happy. The program also dealt with a number of gender issues through the representation of sexual harassment cases at Ally's law firm.

Topics on love and sex could also be found in *Sex and the City*, which gained such popularity it inspired feature films based on the series. While the four lead single women all had powerful careers, their professions were often not a part of episode plots. Instead, the series focused on women's personal lives. It dealt with current issues like buying an apartment alone, abortion, miscarriage, breast cancer, aging, being a single mother, casual sex, money and the power of female friendships. The truth and emotion that was brought to these topics was, in part, due to the numerous female writers who worked on the program. While *Sex and the City* was less criticized by the media than previous series, the writing displayed fictionally the complications single women in New York were still facing in living alone.

Many of the single women over the preceding decades on television had been soft-spoken and not fully capable of having it all (husband, children and career), which was possibly less threatening to mass audiences. But the women of the 1990s brought changes to this image. In addition to strong-willed characters like Murphy Brown and *Sex and the City's* Samantha, who vocally expressed their opinions for all to hear, women were also reclaiming their physical strength. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Xena: Warrior Princess* were placed in fantasy settings, yet they were important for their portrayals of powerful women who were able to literally save the world. Susan Douglas noted that the 1990s rise in the topic of violence towards women may have led to the development of these powerful characters.⁵¹² Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) on *The X-Files* was an FBI agent and forensic pathologist, also unmarried, and able to excel at her job because of her intellect not her appearance or positive attitude.

Despite the progress in making the single woman a staple of television, equality has remained elusive. The Writers Guild of America in 2015 noted that women made up 29 percent

⁵¹² Susan J. Douglas, *Enlightened Sexism: The Seductive Message that Feminism's Work is Done* (New York: Times Books, 2010), 79.

of the television writers, while 11 percent of programs had no female writers on staff at all.⁵¹³ USC Annenberg and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media completed a joint study between 2006 and 2011 on female characters in the media. They found that females were continuing to be stereotyped and sexualized as well as being treated unequally. On primetime television, it was discovered that only 44.3 percent of women characters were employed, opposed to 54.5 percent of men.⁵¹⁴ In 2015, the American Civil Liberties Union requested that federal and state agencies assess Hollywood's hiring practices for women. Female directors were not used on one-third of television programs, with women often being told they cannot work on certain series because the programs are not women-friendly.⁵¹⁵

The single female character seen in the programs discussed is not the only aspect of womanhood facing inequality. *That Girl*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Murphy Brown*, *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the City* all featured women who were white and heterosexual in their lead roles, and minority women in very few supporting roles. While television series including African American women became increasingly accepted after the debut of *Julia* in 1968, they were often married or widowed and a mother. *Get Christine Love!* in the mid 1970s, although cancelled after one season, broke new ground showing its title character as an undercover detective that could arrest criminals with style. In 1993, FOX's *Living Single* debuted featuring four African American single women living together in New York City. While not as successful as similarly themed programs focusing on white characters, it still garnered attention over the five seasons it aired. Other minorities in television have had even less representation in

⁵¹³ Darnell M. Hunt, "WGAW 2015 TV Staffing Brief," *Writers Guild of America, West*, http://www.wga.org/uploadedFiles/who_we_are/tvstaffingbrief2015.pdf (accessed July 13, 2015).

⁵¹⁴ Nina Bahadur, "Women In The Media: Female TV and Film Characters Still Sidelined and Sexualized, Study Finds," *The Huffington Post*, November 13, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/13/women-in-the-media-female_n_2121979.html (accessed June 8, 2015).

⁵¹⁵ Cara Buckley, "A.C.L.U., Citing Bias Against Women, Wants Inquiry Into Hollywood's Hiring Practices," *New York Times*, May 12, 2015.

programming over the decades. *Ugly Betty* (2006-2010) was one of the first successful American network series to showcase a predominantly Latino cast, including the title character Betty who is a young single woman navigating a career in Manhattan while living with her family in Queens. Women who were homosexual also received very little attention on television. The sitcom *Ellen* (1994-1998) was centered on a single woman and her group of friends. During the series, the lead actress, comedian Ellen DeGeneres, revealed to the media she was gay and it was written into the series that her character was as well. The 2004 debut of *The L Word*, on the cable network Showtime, was able to run more detailed and graphic content than *Ellen*. The series followed an ensemble of lesbian and bisexual friends living in Los Angeles, most of who were single and struggling with aspects of their love lives.

The Women's Media Center's recent report leaves little question as to why minorities are not frequently utilized as television characters.⁵¹⁶ Research has found that in the 2012-2013 television season, 89.3 percent of cable shows were created by people who are white,⁵¹⁷ and 77.4 percent of those programs were created by men.⁵¹⁸ In terms of writing, only 2 percent of television writers in 2013 were Latino, which could explain why out of the female characters, 74 percent were white.⁵¹⁹ It can be no coincidence then that the lack of equality behind the scenes results in a dominance of male and white characters onscreen.

Over the last few years the variety of single female characters on television has risen. Female created sitcoms like Elizabeth Meriwether's *New Girl*, Mindy Kaling's *The Mindy Project*, Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson's *Broad City*, Whitney Cummings and Michael Patrick

⁵¹⁶ The Women's Media Center was created in 2005 by active second wave feminists Robin Morgan, Gloria Steinem and Jane Fonda to promote an increase in women's voices in all aspects of the media, which in many areas is far below equal to men's.

⁵¹⁷ Katti Gray, ed., "The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2015," *Women's Media Center*, http://wmc.3cdn.net/83bf6082a319460eb1_hsr680x2.pdf (accessed July 14, 2015), 32.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39-43.

King's *2 Broke Girls* and Tina Fey's *30 Rock* and *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* showcase a selection of characters that are different ages and have diverse lives.⁵²⁰ Male created comedies, like *Ugly Betty* and *Parks and Recreation*, also featured bold women who worked with integrity to achieve their goals and improve the lives of those around them. Dramas like Shonda Rhimes' created *Grey's Anatomy* and *Scandal* along with Jenji Kohan's *Orange is the New Black* have brought to television a new complexity of women with extreme success. They feature women of varying age, race, sexual orientation and marital status, though do primarily center on unmarried women who take charge of their own identity and life choices. Through the use of flashbacks and narration they also provide a look into the inner thoughts and feelings of women at a level rarely seen before.

The Lena Dunham-created program *Girls* (2012-present) on HBO also has received a lot of attention by the media and its viewers. Like *Sex and the City*, the series focuses on the lives of four single women living in New York City. However, unlike many of the single female programs since the 1970s, *Girls* follows the lives of younger adult women who are in their early twenties and do not yet have careers. In this way, the series is closer to *That Girl* in its ability to present women who have jobs that are temporary, parents who are still active in their lives and the endeavour of how to bridge the gap between their younger selves and adulthood. Marlo Thomas has responded positively to the program, believing it has done a better job than *Sex and the City* at relating to women, through the messiness of life. While to her they may not feature a central role model figure like *That Girl*, the program does allow viewers to feel better about their

⁵²⁰ While Tina Fey created both *30 Rock* and *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, the latter was also created by her fellow *Saturday Night Live* and *30 Rock* writer Robert Carlock.

own lives that seem less disastrous in comparison.⁵²¹ Conflictingly, *That Girl* creator Bill Persky perceives the characters on *Girls* as indulging in their low self-worth and unhealthy behaviours instead of improving themselves, which sets a poor example for young viewers.⁵²² Persky's belief that women on television should serve as role models can help explain why *That Girl's* Ann Marie was often so sweet and positive and unrealistic to adult women as we saw with *TV Guide's* Diane Rosen and her review.

Evidently, the single woman has not been easily accepted on television or within America for her choices. Some have reacted with suspicion and confusion as to why she is not married, with several critics and viewers classifying it a prolonged adolescence. A single woman is, at times, condemned for her sex life and children out of wedlock. Others worry she does not fit an ideal image of what a woman should be. When shown on television, the fictional single women did not always display a realistic vision of life, with expensive wardrobes, long-term relationships without sex and lengthy conversations with friends and co-workers instead of actually working. But programs did also address numerous contemporary issues that were experienced by women. This allowed millions of viewers to learn about single women or relate to the topics that were also encountered in their own lives. As Gloria Steinem has said, "When you are living a certain kind of life but you never see it reflected in the mass media, you feel that perhaps you are alone or crazy."⁵²³ Television and its single women have displayed examples of ways to live and caused many women to feel less alone and crazy in the process.

⁵²¹ Emily Shire, "Marlo Thomas Says Girls Should Feel Free to Be Like Hannah Horvath," *The Daily Beast*, April 24, 2014, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/04/24/marlo-thomas-says-girls-should-feel-free-to-be-like-hannah-horvath.html> (accessed June 10, 2015).

⁵²² Bill Persky, "The Problem with Lena Dunham's *Girls*," *Time*, February 8, 2013, <http://ideas.time.com/2013/02/08/viewpoint-the-problem-with-lena-dunhams-girls/> (accessed July 25, 2015).

⁵²³ Stephen Cole, *That Book About That Girl: The Unofficial Companion* (Los Angeles, CA: Renaissance Books, 1999), 88.

As the image of single women in television has evolved, viewers at home have been presented a number of paths their own futures could lead to. It is difficult to dream about achieving what one does not know and, therefore, it is important to comprehend how people can be inspired to live more confidently in their choices. By viewing fictional characters, audience members could desire more than what they saw around them and spend their life trying to achieve it and not settling until they did. While the lives of single women have evolved over the decades from the wonderment in *That Girl* to despair and cynicism in *Ally McBeal*, a sense of hope for love and success was often present. Single women in the real world, likewise, need to maintain hope for their own futures. They are not alone in their life choices, despite the judgment they receive from media critics. They do not puzzle everyone with their choice to stay single, they are not bloodthirsty spinsters, they are not creating social catastrophe for being mothers out of wedlock and they will not kill feminism for desiring romance. Like Mary Tyler Moore, they're "gonna make it after all" and can seek comfort in television's single female icons that it can be so.

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