



Women and the Myth of Having It All

Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:37736803>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

Women and the Myth of Having It All

Caitlin Feeney

A Thesis in the Field of History
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

November 2017

© 2017 Caitlin Rae Feeney

Abstract

This thesis traces the formation and development of the idea of “having it all” from the mid-twentieth century to the present. Drawing on film, television, and magazines, I argue that mass media alternately challenged and reinforced the perceived contradiction between women’s roles as mothers and as workers. At times, the feminist call for equality prevailed and onscreen heroines were portrayed as independent and vocal. At other times, when conservative views grew louder, characters renounced their careers for domesticity. Although both progressive and traditional ideals endured throughout this sixty-year period, the relative influence of each waxed and waned. Based upon the teachings of sociologists during the 1950s, the happy housewife and the more fully realized version of her – the Supermother – remained the motherhood ideal for American women throughout that decade and well into the next. After a decade of increased maternal employment, the Supermother became the Superwoman, who fulfilled all of the requirements of her predecessor, plus a career. As the women’s movement grew, articles and films portrayed women in a more independent light. This push forward for women’s rights led to a pushback, however, and by the 1980s articles warned women of the costs of liberation and encouraged their reappointment to the home; this trend continued into the 1990s. The Great Recession of the late 2000s ushered women back into the workforce and dual-career households increased; women had to do it all, including all of the housework, childcare, and paid work. The examination of cultural ideals and mass media that shaped women’s roles and expectations from the 1950s to

present day helps explain what “having it all” meant for American women and why many women today are expected to fulfill the roles of both breadwinner and caregiver.

To my mother, who always told me: “No one can take away your education.”

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Dedication..... | v |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Chapter by Chapter..... | 2 |
| Chapter I: Dawn of the Supermother: Stay-at-Home Mothers of the 1950s and 1960s... | 6 |
| Experts Built the Super Mother..... | 12 |
| The Suburban Home as Haven..... | 17 |
| Self-Help Yourself to Happiness..... | 18 |
| America Loves Lucy..... | 20 |
| The Backwards Bulletin..... | 28 |
| Chapter II: Rise of the Superwoman: Working Mothers of the 1970s and 1980s..... | 48 |
| Supermother I and II..... | 64 |
| Women Wanted “Moore” Than Motherhood..... | 66 |
| Working Nine to Five..... | 74 |
| Movies, Motherhood, Marriage... and Divorce..... | 76 |
| The Backlash Begins..... | 84 |
| Rise of the Right..... | 90 |
| Chapter III: Super-rich but Unlucky in Love: The Cost of Success in the 1990s and 2000s..... | 106 |
| The Great Escape..... | 121 |
| The Meaning of “Ms.”..... | 129 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Height of Neoliberalism..... | 134 |
| The Close of the Twentieth Century – Libert ,  galit , Anxi t ..... | 138 |
| Conclusion: Having It All in the Twenty-First Century..... | 142 |
| The War on Abortion..... | 145 |
| Speculative Fiction..... | 154 |
| The Luckiest Women..... | 156 |
| The Super-rich Can Have It All..... | 159 |
| The Myth of Having It All..... | 162 |
| The Pay Gap..... | 165 |
| The Power Gap..... | 167 |
| The Labor Gap..... | 168 |
| Forward March..... | 172 |
| Appendix A: Methodology: Cultural Studies..... | 175 |
| Appendix B: The Literature Review..... | 182 |
| Maternal Employment..... | 183 |
| Cultural Ideals of Womanhood..... | 195 |
| Motherhood Ideals..... | 198 |
| Superwoman Ideal..... | 201 |
| Heroines in the Mass Media..... | 210 |
| Sex Roles in the Mass Media..... | 213 |
| Conclusion..... | 219 |
| Bibliography..... | 220 |

Introduction

This thesis examines how media portrayals of women shifted as ideals of motherhood within American society changed from the mid-twentieth century to the present. I believe cultural studies to be the best methodology for a thesis that integrates historical, social, political, media, and gender studies. This interdisciplinary field draws on a broad spectrum of research from history, sociology, psychology, and literature. In this case, I culled through published literature and media archives to construct a nuanced picture of the ideals of womanhood in America throughout the last sixty years. A full explanation of the methodology encompassed in cultural studies is attached as Appendix A. A list of the literature reviewed is attached as Appendix B.

I examine why and how women attempt to reinforce, challenge, and balance the seemingly incompatible spheres of public and private life. Both fictional and real women from mass media illustrate these efforts over the past sixty years. Several women who infamously tried to “have it all” – a fulfilling career and a thriving family – are profiled. As it turns out, all of the women profiled are Caucasian. This does not stem from negligence or naïveté. Instead, it reflects a history in which women of color have been excluded from professional and political power. Still, the people, places, and objects historically missing from America’s television screens can teach us a great deal. The lack of racially diverse examples in this thesis reflects past prejudice in mass media, but in no

way intends to perpetuate it. Women of every race have a long way to go to reach pay equity, to possess full reproductive rights, and to eliminate “the second shift.”¹ I hope this thesis offers value to all women, regardless of race.

I will explore what “having it all” meant for American women by studying how media publications, cultural ideals, and economic conditions shaped women’s roles and expectations. With motivations that ranged from encouraging consumerism, to cementing conservatism, to expanding equality, writers and editors challenged or reinforced the perceived contradiction between women’s roles as mothers and as workers. Heroines occasionally challenged the traditional division between public and private spheres, yet media ultimately encouraged a conventional order in which women could not excel in both the private home and public workplace. Media reinforced what American women came to understand in real life: that women cannot have it all.

Chapter by Chapter

This thesis is divided by decade. Chapter 1 examines the 1950s and 1960s. It begins with charting how marriage expectations and the polarization of private home and public workplace set the stage for later decades. Marriage was the lynchpin around which the 1950s woman built her life. The goal was to find a steady breadwinner, to create a

¹ In her 1989 book *The Second Shift*, Arlie Hochschild explains that wives and mothers work a “second shift” of household responsibilities in addition to working a paid job. Hochschild calculated that “women worked roughly fifteen hours longer each week than men. Over a year, they worked an extra month of twenty-four-hour days a year.” Hochschild concludes: “Most women without children spend much more time than men on housework; with children, they devote more time to both housework and child care. Just as there is a wage gap between men and women in the workplace, there is a “leisure gap” between them at home. Most women work one shift at the office or factory and a ‘second shift’ at home.” Arlie Hochschild, *The Second Shift* (New York: Avon Books, 1989), 3-4.

haven-like home, and to maintain a perfect nuclear family. I examine how: (1) popular media of the fifties and sixties reinforced cultural expectations of the happy housewife; and (2) experts like Dr. Benjamin Spock urged unhappy women to turn a critical eye on themselves, not social pressures. Dr. Spock advised women to cater to children and to mold their lives around husbands' needs, desires, and schedules. Continuing with *I Love Lucy*, I review how television reflected the domestic dogma of the Cold War era, which idealized gender distinctions and the wife's supporting role. Next, I inspect how *Ladies' Home Journal* reinforced the division between public and private spheres by teaching female readers their purpose was to guide "the social and cultural life of the family."²

While women of the 1950s rarely bucked expectations, the growing popularity of the *Feminine Mystique* during the 1960s awakened women to the "problem that has no name" and spurred them to question conventional roles.³ As Betty Friedan wrote,

"Each suburban wife struggles with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night – she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question – 'Is this all?'"⁴

For many housewives, the answer was "no." I examine how by the sixties, America's second-class citizens were ready to "stop being ashamed of wanting something more," and to define themselves as more than wives and mothers.⁵

² Dorothy Thompson, "What Is Wrong with American Women?" *Ladies' Home Journal* [hereafter referred to in notes as *LHJ*], August 1953, 74; Ashley Montague, "The Natural Superiority of Women," *LHJ*, July 1952, 61.

³ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵ A housewife from Houston, Texas, wrote a letter to Friedan: "It has been the feeling of being almost alone with my problem that has made it so hard. I thank God for my family, home and the chance to care for them, but my life couldn't stop there. It is an awakening to

In Chapter 2 I examine the 1970s and 1980s, from the crest of the women's movement to the end of Ronald Reagan's presidency. Editorial attitudes changed during this time period after feminists staged a sit-in at the *Ladies' Home Journal* to protest prejudiced advertising. Next, I explain how the fictional heroine Mary Tyler Moore captivated television viewers by presenting a "feminist lifestyle" in an approachably feminine way. Attractive and affable, Mary paved the way for future television portrayals of working women. In the 1970s, movies began to feature spunky heroines too busy cultivating their own voices and independence to act as submissive, supportive wives. In the movie *9 to 5*, three female office employees launch a counterattack on their misogynistic boss. After punishing his horrible behavior, the women restructure the office around family-friendly benefits, including onsite daycare. Finally, I inspect *Kramer vs. Kramer*, which shocked contemporary viewers with its reversal of traditional roles and its novel portrayal of divorce, parenthood, and abandonment. During the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan's conservative cabinet removed women from the White House and threatened women's rights nationwide. The political influence of the conservative New Right was reflected in movies, magazines, and television as heroines of the eighties traded boardrooms for babies.

Chapter 3 looks at the 1990s and 2000s, beginning with a review of a popular television show, *Murphy Brown*. It depicted a woman who excelled professionally but failed personally, which reinforced many traditional attitudes about the role of women, such as the idea women cannot "have it all." *Murphy Brown* indicated women had to choose between professional and personal success. Next I examine how the heroines in

know that I'm not an oddity and can stop being ashamed of wanting something more." Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 23-24.

the cult classic film *Thelma & Louise* transgress public and private boundaries. Then I delve into the pages of *Ms. Magazine*, which touted itself the “new magazine for women.” The publication offered excellent articles and sparked a colorful exchange with readers, but struggled to reconcile its feminist voice with traditional consumerist advertisers. Chapter 3 ends by charting the growth of neoliberalism that defined American national and foreign policy, triggered the financial crisis, and created conditions conducive to the election of Donald J. Trump as President. In the conclusion I connect these various strings – mass media, maternal employment, political shifts – to reveal how current trends threaten to undercut both existing rights and the rights American women have yet to win.

Chapter I

Dawn of the Supermother:

Stay-at-Home Mothers of the 1950s and 1960s

World War II pulled families apart, dragged men to war, and put women to work. As Sputnik, Khrushchev, and the Bomb loomed ominously from afar, patriotism, nationalism, and suspicion of foreign ideologies flourished. The American housewife was called on to guard her family against liberalism, socialism, and communism. By 1950, the ideal American home was a nuclear family with a “Supermother” at its center.

The economic conditions of the 1950s reinforced the nuclear family as an American ideal. After the war, families reunited and began having children at an unprecedented rate, resulting in a record baby boom. The wartime economy recovered enough to ensure jobs and employment provided Americans with the disposable income to fuel what seemed like a continuous shopping spree at America’s newest marketing creation: the mall. Mass production of houses, furniture, cars, and appliances further encouraged Americans to spend their hard-earned cash. The American housewife was tasked with spending her husband’s wages. A housing boom in semi-rural areas offered lower income families a chance to own their own home on their own plot of land. Families migrated steadily from the cities to the suburbs as consumerism and domesticity came to define the American way of life. The suburbs were born.

In the early 1950s, the future looked bright for the daughters of white, middle-class suburban families. Their prospects seemed plentiful compared to young women of a

century prior. Not only did young women of the '50s possess the right to vote, the chance to earn a college degree, and the opportunity to take a job, they could also marry for status, security, and money. Life as the wife of a steady money earner or, even better, as a suburban Supermother, was the ultimate dream for many young women. Girls often entered college on the premise that it would make it easier for them to find the breadwinner of their dreams and drop out. Those who stayed long enough to earn a four-year degree frequently listened to the adage that educated women made better mothers and wives than uneducated ones. Women who focused on a specific field of study did so as a safety net should their husband unfortunately fall ill or die. For many young women college was a stepping-stone to marriage, not to a career.

Marriage was the cornerstone of the 1950s housewife role. Women of the Cold War era cheerfully pledged themselves to home, hearth, and husband in return for the financial security and prestige marriage provided. Women were encouraged to find fulfillment as wives and mothers; personal ambitions outside of the home were discouraged. Great stock was placed on family unity. It was daring, even scandalous, for a woman to admit to unhappiness in marriage. Housewifery was presented as the most attractive path to both personal fulfillment and socioeconomic stability. The role of the husband was to earn money in the public sphere while housewives worked for affection in the private sphere.

But all was not well with the American marriage. The housewife was dependent on her husband's money and mood, and that dependency turned many relationships sour. As the '50s progressed, a growing number of housewives reported emotional instability,

fatigue, and low self-esteem.⁶ “I have discovered in most of my friends and, I must admit, in myself, a feeling of frustration and of having been prepared for something better than the monotonies of dusting, sweeping, cooking, and mending,” one Vassar alumna explained.⁷ As housewives’ unhappiness mounted, the divorce rate began to quietly climb.⁸

While the suburban housewife served as the ideal for American society, another model was shaping the backdrop upon which that ideal flourished: the working woman. Six million women entered the job market during World War II, by the end of the war, 36 percent of all women worked for wages.⁹ As the economy thrived in the 1950s, employers hired women to fill the growing number of service and clerical positions. Soon young unmarried women made up a smaller percentage of the population than ever

⁶ A sense of low confidence and low energy was so pervasive among housewives that the affliction came to be known as the “housewife’s syndrome.” Abraham Myerson, *The Nervous Housewife* (Boston: Little Brown, 1920), 77-81; and Gail Sheehy, *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974), 218.

⁷ John Willig, “Class of ’34 (Female) Fifteen Years Later,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1949.

⁸ In the United States, the divorce rate was 2.6 in 1950. By 1960 the divorce rate was 2.2, by 1970 it was 3.5, and by 1980 it had climbed to 5.2. “100 Years of Marriage and Divorce Statistics, 1867-1967,” see Table 1. “Marriages, Divorces, and Rates: United States, 1867-1967,” U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (December 1973), page 22; “Live Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Divorces: 1960 to 2007,” see Table 78, U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 2011*, page 65.

⁹ Half the women who worked were over 34 years old. This was unusual considering that young unmarried women had been the norm. Kessler-Harris found that white working women continued to be older. “By 1950 there had been a net drop in the rate at which married women aged 25-34 went out to work. Correspondingly, half again as many women aged 45-54 were working for wages as had worked in 1940.” Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 278.

before.¹⁰ As the number of unmarried women fell, employers were forced to draw from an uncommon pool of possible labor: married women. In 1940, less than 10 percent of American mothers with children under 18 participated in the workforce; by 1950, that number rose to 18 percent.¹¹ In 1950, 12 percent of married mothers of children under six participated in the workforce.¹² By 1952, for the first time in American history, more married women than single women were employed. Over ten million wives held jobs, which was three times the number employed in 1940 and two million more than at the height of World War II.¹³ American women entered the labor force out of wartime necessity, but they stayed for the newfound independence and respectability that came with having a job.

Sociologists of the early 1950s shaped attitudes concerning whether wives should work outside the home. Several experts who focused on how women should lead their lives decided women who worked could also be satisfactory homemakers and suitable

¹⁰ Julia Kirk Blackwelder, *Now Hiring: The Feminization of Work in the United States, 1900-1995* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 143.

¹¹ The labor force participation statistics for mothers of preschool-aged children prior to 1950 are unavailable. "Who Are the Working Mothers?" Women's Bureau Leaflet 37 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, October, 1970), 1. It is also important to note that male unemployment remained below 5% for most of the 1940s and 1950s, which allowed women to avoid the stigma of "stealing" men's jobs. In 1940, 14.6% percent of the labor force was unemployed. Otherwise, the unemployment rate remained low throughout the 1940s and 1950s. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Household Data Annual Averages: Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population, 1940 to Date," <https://www.bls.gov/cps/aa2009/cpsaat1.pdf>, accessed on January 19, 2017.

¹² Phyllis Moen, *Women's Two Roles: A Contemporary Dilemma* (New York: Auburn House, 1992), 14.

¹³ Juanita M. Kreps, ed., *Women and the American Economy: A Look to the 1980s* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 17.

mothers. An article published in a 1952 edition of the *Journal of Home Economics*, focused on debunking the commonly held belief that working mothers were more likely to raise delinquent children. The *Journal* used current demographic evidence to argue that full-time employment was not the issue. Mothers who were unable to maintain full-time employment due to their history of crime, alcoholism, mental illness, or financial negligence tended to have more troubled children.¹⁴ In 1952 Dr. Drusilla Kent explained that the American economy would be unable to maintain or expand its productivity “without the increasing number of women in the labor force.”¹⁵ Dr. Kent encouraged the government and communities to recognize and utilize the growing number of women who contributed to the American economy. The 1952 Annual Congress on Industrial Health – which was themed “Occupation Housewife” – focused on the 66 percent of employed women who were also housewives.¹⁶ The employed wife was praised for investing her money towards family goals such as a new car, a new home, or the children’s college education. Conference attendees praised the employed housewife for maintaining a suitably clean house, even though she spent far fewer hours cleaning than a full-time homemaker. Home economists recommended workplaces host cooking classes and provide childcare. The defense of maternal employment continued as children were said to not only survive, but also thrive, in homes where the mother divided her attention

¹⁴ Elizabeth S. Herbert, “When the Homemaker Goes to Work,” *Journal of Home Economics* 44 (April 1952): 257-259.

¹⁵ Druzilla C. Kent, “Homemaking in the Defense Decades,” *Journal of Home Economics* 44 (April 1952): 13-18.

¹⁶ “Women Tending to Be Worker and Homemaker,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Pittsburgh, PA), January 21, 1952.

between family and job. By the end of the fifties it appeared that the employed mother could manage it all – a household and a job – successfully.¹⁷

Although a large number of wives worked, society continued to place the suburban housewife on a pedestal. As a result, society delivered two potent yet contradictory messages to regarding the goals and dreams American women should pursue. The ideal was that women find fulfillment at home as a wife and mother. The reality was that many women worked, either out of necessity or choice. “The gulf between the reality of the working wife and the ideal of the married woman as wife and homemaker continued to grow,” Lois Scharf concludes in *To Work and to Wed*. “In accepting dual roles, the married working woman also accepted dual burdens, and the voices of concern and protest were barely whispers.”¹⁸ Single women, divorced women, widowed women, and working women were deemed less than ideal in a mass media controlled society that revered the stay-at-home mother and nuclear family conformity. The American public of the 1950s never fully sympathized with the working mother and her dilemmas. The suburban housewife served as the ideal for women throughout that decade and well into the next.

The renewed focus on homemaking, domesticity, and consumerism, coupled with pressure from the mass media, encouraged women of the 1950s to try to do it all. Magazines, radio, and television encouraged girls to anticipate futures filled with beautiful wedding dresses, handsome husbands, and quaint suburban homes. As mass

¹⁷ Francis Ivan Nye and Lois Wladis Hoffman, *The Employed Mother in America* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), 384-399.

¹⁸ Lois Scharf, *To Work and to Wed: Female Employment, Feminism, and the Great Depression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 158.

media image-makers spread this fantasy, experts in the universities spread information and advice that would make American women into knowledgeable, superior mothers.

Experts Built the Super Mother

During the early fifties, psychologists and sociologists offered mothers a blueprint for producing perfectly programmed children. Experts concluded that the perfect child, like the perfect home, was the product of a mother's management. Under the loving guidance of a psychoanalytically informed mother, a well-managed child would develop into a high-functioning adult. This forecast, and the mother's influence on the outcome, was discussed at conferences and studied by research agencies, institutes, and foundations.¹⁹ Expert advice became an integral part of the housewife's quest to construct the perfect nuclear family complete with perfect children.

Sigmund Freud's theories about early childhood development gained popularity during the 1930s and colored the work of his successors in the 1950s. Although many mothers did not immediately understand Freud's psychoanalytical techniques, they certainly understood one main message: the problems children exhibited could be traced directly back to their mothers. Doctors of the 1950s who ascribed to Freudian theory preached that it was a mother's overprotectiveness or inattention that caused her children to fail. Freud and his followers triggered overwhelming guilt in the young wives of the

¹⁹ The Child Study Association of America, formerly known as the National Congress of Mothers, originated from a small group of women who focused on a "scientific" approach to motherhood. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1979), 208.

fifties and motivated them to dote and fret. Adrienne Rich recalls her feelings of failure acutely:

“I could not possibly know then, that among the tangle of feelings between us [her mother and herself] ... was her guilt. Soon I would begin to understand the full weight and burden of material guilt, that daily, nightly, hourly, Am I doing what is right? Am I doing enough? Am I doing too much? The institution of motherhood finds all mothers more or less guilty of having failed their children; and my mother, in particular, had been expecting to help create, according to my father’s plan, a perfect daughter.”²⁰

According to male psychologists, child development was a thrilling process and the outcome hinged entirely on the mother’s behavior. If she raised her children according to the rules, she could produce perfect children.

The Supermother needed reassurance that raising her children the “right” way was possible and worthwhile. Pediatrician Benjamin Spock, M.D., offered the perfect balance of clear information and sympathetic reassurance in his national bestseller, the *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*.²¹ In a monthly column for *Ladies’ Home Journal*, Spock positioned himself as an ally to millions of mothers. In a calm and uncritical tone, he reassured mothers that the next stage of child rearing was always easier. Many

²⁰ Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: Bantam, 1977), 223.

²¹ Dr. Spock begins the book with a reassurance: “Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do.” His reassuring tone sold well; more than 500,000 copies sold during the six months following the book’s publication. The *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* remains one of the bestselling books ever, with overall sales of approximately 50 million. Louise Hidalgo, “Dr. Spock’s Baby and Child Care at 65,” *BBC World Service*, August 23, 2011, <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-14534094>>.

children who reached maturity in the sixties, were taught according to Spock's work.²² As *Time* wrote in its 1998 obituary of Spock: "What Spock really did in *Baby and Child Care*... was to sneak Freudian concepts into the American middle-class mind."²³ Although Spock encouraged women to make time for self-care, he was primarily interested in cajoling mothers to attend diligently to their children.

Talcott Parsons was another prominent authority in the 1950s that taught women how families should function. His work was anchored in the popular ideal that the nuclear middle-class family was the epitome of human life and a matchless model for all Americans. According to Parsons, the intimate family group offered emotional enrichment and outlined strict roles for each member. The Supermother, for example, should be the "adjuster" of the family unit. By mediating conflict between her husband and children, and by cushioning their conflicts with the outside world, the mother kept the family centered and functional. She was the crucial, flexible spring in an efficient machine. If the nuclear family exemplified the fittest of the human species, then the broken family symbolized the weakest. Parsons' belief that the "failures and causalities of American family life," were "rather heavily concentrated in the lower-income group, and complicated there by racial and ethnic problems" was a deeply prejudiced belief,

²² "Spock at 65: Five Ideas That Changed American Parenting," *Time*, July 14, 2011, <<http://healthland.time.com/2011/07/14/65-years-since-spock-five-ideas-that-changed-american-parenting/photo/baby-feet-mom-hands/>>.

²³ Paul Gray, "The Man Who Loved Children: Dr. Benjamin Spock (1903-1998)," *Time*, March 30, 1998, <<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,988061,00.html>>.

though not uncommonly held at the time.²⁴ In his opinion, dysfunctional families were pathetic and pathological. A fragmented family was the ultimate failure for Supermothers, whose sole purpose was to foster a tight nuclear family, to raise her children to their full potential, and to create a haven from the outside world for her husband.

Anne Parsons did not corroborate her father's housewife ideals. Instead, she chose to forgo marriage in favor of academic pursuits. In a culture that considered marriage and motherhood the only legitimate goals for white women, Anne, who was a gifted psychoanalytic thinker, was also an outsider. In 1963, Anne wrote to Betty Freidan after reading *The Feminine Mystique*. In the letter, Anne complains that in most upper-middle-class circles the unmarried career woman was a scapegoat:

“Nobody needs to look at her as a person at all since it is so well known in advance that she is aggressive, competitive, rejecting of femininity and all the rest. Thus being in that category is like being a Negro or Jew—with the difference that the prejudices are manifest in such subtle ways that it is very hard to pin them down, and that the feminine mystique is so strong and attractive an ideology that it is very hard to find a countervailing point of view from which to fight for oneself. The one resource the unmarried woman has is the psychoanalyst... but he will probably tell her she is aggressive, competitive, rejecting of femininity.”²⁵

Anne's critique of the American social sciences may have been a slight against her sociologist father as well. Either way, Anne clearly felt a deep sense of alienation as a childless career woman. Anne, who believed girls should attend college for more than “husband-hunting,” was an anomaly for her time. In her letter, Anne assured Freidan that

²⁴ Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales, *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1955), quoted by Jessie S. Bernard in *Women, Wives and Mothers: Values and Options* (Chicago: Aldine, 1975), 228.

²⁵ Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 177.

even in college her “initial conscious refusal to follow the feminine mystique was not too difficult.” Though Anne claimed she handled her rejection of societal dictates easily, she did not. As an unmarried career woman, Anne suffered from feeling like an outsider and a scapegoat and in 1964, at the age of thirty-three, she committed suicide.

Sociologist Helena Znaniecki Lopata took a more analytical look at “the typical housewife.” After conducting a detailed study of 571 urban and suburban housewives from the Chicago area, Lopata penned *Occupation: Housewife*.²⁶ Lopata observed that a husband’s job defined a woman’s status and determined whether she worked outside the home. The “typical American housewife” could be differentiated according to ethnic background, educational attainment, and location. But every woman, regardless of ethnicity or geographic location, identified herself as a mother first and foremost. A woman’s role as wife and housewife was thus secondary and tertiary to her primary role as mother.

Throughout the 1950s, a wife was expected to fulfill traditional housewife tasks – to cook, clean, and rear children – regardless of whether she worked outside the home. Thus, the major difference between the classic housewife of earlier decades and the Supermother of the 1950s was that she was now also responsible for building egos, maintaining domestic peace, and preserving her family’s emotional stability.²⁷

²⁶ Helena Znaniecki Lopata, *Occupation Housewife* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 108-111, 152.

²⁷ Parsons et al., *Family, Socialization*, 1955.

The Suburban Home as Haven

In 1963 the President's Commission on the Status of Women issued a report that reinforced mothers as the ultimate wardens (and culprits) of their children's development. "The Modern Task of Homemaking" instructed housewives to fulfill the traditional dream of home as haven. Mothers should fashion "a place where all members of the family can find acceptance, refreshment, self-esteem and renewal of strength amidst the pressures of modern life."²⁸ The report held mothers responsible for the growth of teenagers in addition to small babies and young children. The "responsibilities of the home during the child's later years may be even more demanding," the Commission concluded. To bolster this point, the report praised "modern psychological knowledge" for enhancing "traditional conviction as to the mother's role." By 1963, the American government had essentially endorsed the Supermother role.

The report delineated between "normal" traditional Americans who lived in the suburbs and everyone else.²⁹ The Commission reported that two-thirds of America's population growth came from families flocking to suburban areas; these budding communities were "the domain of women and their children."³⁰ However, not everyone

²⁸ "The Modern Task of Homemaking," in U.S. President's Commission on the Status of Women, Report of the Committee on Home and Community, October 1963 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1963), 3.

²⁹ "History of the Suburban Woman," in Nancy Rubin, *The New Suburban Woman: Beyond Myth and Motherhood* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geohegan, 1983), 58-61.

³⁰ From 1940 on, suburbs accounted for more population growth than central cities. Out of the total population living in metropolitan areas, 32.8 percent lived in central cities in 1950. By 1960 this rate had dropped to 32.3 percent. Meanwhile, the portion of metropolitan dwellers that lived in the suburbs jumped from 23.3 percent in 1950 to 30.9 percent in 1960. See Figure 1-15. "Percent of Total Population Living in

fit the suburban ideal. Those who were too poor, too old, or too “other” were not welcome to claim a place in American suburbia. Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and other minority groups were forced to remain within the boundaries of their own urban ghettos. Lines were drawn between suburbanites and inner-city dwellers, nuclear and “broken” families, suburban housewives and working mothers.

The 1963 government report on “The Modern Task of Homemaking” celebrated the affluent suburban homemaker who had the time, means, and inclination to coddle her family. By praising the stay-at-home mother as an American and Christian ideal, government administrators, like psychologists and sociologists, shaped women’s perception of their proper place within the family. However, it was self-help advice, which entered households via magazines and popular books, that most strongly encouraged women to pursue the Supermother ideal.

Self-Help Yourself to Happiness

Self-help advice with a cheerfully practiced outlook flooded bookshelves during the 1950s. Psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, and marriage and family counselors, deftly packaged the latest “scientific” ideas in energetic optimism and approachable common sense. Similar to popular gimmicks found in magazines then and now, Helen Sherman and Marjorie Coe began *The Challenge of Being a Woman* (1955) with a happiness quiz. Women were asked to evaluate whether they enjoyed children, appreciated men, felt sorry for themselves, felt glad to be women, and interacted well with others. After readers inevitably answered “no” to some questions, the authors

Metropolitan Areas and in Their Central Cities and Suburbs: 1910 to 2000,” in “Demographic Trends in the 20th Century,” U.S. Census Bureau (November 2002), 33.

offered a fix. The solution was simple: if a woman wanted her life to change, then she must do the changing.

Sherman and Coe suggested happiness was within reach if only a woman tried hard enough.

“You can change your attitude if you are determined to, sometimes by simply improving your techniques... If you play the part of a woman, you will be able to enter the sex act with warmth and receptivity... The good wife encourages her husband to enter into family activities not by demonstrating to him how naughty the children can be and how tired she is but by planning her work so that when he comes home both she and the children are relaxed and at their best... If your marriage isn’t yet all that you want it to be, new psychological insights can help you.”³¹

These “new psychological insights” were touted as fresh and progressive but in fact were rooted in traditional sex-role divisions long celebrated by nineteenth-century social analysts. Sherman and Coe created a digestible introduction to self-psychoanalysis, analogous to the popular Freudian theories of the 1950s. A common denominator of both psychoanalysis and *The Challenge of Being a Woman* was that negative feelings stemmed from repressed childhood traumas. Positive thinking, religion, hobbies, and counseling, could help the American housewife “recondition” herself from misery to happiness.

Like typical advice literature, books of the fifties rarely challenged the nature of housework itself, but instead focused on the nature of the reader. Every woman could find satisfaction as a mother and wife “by developing the concrete daily philosophy for mature self-realization, in which such typical sources of irritation as housework, negative emotions, and disappointments are viewed in a challenging new perspective.”³² Sherman

³¹ Helen Sherman and Marjorie Coe, *The Challenge of Being a Woman* (New York: Harper, 1955), 52.

³² Sherman et al., *The Challenge of Being a Woman*, 6.

and Coe urged women to look inwards, to remain within the private realm, and to cater to children and husbands. In theory, their simple rules would allow unbalanced women to reason themselves back to equilibrium and happiness. In reality, the authors ignored economic and political sources of discontent and burdened the reader by stating unhappiness began and ended with her.

America Loves Lucy

In the early 1950s televisions entered American homes en masse and quickly became the “electronic hearth” of the American home.³³ Unlike the traditional center of food and fire, which directed family interaction inward, the new hearth connected the home to the outside world. As novel images, sounds, stories, and people poured from the tube into the home, television became both a frame and a mirror for contemporary domestic, political, and cultural ideals. Television mirrored the enforced consensus of everyday life as stable nuclear families populated cookie cutter suburbs onscreen and off.

No sitcom caught America’s attention and affection as immediately or as completely as *I Love Lucy*. The lovable Lucy Ricardo, played by Lucille Ball, was a housewife who endearingly, foolishly, and relentlessly embarks on a series of hilarious misadventures. Along with her husband Ricky, and neighbors Ethel and Frank, Lucy chases jobs, keeps house, and navigates married life. Millions tuned in to CBS every Monday between 9:00 and 9:30 PM to catch a glimpse of the nation’s most beloved

³³ Media critic Marshall McLuhan first called the television an “electronic hearth.” Other scholars have adopted the phrase as a clever synonym for television. Cecelia Tichi, *Electronic Hearth: Creating an American Television Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4.

redhead.³⁴ Devotees were so transfixed that some say Chicago plumbing faltered during commercial breaks as millions of fans rushed to the restroom. By 1952, *I Love Lucy* had become the first sitcom to finish Number One in the Nielsen ratings, making it the nation's most popular show.³⁵ American women loved Lucy and so did critics; *Lucy* nabbed an Emmy Award for Best Situation Comedy in 1953 and 1954, and Lucille Ball won a Best Actress Emmy in 1956.³⁶

The show was relatable because characters reflected real-life situations and tropes. Actress Lucille Ball and her onscreen counterpart Lucy Ricardo proved that art imitates life.³⁷ Boundaries between marriage onscreen and off blurred, as Lucille's real husband Desi Arnaz played her onscreen husband Ricky. When Lucille became pregnant with a son, so did her character and, thanks to a well-timed cesarean, onscreen Little

³⁴ The first episode aired on October 15, 1951 and the last episode aired on May 6, 1957. Reruns were shown for decades after. Martin Gitlin, *The Greatest Sitcoms of All Time* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2014), 29.

³⁵ *I Love Lucy* reached its Number One Nielsen rating by surpassing several other comedy-variety shows including *The Texaco Star Theater with Milton Berle*, *Arthur Godfrey and Friends*, and *The Red Buttons Show*. David Marc and Robert J. Thompson, *Prime Time, Prime Movers* (New York: Little, Brown, 1992), 26-27.

³⁶ Between 1952 and 1958, the actors and writers on *I Love Lucy* were nominated for a slew of Emmy Awards. Gitlin, *The Greatest Sitcoms of All Time*, 33.

³⁷ Iconoclastically expressed in his essay "The Decay of Lying," Oscar Wilde wrote that "Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life." The words are actually from a conversation between characters Vivian and Cyril. Cyril asks, do "you seriously believe that Life imitates Art, and Life in fact is the mirror, and Art the reality?" Vivian responds, "Certainly I do. Paradox though it may seem—and paradoxes are always dangerous things—it is none the less true that Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life." Oscar Wilde, *Intentions* (Leipzig, Germany: Heinemann and Balestier, 1891), 26.

Ricky and real-life Desi Arnaz Jr. were born on the same day.³⁸ As an acquaintance of Ball's remarked in a June 1952 *Look* article, "The trouble with [Lucille Ball] is that her real life is so much like her reel life."³⁹ This double identity thinned the division between television and reality. However, in some very significant ways, real-life Lucille Ball was everything the hapless Lucy was not: famous, talented, wealthy, and savvy. The fact the actress used her full comedic talent to embody the utterly untalented Lucy Ricardo was not a departure from reality so much as a wink at the audience.

I Love Lucy reflected the domestic dogma of Cold War America, which idealized gender distinctions and the wife's supporting role. As producer Jess Oppenheimer explained, Lucy was meant to play a secondary role to her husband Ricky.

"He is a Latin-American orchestra leader and singer. She is his wife. They are happily married and very much in love. The only bone of contention between them is her desire to get into show business, and his equally strong desire to keep her out of it... this dream is having a wife who's out of show business and devotes herself to keeping as nearly normal a life as possible for him. The first story concerns a TV audition.... Although she does a bang-up job, she foregoes the chance at a career that is offered to her in order to keep Ricky happy and closer to his dream of normalcy."⁴⁰

Although Lucille Ball's comedic flair routinely stole the show, onscreen Lucy was meant to bow to Ricky as the master of their marriage. In the first season alone, fifteen episodes revolved around marriage and domesticity, fourteen focused on show business, six

³⁸ *Reader's Digest* described the coordination of the real and fictive births as having an "electric" effect. Bart Andrews, *The "I Love Lucy" Book* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 101-104.

³⁹ Leonore Silvain, "Laughing Lucille," *Look*, June 3, 1952, 7.

⁴⁰ Jess Oppenheimer and Gregg Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck... and Lucy: How I Came to Create the Most Popular Sitcom of All Time* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 139.

fixated on a battle of the sexes, and one was a fight with another married couple. The show allowed Lucy to explore alternate roles, but always ended with her reappointment to the home.

Throughout the series, home was the center of action. *I Love Lucy* was set primarily in the Ricardo apartment, with some scenes at their friends, the Mertzes' house, or at Ricky's nightclub. As a housewife, Lucy was expected to clean the house, cook and serve meals, and maintain a pleasant home atmosphere. Although Lucy was competent at housework she was utterly inept with money. Overspending the household budget and blowing through her personal allowance was all in a day's work for America's most beloved scatterbrain.⁴¹ Her constant desire for more, her frequent desire to upgrade furniture, and her tendency to measure her home against external factors, marked her unfit to manage money. In contrast, the responsible Ricky ridiculed Lucy like a father reprimands a child. "I don't know what's wrong with you. Every month – every single month – your bank account is overdrawn," Ricky exclaims.⁴² After chiding Ethel's similar spending habits Fred Mertz chimed in, "Let's face it, Rick. When it comes to money, there are two kinds of people: the earners and the spenders. Or, as they are more

⁴¹ As usual, Lucy constantly overspent what Ricky earned. In one scene, Lucy placed all of the household bills on a Lazy Susan turntable and gave it a spin. Bills that remained on the turntable would be paid; those that fell off would go unpaid. Lucy demonstrated her troubling technique: "We put all the bills on the Lazy Susan, like this, see? Just like that. Now, we spin it around, and any bill that stays on gets paid. The lucky winner is the Connecticut Light and Power Company!" *I Love Lucy*, "Lucy Raises Chickens," season 6, episode 19, directed by William Asher, written by Madelyn Martin, Bob Carroll Jr., Bob Schiller, and Bob Weiskopf, CBS, March 4, 1957.

⁴² *I Love Lucy*, "Job Switching," season 2, episode 1, directed by Marc Daniels, written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, and Bob Carroll Jr., CBS, September 15, 1952.

popularly known, husbands and wives.”⁴³ When it came to coin, the conclusion was clear: men were responsible and women were not. The underlying message was that Lucy, like many women, was unable to make or manage money.

The Ricardo home, meant to exemplify the typical American home, was a site of labor for women and leisure for men. The 1951 episode “Men Are Messy” reinforced this labor division. After Lucy has carefully cleaned the apartment, Ricky quickly undoes her work by throwing clothes, newspapers, and banana peels throughout the living room. When scolded, Ricky declares, “A man’s home is his castle, and this is my castle.”⁴⁴ Exasperated, Lucy decides to teach Ricky a lesson about cleanliness. Instead of tidying up when a famous magazine asks to photograph their home, Lucy transforms their abode into “Tobacco Road.” Tires, trash cans, a clothesline, and live chickens decorate the Ricardo apartment as Lucy gallops about in hillbilly overalls. Unfortunately for Lucy, the photographer is actually from the popular magazine *Look*, not a small music magazine read by Ricky’s peers. Lucy’s devilish plan backfires when the magazine cover finally arrives. While suave pictures of Ricky in his nightclub adorn the inside, Lucy dances on the cover in her hillbilly getup, looking quite different from the well-groomed glamour she wanted to project. Of course, Lucy is mortified. Her trickery backfired and made her the fool.

Lucy’s embarrassing actions clarify which ideals of gender, class, and region were worthy of celebration or reproach. Her caricature exemplified everything the ideal

⁴³ *I Love Lucy*, “Job Switching,” 1952.

⁴⁴ *I Love Lucy*, “Men are Messy,” season 1, episode 8, directed by Marc Daniels, written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, and Bob Carroll Jr., CBS, December 3, 1951.

American middle-class home should not be: dirty, messy, ugly, and backcountry. Lucy chose to look unkempt, act crudely, and showcase a messy home, rather than act like a good, caring wife who supports her husband's career and creates a sanctuary for him at home. In one fell swoop Lucy violated the domestic ideal and transgressed the lines that define feminine standards. Public humiliation was the price she paid for failing to fulfill the traditional ideal of "home as haven."

Lucy constantly tried, and failed, to work outside the home. Each episode followed a similar pattern: Lucy would concoct a crazy plan to win fame or fortune and, once her plan flopped (which it always did), Lucy returned to the home. Failure was the inevitable outcome of every attempt to be more than just a housewife. Although Lucy was simply unfit for a job outside the home, she was the only one unaware of this fact. The audience knew it and so did Ricky; he constantly reminded Lucy of her limitations. Ricky successfully kept Lucy from show business and yet, in nearly every episode, she sought escape from her comfortable confines into the wonderful world of celebrity.

In one of the series' most beloved episodes, Lucy and Ethel test their husbands' assertions that housework is easier than paid work. After Ricky grumbles, "holding down a job is a lot more difficult than lying around the house all day," Lucy retorts, "We'll change places. We'll get jobs, and you take care of the house."⁴⁵ Challenge accepted, Fred and Ricky agree to do housework while Lucy and Ethel get jobs. By switching responsibilities each hopes to prove their role has value. Trouble begins when the women are thrust from their natural element (the home) into the world of paid work in which they possess neither experience nor skill. The men are similarly removed from their normal

⁴⁵ *I Love Lucy*, "Job Switching," 1952.

sphere (the workplace) and plunged into housework, at which they fail massively. As chickens fly from pots, and waves of rice gush onto the kitchen floor, Fred and Ricky realize they may be unfit for housework. Meanwhile, after accepting jobs at a candy factory, Lucy and Ethel are stationed at a conveyer belt to wrap chocolates. As the chocolates move along the belt faster and faster, and the threat of being fired grows greater and greater, they feverishly stuff chocolates down their shirts, hats, and mouths. Eventually their incompetence is revealed and the women return home to their husbands' equally disastrous mess. "We never realized how tough it was to run a house before," Ricky concedes. "What say we go back to the way we were? We'll make the money and you spend it."⁴⁶ As always, the brief reversal of roles inevitably fails. Both men and women prefer to reassume traditional gender roles.

Traditional gender roles and rights are challenged when Lucy and Ethel try to teach Ricky and Fred a valuable lesson in equality. At the beginning of the episode "Equal Rights," tension builds as Ricky attempts to put Lucy in her "place":

Ricky: We're going to run this house like we do in Cuba, where the man is the master and the woman does what she's told.

Lucy: I don't know how you treat your women in Cuba, but this is the United

States, and I have my rights.

Ricky: I am not arguing about women's right [sic]. I am the first one to agree that women should have all the rights they want. As long as they stay in their place.

Fred: That's tellin' her.

Ethel: Oh, you're just as bad as he is, Fred. You men tell us that we have equal rights, but you certainly don't give us a chance to act like it.

Fred: What do you want? You've got the vote, you wear pants, you drive buses, you wrestle, you go everyplace you please except the steam room in the YMCA.

⁴⁶ *I Love Lucy*, "Job Switching," 1952.

Lucy: That isn't true. Equal rights means just what it says—equal rights.

Eventually, the couples strike a deal. The women demand “to be treated exactly as if we were men” and the men agree. Both sides set out to demonstrate the benefits and drawbacks of an egalitarian marriage and society.

Immediately the men abandon their manners and rescind small niceties. They drop their wives' coats, bulldoze through the doorway, sit first at the table, and order dinner first. The lesson is clear: equality means women must forgo preferential treatment. Finally, the restaurant scene climaxes as Fred and Ricky whip out razors and shave at the table. While primping Ricky sings, “Equal rights, dear. Equal rights, equal rights.” Appalled, Lucy mutters, “We get your point. You win.” But the lesson is far from finished. Separate checks arrive for the women as Ricky repeats, “Equal rights, dear!” Ethel turns to her husband and asks, “Fred, aren't you going to pay for my dinner?” “And take away your independence? Never,” Fred retorts. Flustered, Lucy turns to Ethel: “Do you have any money?” “I haven't got a cent,” Ethel replies. After washing dirty dishes for hours to pay for her meal Lucy declares: “I never worked so hard in my life.” “Maybe this'll teach you to keep your big mouth shut,” Ethel retorts. She declares the idea of equal rights “stinks” and both women burst into tears.

Eventually, after a long and hectic night, the battle of the sexes dies down and all four laugh, kiss, and make up. “Equal rights” Lucy giggles. In place of her earlier outrage is a calm, good-natured complacency. When Lucy resumes her role as the wife of a steady wage earner the status quo returns. “Equality” is framed as one big farce that spurs both sexes to antagonize the other. “Equal rights” are deemed useless for American society, irritating for men, and miserable for women. The rupture and repair of traditional

marriage roles onscreen hinted at American women's desire for a more equal social order. However, like many of her viewers, Lucy was not ready to chart an entirely new path for women.

The Backwards Bulletin

The *Ladies' Home Journal* was essential reading material for young suburban wives. A popular periodical since 1883, the *Journal* "transformed the field of women's magazines and was one of the first magazines ever to reach a circulation of a million."⁴⁷ In 1952, the Philadelphia-based publication boasted the highest circulation of any women's magazine and twenty years later it remained among the top three magazines along with *McCall's* and *Family Circle*.⁴⁸ Aptly titled the "The Magazine Women Believe In," it was no exaggeration to call *Ladies' Home Journal* "the most dramatic thing in publishing in a quarter of a century."⁴⁹ It was "impossible to underestimate the importance and influence of the women's magazines" on millions of middleclass women.⁵⁰

In the early fifties, nearly every fictional and nonfictional woman featured in *Ladies' Home Journal* shared one goal: marriage. Women were taught their life's purpose was to guide "the social and cultural life of the family" and "to teach men how to

⁴⁷ Theodore Peters, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 11.

⁴⁸ In 1952 the *Journal* boasted a circulation of 4,564,101 and by 1972 its readership had grown to 7,515,235. See *N.W. Ayer and Son's Directory: Newspapers and Periodicals 1952* (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer and Son, 1952), 1,344; *1972 Ayer Directory of Publications* (Philadelphia: Ayers Press, 1972), 584, 591, 593.

⁴⁹ Peters, *Magazines*, 11.

⁵⁰ David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (New York: Villiard Books, 1993), 590.

be human.”⁵¹ Marriage was the ultimate dream for women and, inversely, divorce was the worst nightmare. Since maintaining one’s marriage was of utmost importance, the *Journal* published the monthly advice column “Can This Marriage Be Saved?” to offer solutions to troubled real-life couples. In most scenarios, the marriage could be saved if the wife changed her behavior to suit her husband’s needs and habits. Wives featured in the monthly series “How America Lives” happily sacrificed professional goals for raising children full-time. In most instances, women who abandoned career ambitions were rewarded with a loving home life.⁵² The not-so-subtle message was that women should relinquish career goals for domestic dreams.

Although wives anchored the nuclear family they did not completely control the private sphere. Nonfiction articles urged women to use their powers of persuasion, domestic dominance, and natural superiority to teach men compassion.⁵³ Not everyone thought women should rule the roost. A humor columnist joked that “American men overseas are vastly charmed by foreign women who aren’t nearly so influential.”⁵⁴ Women were expected to manage the home, but only according to their husband’s rules. As the fictional Candy explained, “I think the trouble with the American woman is that she has to do so many things, she gets turned into the boss of the family and hates it...

⁵¹ Thompson, “What Is Wrong with American Women?” 74; Ashley Montague, “The Natural Superiority of Women,” *LHJ*, July 1952, 61.

⁵² Thelma Strabel, “Second Act,” *LHJ*, January 1952, 80.

⁵³ Thompson, “What Is Wrong with American Women?” 74; Montague, “The Natural Superiority of Women,” 62.

⁵⁴ Harlan Miller, “There’s a Man in the House,” *LHJ*, January 1952, 11.

she likes to be told firmly, but kindly, what to do.”⁵⁵ The message was clear: wives should defer to husbands. The *Journal* rarely portrayed marriage as an equal partnership.

Ladies' Home Journal held mothers responsible for developing children into perfect American citizens:

“The love of a mother for her child is the basic patent and the model for all human relationships.... It is indeed in the home that the foundations of the kind of world in which we live are laid, and in the sense it will always remain true that the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world. And it is in this sense that women must assume the job of making men who will know how to make a world fit for human beings to live in.”⁵⁶

The women of *Ladies' Home Journal* took their domestic and political purpose seriously. After telling a white lie, Candy worried her dishonesty would negatively impact her children. “What was the future of American children if their parents—no, be honest, their mothers—were totally lacking in integrity?”⁵⁷ In his monthly column, Dr. Benjamin Spock compared mothers to “well-beloved saints” who had “at least fair amounts of all the most pleasant human qualities.”⁵⁸ The underlying message was cut and dry: virtuous mothers produced virtuous children and flawed mothers produced flawed children.

Ambition and motherhood did not mix well according to *Ladies' Home Journal*. Dr. Spock warned ambition could “throw the whole family system out of kilter and do harm rather than good.”⁵⁹ Dorothy Thompson cautioned that “the woman who is talented and intellectually equipped for a demanding art or profession is, if she be fully feminine,

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Dunn, “The Incompetence of Candy,” *LHJ*, October 1952, 120.

⁵⁶ Ashley Montague, “The Natural Superiority of Women,” *LHJ*, July 1952, 61.

⁵⁷ Dunn, “The Incompetence of Candy,” 44.

⁵⁸ Benjamin Spock, “What’s She Got That I Haven’t?” *LHJ*, October 1952, 195.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

torn between two functions.... The woman in the office is therefore perpetually of divided mind.”⁶⁰ The *Journal* consistently featured women who prioritized childrearing and abandoned professional and academic goals.⁶¹ Those who both worked and mothered were doomed to never-ending feelings of guilt and inadequacy.⁶² As mothers entered the workforce en masse during the fifties, the *Journal* continued to counsel women to prioritize motherhood over work.

Ladies' Home Journal celebrated self-sacrificing mothers in the “How America Lives” series. For housewife Betty, the “most rewarding experiences come from little things the children say or do.” “Other people, she believes, are more interesting (though none more interesting than her family).”⁶³ Just like Betty, who “never thinks of herself,” mothers were encouraged to sacrifice personal comfort for their children’s sake. Dr. Spock bemoaned how “Oscars are not given for the year’s best performance in the home” or that “no annual listing of the ten best-loved mothers makes the headlines.”⁶⁴ Although mothers received neither trophy nor fame for their domestic sacrifice, the *Journal* declared Supermothers worthy of universal admiration.

A decade later the *Journal* questioned the value of housewives; “Have Housewives Traded Brains for Brooms?” the January 1963 issue probed. Inside, an article by Betty Friedan, whose bestseller *The Feminine Mystique* would spur a

⁶⁰ Thompson, “What Is Wrong with American Women?” 75.

⁶¹ “Women Like You and Me in Politics,” *LHJ*, February 1952, 48.

⁶² Thompson, “What Is Wrong with American Women?” 75.

⁶³ G. M. White, “Open House in New Hampshire,” *LHJ*, January 1952, 103.

⁶⁴ Spock, “What’s She Got That I Haven’t?” 56.

nationwide controversy about women's traditional roles, introduced readers to a radical new idea, the "feminine mystique."⁶⁵ Dr. Spock addressed working mothers directly in his monthly column. Although he struggled to endorse maternal employment, Dr. Spock finally conceded that a working mother would not inevitably and irreparably harm her child.⁶⁶ The oldest women's magazine appeared more willing to address societal change – like maternal employment – even if that change questioned the traditional housewife role. This shift in content resulted from a period of editorial upheaval and financial turmoil. In 1960, the *Journal* lost its number one position to *McCall's* and its parent publishing company faced dire financial problems. A period of editorial instability shook the *Journal* as three editors in three years circulated in and out of power.

In June 1964 the *Journal* paid lip service to an untraditional model: the working mother. The issue explored "A Daring New Concept" that there might be more to life for American women than housework and childcare. Guest editor Betty Friedan, penned the issue's centerpiece on the "Four Dimensional Woman." According to Friedan, the Four Dimensional Woman fulfilled the typical three roles of "wives, mothers and homemakers" as well as a fourth dimension – worker.⁶⁷ The six women Friedan profiled achieved "the realization of [their] own ambitions in the mainstream of society" despite discrimination, hostility, and male ego.⁶⁸ Oddly enough, Friedan argued the marriages of working women actually improve because "as women move into the world of work and

⁶⁵ Betty Friedan, "Have Housewives Traded Brains for Brooms?" *LHJ*, January 1963, 24+.

⁶⁶ Benjamin Spock, "Should Mothers Work," *LHJ*, January 1963, 16+.

⁶⁷ "Editor's Diary," *LHJ*, June 1964, 12.

⁶⁸ Betty Friedan, "Woman: The Fourth Dimension," *LHJ*, June 1964, 47-55.

large decisions, they become less dominating, more feminine at home.”⁶⁹ Editor Curtiss Anderson assured readers the *Journal* intended to address women who had “broken out into a new kind of life involving jobs and a myriad of other activities outside the three dimensions of their former lives as wives, mothers and homemakers.”⁷⁰ Four Dimensional Women symbolized the ability to successfully mesh household and family responsibilities and juggle both traditional and new roles.

The fictional diary of a woman who is “wife, mother, sculptor, but who discovers that she cannot be exclusively any of these” illustrates the Fourth Dimensional Woman.⁷¹ Within a twenty-four-hour period, she ran errands, sculpted, negotiated commissions, cared for her children, and cooked a dinner party for nine people – all without her husband’s help. Exhausted, she concludes, “All I know is that I wouldn’t trade my life [for that of a full-time housewife] for anything.”⁷² Although she took pride in her work her family took precedence; the woman rejected a commission that required time away from her children. The following article explored “What Husbands Think” about working wives. Alvin Toffler insisted his wife’s career satisfaction compensated for the comforts he lost because she worked. Toffler framed support of a working wife as a clear-cut matter of justice: “Does any person have the right to stand in the way of any other person’s desire to become a truly independent human being?”⁷³ The underlying

⁶⁹ Friedan, “Woman: The Fourth Dimension,” 47-55.

⁷⁰ “Editor’s Diary,” *LHJ*, June 1964, 12.

⁷¹ Marya Mannes, “The Happiest Day,” *LHJ*, June 1964, 24.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷³ Alvin Toffler, “What Husbands Think,” *LHJ*, June 1964, 27-29.

assumption was that women could shift seamlessly from the home to the workplace so long as they had supportive husbands. But the devil was in the details (and the dishes). The sculptor's husband lost no comfort and gained no chores. His working wife continued to offer the benefits of a full-time housewife who managed all childcare and housework. The overriding message of this woman's "Happiest Day" was that career commitments were sometimes enriching but always secondary to family duties. Women could attempt the fourth dimension so long as the first three were flawlessly met.

The *Journal* did not wholeheartedly embrace the cause of the Fourth Dimensional Woman. A mere month later, editors sang a new tune. They shrewdly conceded that "many American women may not align emotionally or intellectually to the Fourth Dimension theme," and wrote they were "pleased to present the other side of the subject."⁷⁴ Ermalee Webb Udall, the wife of Stuart Udall, the current Secretary of the Interior, defended homemaking as "a creative, fulfilling career."⁷⁵ Mrs. Udall directly attacked the "feminine mystique" and bemoaned the changes and challenges imposed upon the sacred roles of wife and mother. She claimed "most of us delight *first* in being women; and that because of the supreme importance of childrearing in the production of a stable, creative society, the majority of women will continue to give precedence to home and family over life's other pursuits."⁷⁶ The following month, Pulitzer Prize winning author Phyllis McGinley wrote that skilled women had the right to work so long as their work did not negatively impact their family. McGinley did not directly condemn

⁷⁴ "Editor's Diary," *LHJ*, July 1964, 12.

⁷⁵ Ermalee Webb Udall, "The Home Is Not Obsolete," *LHJ*, July 1964, 32+.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

working mothers, but she plainly stated that career obligations impede family responsibilities.⁷⁷ A mere month after the *Journal* supported the Fourth Dimensional Woman editors reinforced the full-time housewife.

Readers generated intense debate by offering alternate support and criticism for housewives. Editors also straddled the fence on maternal employment; in July 1964 the magazine published six letters for and six letters against the Fourth Dimensional Woman. One reader thanked the magazine for offering “the answer to many half-formed hopes and aspirations for the planning of my own future.” Another woman scoffed, “I feel there is something terribly wrong when one of the leading women’s magazines publishes an entire issue stating that today’s homemaker is an uninteresting drudge and can only fulfill herself by making a career for herself outside the home.”⁷⁸ Rhonda Harris was outraged at the *Journal*’s support for working wives; “I was miserable when I read the June issue on 4-D women. Despite my best efforts, I persist in being happy and fulfilled as a ‘trapped housewife.’... After four weeks of rushing around trying to find my ‘identity,’ your July issue arrived. I can now hold my head up and assert my right to stay home without neurosis or rebellion.”⁷⁹ In effort to appease conservative readers, editors published “a semi-humorous extension of the Four-Dimension Woman theme,” in which contributor Romain Gary mocked how “women, pride and jewel of our civilization, no longer exist; she has become a human being... It’s heartbreaking.”⁸⁰ Editors entertained

⁷⁷ Phyllis McGinley, “Wives and the Moonlight Adventure,” *LHJ*, August 1964, 30-32.

⁷⁸ “Our Readers Write Us,” *LHJ*, August 1964, 32.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, September 1964, 12.

⁸⁰ Romain Gary, “Twilight of the Goddess,” *LHJ*, March 1965, 90-91.

the Fourth Dimensional Woman for a time, but they did not champion maternal employment. Whether editors wholeheartedly favored the traditional housewife or had grown more receptive towards working women was unclear; either way, conflict sold copies.

In August 1964 the *Journal* reported an even divide in reader response to the question of “4-D or Not 4-D.” After issuing a poll, the magazine stated that single and married women were evenly split for and against maternal employment. However, men opposed the idea of working women by a ratio of three to one. Editors realized it was most lucrative to cater to both employed and full-time mothers. Editors promised to “continue, as always, to regard homemaking as a creative function of the first importance, but would not turn its back on 23 million working women.”⁸¹ “[E]ach woman must define her individual goals and roles in life,” editors explained, and swore to “continue to discuss this right of choice.”⁸² Although editors agreed to address women’s expanding rights and roles, they believed that work and family could coincide only so long as the former did not impede the latter.

In April 1965 Editor John Mack Carter continued to promote traditional roles with an occasional nod to change. In his first editor’s letter Carter outlined the magazine’s values:

“Today we feel there are more reasons than ever why the *Journal* deserves the trust of women. Because we believe in love, as the moving force in family life.... Women understand better than men the importance of people above things.... We believe in intimacy in the *Journal*, not in a sensational way but in a deeply

⁸¹ “4-D or Not 4-D,” *LHJ*, August 1964, 6-8, 34-37.

⁸² *Ibid.*

personal sense that comes as close as ink and paper can come to the touch of a hand.”⁸³

Carter assured readers the *Journal* would continue to offer “food pages you can trust, decorating pages you can copy, beauty pages that can change your life.”⁸⁴ During Carter’s first year as editor, trifling and melodramatic writing prevailed and the magazine remained largely devoid of feminist issues.

In 1966 the magazine drew editorial inspiration from former editor Edward Bok, who led the *Journal* to deserve its slogan “The Magazine Women Believe In.” Bok, who served as editor from 1889 to 1919, achieved a circulation of over a million by following his “golden rule” that “the American public always wants something a little better than what it asks for.”⁸⁵ Bok “banished the sentimental mishmash, piety and preaching” typical of women’s journalism and replaced it with “practical services and answers to questions that readers couldn’t find elsewhere.”⁸⁶ In the spring of 1966, editors followed Bok’s golden rule; they offered guidance to working mothers that went above and beyond the typical content found in well-known women’s magazines. The May issue included the first article by Betty Friedan in nearly two years along with an excerpt from a new book,

⁸³ “Editors and Contributors,” *LHJ*, April 1965, 12.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Bok’s beliefs guided the *Journal* even after his retirement. Bruce and Beatrice Gould ran the magazine from 1934 to 1962 and ensured the *Journal* remained the top women’s publication in the nation. Tom Butler-Bowdon, *The Literature of Possibility* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2013), 40.

⁸⁶ Edward Bok was appointed editor in 1889 and he managed the *Journal* for forty years. Joseph C. Goulden, *The Curtis Chapter* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 18-21. See also Helen Woodward, *The Lady Persuaders* (New York: Obolensky, 1960). For a biography purely dedicated to Edward Bok see Salme Harju Steinberg, *Reformer in the Marketplace* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

So You Want To Be a Working Mother.⁸⁷ The book was a sympathetic but superficial exploration of problems (like intense guilt) that plagued working mothers.⁸⁸ In June 1966 editors delved deeper into maternal employment issues and promoted a national program for childcare services, which they called “a campaign for a new family birthright.” Over the next six months, the *Journal* described successful daycare programs, offered solutions to unsatisfactory childcare, and published reports that framed daycare as a political issue. An article even accused the United States Senate and the Senate Appropriations Committee of “Sabotaging Day Care for Our Children.”⁸⁹ After the author criticized politicians for backwards thinking, he remarked, “it is not impossible that [senators] also reflect male prejudice against The Modern Woman.”⁹⁰ The *Journal* ended with a call for women to lobby Congress for a national daycare policy.⁹¹

Reader response was severely for and against the magazine’s “campaign for a new family birthright.” Editors correctly predicted that mothers who needed daycare

⁸⁷ Betty Friedan, “How Mrs. Gandhi Shattered the Feminine Mystique,” *LHJ*, May 1966, 100+.

⁸⁸ Lois Benjamin, “How to Be a Working Mother without Really Crying,” *LHJ*, May 1966, 101+.

⁸⁹ Ben H. Bagdikian, “Who Is Sabotaging Day Care for Our Children?” *LHJ*, November 1966, 86+.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ The daycare campaign included the following articles: Lois Benjamin and Arthur Henley, “What Every Mother Owes Her Child and Herself,” *LHJ*, June 1966, 133-34; Jhan Robbins and June Robbins, “One City that Cares Enough to Make Every Mother’s Day Care Dream Come True,” *LHJ*, July 1966, 71+; John Kobler, “Here’s Child Care for Every Working Mother,” *LHJ*, August 1966, 34+; Gwen Gibson, “One Woman Can Make the Difference: A Blueprint for *Day Care* Action,” *LHJ*, September 1966, 62+; Charlotte Painter, “The Perfect Day-Care Home for Tommy,” *LHJ*, October 1966, 72+.

would respond with enthusiasm to the *Journal's* position on childcare. However, editors miscalculated “the viciousness of some readers challenging our point of view. We have been accused of Communist leanings, fatuous thinking, and plotting the destruction of both motherhood and fatherland.” A conservative reader urged her fellow “Mothers in America” to “fight with every breath” against daycare “as a design to take away our children’s birthright—the right to be brought up in a home filled with love of God and Country.”⁹² Editors reminded naysayers “the century is not the nineteenth, no matter how much some of us would wish it. We must live in the present and we must provide for those who do.”⁹³ For the remainder of 1966, the *Journal* supported the twentieth-century working woman, so long as she also maintained her role as a doting nineteenth-century housewife. The only right editors upheld was “every mother’s right to live a full life without sacrificing her children’s wellbeing.”⁹⁴

The magazine continued to urge women to change themselves rather than society. The November 1966 issue profiled a bored housewife. The opener asked, “Millions of women share her feelings. Read them, we dare you. Then tell us: What can we do for Lois? What can she do for herself?”⁹⁵ Reader response ranged from livid to resigned. One woman self-righteously declared, “For everyone like her, there are nine of us who are in love with our lives—and it’s time we were heard.” Another remarked, “We can’t change

⁹² Editors received a lot of backlash for the childcare campaign from staunchly conservative mothers. This particular letter appeared in the September 1966 issue on page 6.

⁹³ “Editor’s Diary,” *LHJ*, September 1966, 6.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Lyn Tornabene, “How America Lives: The Bored Housewife,” *LHJ*, November 1966, 97+.

society so we have to change ourselves.”⁹⁶ The general conclusion was that societal roles were unshakeable and that unhappy women who broke the mold had only themselves to blame. Individual unhappiness was an individual concern.

The growing number of women who collectively fought for women’s rights and sought to change society remained largely absent from the *Journal* throughout the mid-1960s. In 1967, editors finally asked ten “experts” to report on women’s progress for the article “The Battle of the Sexes Is Over. Who Won? We Did.”⁹⁷ “Women never had it so good,” the article began; the so-called specialists cheerily concluded that “American women now have the best of all possible worlds—almost. And in the future, they’ll have it even better.” The psychiatrist claimed women were *better* off than men because they had more life choices; the attorney also claimed women’s legal rights were better than ever.⁹⁸ However, the panelists conceded that “arrangements will have to be made... so that motherhood and work will not interfere with each other but will be mutually supportive.” Unsurprisingly, the panelists never divulged how their brilliant “arrangements” would solve barriers to maternal employment. They breezily assumed family and career could easily mesh. Only one panelist predicted that “the more improvements that are made in [women’s] lives, the more discontented they’ll

⁹⁶ “Bored? Ridiculous,” *LHJ*, February 1967, 8.

⁹⁷ The panelists included anthropology professor Ethel Appenfis, money management consultant Mary Feeley, economics professor Eli Ginsberg, attorney Harriet Pilpel, and Women’s Bureau Director Mary Kenjserling, among others. Three hundred “female opinion makers” attended the discussion. “The Battle of the Sexes Is Over. Who Won? We Did,” *LHJ*, February 1967, 66+.

⁹⁸ The female attorney was described as “a lovely example of how to stay lovely and feminine while succeeding at the bar.” *Ibid.*, 68.

become.”⁹⁹ By assessing women’s rights through rose-colored glasses, the panelists blithely downplayed or completely ignored the massive problems women faced. Their stridently optimistic attitude minimized the importance of an organized women’s movement.

In 1969 the *Journal* debuted a new series of articles on “The Power of a Woman.”

Editor John Mack Carter defined the series’ premise:

“For almost three decades, the motto of the *Ladies’ Home Journal* has been ‘Never underestimate the Power of a Woman.’ Today, we feel, this slogan has deeper implications than ever. The contemporary woman—better educated, longer lived, more involved in her community and her world—has a greater opportunity to improve and change the society around her.”¹⁰⁰

At first glance, it seemed the editorial staff felt compelled to discuss women’s changing role in American society. Upon closer inspection, it became clear the *Journal* remained mired in traditional thinking. When the doggedly conservative Mrs. Richard M. Nixon introduced the series, she urged women to “bring to someone who needs help your power of love and concern.... This is true power. This is the power which is never exhausted because it is based on love.”¹⁰¹ Women could work part-time or volunteer.¹⁰² But they were not encouraged to “change society” through full-time work outside the home. By framing women’s power as “love,” and by encouraging part-time work rather than

⁹⁹ “The Battle of the Sexes Is Over. Who Won? We Did,” *LHJ*, February 1967, 69.

¹⁰⁰ “Editor’s Note,” *LHJ*, September 1969, 93.

¹⁰¹ Patricia Ryan Nixon, “The Power of a Woman,” *LHJ*, September 1969, 93+.

¹⁰² In March 1968, an article described part-time work as “the housewife’s happy middle ground.” “26 Exciting Parttime Jobs for Women,” *LHJ*, March 1968, 74+. Also, the series “How to Make Money in Your Spare Time,” became a regular feature starting in 1969.

complete careers, the *Journal* kept its new series rooted in old beliefs. According to the *Journal*, women's proper place was still at home.

As a new decade loomed, the *Journal* enlisted a second panel of women to predict the future. This time the panelists were ordinary women, not pseudo-experts, who anticipated a future full of freer household standards, more sexual freedom, and better-educated women. They optimistically predicted that women would enjoy more lifestyle choices and less difficulty combining family and career.¹⁰³ Editors began the April 1970 issue by remarking, "Too often American women have allowed others to speak for them and make their decisions. The Seventies could change this. For now, women are breaking through old barriers, propelled by their consciences and their concern to move off their doorsteps into the larger scene."¹⁰⁴ The *Journal* reported societal shifts, yet it took little initiative to help these changes develop. For most of the 1960s, the magazine largely ignored the budding feminist movement, downplayed the barriers women faced, and offered superficial support for working mothers. Editors assumed change would occur naturally and evenly. Little did they know, they were in for a rude awakening.

On March 18, 1970, over one hundred feminists flooded the *Ladies' Home Journal* offices. In a tense confrontation, they held editors John Mack Carter and Lenore Hershey hostage for eleven hours. The sit-in was the brainchild of several feminist groups, including the National Organization for Women, the Media Women, the

¹⁰³ The panel included ad executive Jacqueline Brandwynne, homemaker Lynda Johnson Robb, writer Caroline Bird, actress Dina Merrill, and Betty Cosby, the Dean of Women at the University of Florida. *Journal* editors Lenore Hershey and Mary Powers also weighed in. "The Power of a Woman: Women in the 70s: A *Journal* Panel Looks into the Future," *LHJ*, January 1970, 54+.

¹⁰⁴ "Editor's Note," *LHJ*, April 1970, 82.

Redstockings, and the New York Radical Feminists. The feminists demanded all-female editorial and advertising staffs, a new editorial policy favorable towards feminists, and an end to exploitative advertising. They also demanded that John Mack Carter be removed and replaced by a female editor. Carter refused, but agreed the protestors could publish an eight-page insert in the magazine's August issue.¹⁰⁵

In August 1970 protestors published their piece on the "New Feminism."¹⁰⁶ The insert contained eight short summaries of work, education, and marriage from a feminist perspective. The article on "Women and Work" vividly described the discrimination women suffered in the workplace; "Babies are Born, Not Delivered" condemned how doctors neglected women's bodies; and "Your Daughter's Education," pinpointed how schools and media encouraged passivity and discouraged ambition. After describing women as "domestic slaves" the article on housework explained:

"The idea of love marriages hides the fact that when we repeat the vows of love, honor and obey, we promise to perform our role—domestic services and sexual availability—in return for his financial support. And that support is viewed by men as a gift."¹⁰⁷

Feminists mocked the popular "Should This Marriage Be Saved?" series by describing marriage as a trap for women and a boon for men. The "subjugation of women is an integral part of marriage," authors concluded. After the authors decried men's power to

¹⁰⁵ Lenore Hershey, *Between the Covers: The Lady's Own Journal* (New York: Coward McCann, 1983), 86-87.

¹⁰⁶ The magazine paid the New York Women's Collective ten thousand dollars to create the content and agreed to edit stylistic matters only. *Ibid.*, 88-89.

¹⁰⁷ This article began with an advertisement: "Help Wanted: Female. 99.6 Hours a Week. No pay. Bed and bored. Must be good with children." New York Women's Collective, "Help Wanted: Female," *LHJ*, August 1970, 67-68.

define women's beauty standards, female friendships, and sexual relations, they urged women to create and conduct a consciousness-raising group themselves.¹⁰⁸

In August 1970, John Mack Carter admitted the sit-in changed his editorial approach and personal opinion on women's rights:

“We were literally confronted with the intensity and the reality of this brand of women's rights thinking.... We heard some convincing truths about the persistence of sexual discrimination in many areas of American life.... We heard a rising note of angry self-expression among today's American women, a desire for representation, for recognition, for a broadening range of alternatives, in a rapidly changing society.... We do not agree with many of the assumptions their arguments rest on.... The point is: this is 1970. All peoples and both sexes are free to re-examine their roles. They are free to grow where they have been stunted, to move forward where they have been held back, to find dignity and self-fulfillment on their own terms. As a magazine that for 87 years has served as an emotional and intellectual forum for American women, we can do no less than devote part of one issue to an explanation of Women's Liberation.”¹⁰⁹

Although Carter was reluctant to cooperate with sit-in protestors, the insert gave feminists a platform to explain how magazines' constant coverage of fashion, family, food, and femininity perpetuated an oppressive status quo. As one sit-in participant declared, “We were there to destroy a publication which feeds off women's anger and frustration, a magazine which destroys women.”¹¹⁰ Feminists “assumed that images of women in the mass media had a detrimental impact upon individual consciousness and collective social life,” Gaye Tuchman explained.¹¹¹ For years, the media had ridiculed or

¹⁰⁸ New York Women's Collective, “The New Feminism,” *LHJ*, August 1970, 64-71.

¹⁰⁹ John Mack Carter, “Editor's Introduction,” *LHJ*, August 1970, 63.

¹¹⁰ See the *Village Voice* published on March 19, 1970. Betty Friedan had insisted that the women's magazines were the great purveyors of the “feminine mystique,” and much of her book was an attack on these publications. Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 33-68.

¹¹¹ Gaye Tuchman, “Women's Depiction by the Mass Media,” *Sights* 4 (Spring 1979): 530-531.

dismissed feminist demands and actions and, in return, feminists distrusted the press.¹¹² The March 1970 demonstration brought the tense relationship between feminists and the media to a head and allowed feminists to transmit their message to the broader American public.¹¹³

Although the August 1970 insert was progressive and opinionated, the *Journal* continued to publish traditional content during the following months. In December 1970, the ultraconservative Billy Graham expressed his opinion “that many of the frustrations of life are caused by our failure to accept our role, our God-given duty.” Women, Graham believed, should be “wife, mother, homemaker—this is the appointed destiny of real womanhood.... This is the Judeo-Christian ethic.... [W]ith all the new freedom that Christ brought women, He did not free them from the Home.”¹¹⁴ Although Graham’s opinion was antiquated reader response was not. Sixty percent of readers opposed his viewpoint.¹¹⁵ By the start of the 1970s, *Journal* readers were ready to define women outside of marriage and motherhood.

Over the course of the 1960s, more women added the Fourth Dimension – work – to their existing roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers. The decline of the family

¹¹² In her 1978 book *Making News*, Gaye Tuchman argued that feminism struggled to gain news coverage because it was a fluid social movement without a clear beginning, middle, and end, like most news events. Tuchman used the women’s movement as one example of why social movements struggle to gain news coverage. Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Press, 1978), 133-156.

¹¹³ Monica Morris, “Newspapers and the New Feminism: Black Out as Social Control,” *Journalism Quarterly* 50 (1973): 37-42.

¹¹⁴ Billy Graham, “Jesus and the Liberated Woman,” *LHJ*, December 1970, 40+.

¹¹⁵ “Jesus and Women: Readers Answer Billy Graham,” *LHJ*, March 1971, 80-81.

wage prompted an increase in maternal employment.¹¹⁶ The biggest jump in women's full-time employment came from women with children under six; their number leapt from 18.6 percent in 1960, to 30.3 percent in 1970.¹¹⁷ Most women entered traditionally female sectors such as teaching, nursing, and clerical work, but the number of women in high-paying prestigious fields such as law, academia, and medicine also increased during the 1960s.¹¹⁸

Over the course of the 1960s, the women's movement worked its way into American homes via magazines, newspapers, and books. Feminists began to appear in popular magazines and on nationwide talk shows; consciousness-raising groups and women's literature seminars cropped up on college campuses. Feminist groups continued to monitor the portrayal of women in magazines, in ads, and on television. Women in the labor and civil rights movements fought to make it illegal to pay men and women different rates for the same work and to discriminate against women during the hiring process. Their efforts resulted in the 1963 Equal Pay Act and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which altered the legal landscape of women's employment. Thanks to the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 and the formation of the National Organization of Women in 1966, the new American women's movement was well underway. Rather than blindly accept the typical images writ in stone by a tradition-bound society, women began forging new self-images that better reflected their own aspirations. This second wave of

¹¹⁶ Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 4-5.

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Waldman, "Labor Force Statistics from a Family Perspective," *Monthly Labor Review* 106 (December 1983): 18.

¹¹⁸ Blackwelder, *Now Hiring*, 178-180.

feminism shook fifties-era conformity and rigidity and paved the way for a new decade in which women challenged societal norms through novels, poetry, movies, and television. The seventies belonged to rebellious women ready to expand the roles that limited their lives as citizens, as workers, and as mothers.

Chapter II

Rise of the Superwoman:

Working Mothers of the 1970s and 1980s

The dramatic sit-in staged at the *Ladies' Home Journal* office in May 1970 gave new meaning to the magazine's slogan, "Never underestimate the power of a woman." The eight-page insert allowed protestors to articulate their stance on education, health, and marriage to millions of American women. Conservative subscribers, however, were shocked by the protestors' unconventional opinions; readers wrote livid letters to the editors and canceled subscriptions in droves. In order to better understand the attitudes of their subscribers, the *Journal* conducted a survey regarding "The New Feminism" insert.¹¹⁹ Editors published the survey results in November 1970; 34 percent of survey respondents described themselves as "pro" women's movement, 46 percent defined themselves as "con," and 20 percent expressed mixed feelings.¹²⁰ Some readers supported equal pay for equal work but voiced disdain for the "stridency" of the women's movement. The magazine embraced the intense conversation regarding women's place in American society; feminists voiced their opinion in the insert, readers responded via mail, and management reacted to both through monthly letters from the editor. *Journal* circulation rose substantially as the conversation regarding women's rights and roles grew. Other magazines followed suit; *McCall's* summarized feminist news in a similar

¹¹⁹ "The New Feminism," *LHJ*, August 1970, 63-71.

¹²⁰ *LHJ*, November 1970, 69, 74.

insert titled “Right Now.” In less than a year, the media understood the women’s movement to be a thrilling – and profitable – story.

Once the women’s movement proved its potential to sell magazines, editor John Mack Carter expressed a newfound interest in feminist issues. Carter expressed annoyance at the sit-in in his August 1970 editor’s letter; by the fall of 1971 he sang a different tune. Quoting from a letter he wrote to the National Women’s Political Caucus, Carter expressed genuine concern for the women’s movement:

“Some men will laugh and dismiss your efforts. But having lived through the demonstration at our offices by the Women’s Liberation Collective in March 1970, and thus having gained a deeper understanding of contemporary women’s frustrations and strivings, I know that such heated beginnings are necessary to effect positive changes.”¹²¹

Carter urged the Caucus to see men as allies, not opponents. According to Carter, many men wished to see women gain political parity. In January 1972 Carter remarked, “I have tried to lead the *Journal* beyond food and fashion and beauty—and beyond other women’s magazines—to ask the important social questions of the day.”¹²² Later that year, sociologist Lovelle Ray stated that the *Ladies’ Home Journal* was “consistently concerned about women as individuals.” Among all the mass-circulated women’s magazines, contributors for the *Journal* “consistently supported the belief that women were persons and not just the ‘wife of so-and-so’ and ‘so-and-so’s mommy.’”¹²³

¹²¹ “Editor’s Diary,” *LHJ*, October 1971, 4.

¹²² “Editor’s Diary,” *LHJ*, January 1972, 9.

¹²³ In 1970 the *Journal* had a circulation of 6.9 million. However, since there were an estimated 2.2 readers per copy sold, the total readership was likely higher. Lovelle Ray, “The American Women in the Mass Media: How Much Emancipation and What Does It Mean,” in *Toward a Sociology of Women*, ed. Constantina Safilios-Rothschild (Lexington, MA: Xerox Publishing, 1972), 60-61.

Although the *Journal* paid little attention to the organized women's movement during the 1960s, readers of the 1970s saw more frequent and favorable discussions of women's changing role in American society.

From 1972 to 1980, Letty Cottin Pogrebin offered a frankly feminist take on the women's liberation movement in her new column, "The Working Woman." Pogrebin addressed previously taboo subjects such as unequal marriage, parenting problems, and workplace discrimination. Although Pogrebin was not a radical feminist, she took an activist approach to women's problems and offered advice on where readers could find support for their dilemmas. For example, Pogrebin advised women how to "work without cheating your family," how to handle "sex games your bosses play," and how to "liberate yourself from housework."¹²⁴ In her piece titled, "Job or Baby? Advice for Women Who Want Both," Pogrebin addressed the growing number of women who did not plan to quit work for full-time motherhood. Compared to the long history of self-help advice that urged women to change themselves and not their circumstances, Pogrebin's writing was a breath of fresh air. Taglines offering a glimpse of her practical advice appeared frequently on the front cover of the *Journal* in order to attract a growing, lucrative demographic: working mothers.

¹²⁴ Pogrebin's column was frequently advertised on the magazine cover. Taglines included the following: "Making It in the Job World: Tips for Women Who Work (or Want To)," *LHJ*, June 1971; "Working Women: Special Report for Teachers," *LHJ*, October 1971; "Job Hints for Secretaries," *LHJ*, November 1971; "What To Do When Your Boss Discriminates against You," *LHJ*, January 1972; "Job or Baby? Advice for Women Who Want Both," *LHJ*, February 1972; "Labor Unions: Unfair to Women," *LHJ*, March 1972; "Six Ways to Liberate Yourself from Housework," *LHJ*, May 1972; "The American Nurse: Why She Works So Hard for So Little," *LHJ*, August 1972; "Sex Games Your Bosses Play," *LHJ*, January 1973; "Job Hints for Mature Women," *LHJ*, April 1973; "How to Work without Cheating Your Family," *LHJ*, June 1973.

Other magazines followed the *Journal's* lead and produced progressive material. In 1977 the features editor of *Mademoiselle*, Mary Cantwell, asked Judith Coburn to write a regular column titled "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Sex."¹²⁵ Cantwell insisted the title remain but the content could change; Coburn was allowed to address any subject pertinent to American women. From 1977 to 1981 Coburn wrote freely on feminist issues like birth control, abortion, wages for housework, women and war, and the coming of "the superwoman."¹²⁶ Traditional magazines such as *McCall's*, *Redbook*, and *Harper's Bazaar* continued to print standard content on diets, recipes, health, fashion, and marriage. In many cases, advertisers exploited feminist tropes to sell consumer goods, such as hard liquor, tobacco, vacations, and clothes. A 1971 ad for Ballantine's Finest Blended Scotch Whiskey featured three attractive women surrounded by the slogan, "Liberated Loyalists." One woman retorts, "Why should men get all the Ballantine's Scotch?"¹²⁷ The ad celebrates women who confidently consume substances traditionally enjoyed by men. The benefits advertisements promised were superficial. Although ads equated liberation with consumerism, mainstream magazines contributed to the women's movement in positive ways too. Columns dedicated to women's issues, profiles of feminists, and overtly feminist writers allowed mainstream magazines to slowly but surely educate American women about the feminist movement.

¹²⁵ Before Judith Coburn, radical feminist Karen Durbin penned "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Sex" column.

¹²⁶ See Judith Coburn's column in *Mademoiselle* magazine from 1977 to 1981.

¹²⁷ "Alcohol Ads of the 1970s: Ballantine's Scotch," Vintage Ad Browser, <<http://file.vintageadbrowser.com/o761uw06mz5egz.jpg>>.

By the early 1970s the *Journal* was primed to celebrate women's accomplishments outside the home. Although the *Journal* had celebrated stay-at-home Supermothers of the 1950s who served their families tirelessly and deferred to husbands faithfully, the heroines who appeared in the *Journal* during the 1970s ventured beyond the home into the world of work. In 1973 the magazine announced its first "Women of the Year" awards and proclaimed: "This may be the age of the non-hero, but it is a time for heroines."¹²⁸ The *Journal* presented heroic women to readers "as themselves, and as symbolic surrogates of the total contribution women are making today.... All are *women*. That is the point. That is the significance. That is the glory."¹²⁹ Compared to decades prior, the seventies-era *Journal* featured women who were more accomplished, educated, egalitarian, and civic-minded than ever. The women who populated its pages were more than housewives and workers; they were standalone heroines worthy of praise.

The *Journal* praised a new kind of hero: the educated woman. While previous generations considered college a steppingstone to marriage, women of the seventies pursued education for their own sake. In addition to bachelor's degrees, many women also possessed master's, doctoral, medical, or law degrees. More importantly, they applied their intellect to careers outside the home. In the 1973 "Women of the Year" feature, women were celebrated for their work in business, politics, the arts, medical research, and human rights. Unlike their foremothers, women of the seventies were

¹²⁸ "Ladies' Home Journal Women of the Year 1973," *LHJ*, June 1973, 67. Although the *Journal* curated a lineup of heroic women, a columnist warned readers to be skeptical of television celebrities who posed as experts. "Television promotes hero worship through repeated performances of the same people over and over again," Theodore Rubin warned. "On TV, pomposity and glib talk are too often equated with knowledge." Theodore Isaac Rubin, "Dr. Rubin," *LHJ*, January 1972, 40.

¹²⁹ "Women of the Year 1973," 67.

celebrated – not condemned – for contributions to the “fields of feminism and racial pride.”¹³⁰ The *Journal* continued to endorse accomplished women by creating a “Women of the Month” column within its “How America Lives” series. The column featured unconventional role models, including an architect, a navy admiral, a civil engineer, a fashion designer, and an associate dean of a dental school.¹³¹ Women used education to achieve their own accomplishments; sometimes their pursuits were so fulfilling or all-engrossing they chose to forgo coupledness altogether.¹³²

The *Journal* commended women for making workplace headway. Letty Pogrebin praised Lorena Weeks for suing her employer for sexual discrimination under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Pogrebin applauded how “thousands, perhaps millions, of women may eventually profit from her courage and determination.”¹³³ The magazine praised the first women to enter traditionally male professions, like the first female rabbi and the first female pilot for a commercial airline.¹³⁴ Role models were commended for their work as civil rights advocates, professionals, and voracious readers. Not only were professional and pioneering women worthy of praise, so were traditional mothers. Lest the housewife feel neglected, the *Journal* declared that mothers and wives deserved just as much praise

¹³⁰ “Women of the Year 1973,” 68-69.

¹³¹ Evan Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, September 1972, 76-78; October 1972, 68-70; November 1972, 54-56; January 1973, 48-50; February 1973, 54-56.

¹³² Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, February 1973, 56; Libbie Block, “The Two Sides of the Door,” *LHJ*, June 1973, 86, 120; Margery Sharp, “Conversation on a Train,” *LHJ*, September 1972, 70.

¹³³ Letty Cottin Pogrebin, “The Working Woman,” *LHJ*, January 1972, 46.

¹³⁴ Sherry Levy, “Meet the World’s First Woman Rabbi,” *LHJ*, June 1972, 75; Evan Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, April 1973, 54.

as professional women. Pogrebin declared every housewife “an unsung heroine” who should “insist that [her] praises be sung loud and often.”¹³⁵ While the *Journal* praised women who made their mark publically in politics, business, and humanitarian efforts, it also declared women of all roles worthy of applause.

Single women appeared in the *Journal* occasionally, but women were more likely to be married than not. Single women who were divorced, widowed, or never married took a backseat to heroines who voluntarily postponed their inevitable marriage. One protagonist stated her life “would not fall apart” without marriage, but she did “believe that marriage would add another realm of experience, another dimension to her life.”¹³⁶ Despite the rise of feminism and divorce, editors continued to favor married women.

Although the 1970s wife could work, her emotional worth remained higher than her professional value. The American wife was “a very individual specialty. She furnishes love, understanding, intimacy, compassion, support, excitement, deep sexual partnership—these qualities are not to be found on a resume.”¹³⁷ But if a wife’s qualities were to be found on a resume, what were they worth? Letty Pogrebin set out to find the answer. In her “Working Woman” column Pogrebin calculated that the many roles a wife performed for her husband, like cook, nutritionist, maid, hostess, interior decorator, financial secretary, and childcare provider, were worth upwards of \$10,000 a year.¹³⁸ Pogrebin urged readers to “agitate and educate in order for men to see that justice and

¹³⁵ Letty Cottin Pogrebin, “The Working Woman,” *LHJ*, May 1972, 32.

¹³⁶ Sherry Levy, “Meet the World’s First Woman Rabbi,” *LHJ*, June 1972, 109.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Pogrebin, “The Working Woman,” 32, 34.

fairness” be given to their hardworking wives.¹³⁹ In addition to wage inequality in the workplace, women also suffered lack of recognition at home.

The *Journal* printed glossy images of perfect couples during the 1950s, but columnists of the 1970s warned readers of the pitfalls of matrimony. Readers were advised to resist the “marriage illusion,” which was “particularly prevalent among very dependent women—women who lack a sense of identity, real self, and confidence.”¹⁴⁰ Women were urged to examine prevailing traditions with a critical eye. “Our culture constantly promotes the love myth with songs, poems, and stories, but it remains just that—a myth,” wrote Theodore Isaac Rubin, M.D., former president of the American Institute for Psychoanalysis. “The degree to which a bride believes the marriage fantasy will determine the degree of her ensuing disillusionment—and rage—when she discovers her beliefs were just illusions.”¹⁴¹ In a later issue, Dr. Rubin counseled readers to view marriage as a “liaison between two separate people with individual needs and wants.”¹⁴² The idea that a successful marriage happens when husband and wife approach their relationship as equals was a far cry from previous columnists who urged women to adjust their behavior to suit husbands’ needs.

During the 1970s, *Ladies’ Home Journal* increasingly depicted the successful wife as equal to her husband. In the “How America Lives” column, Amy Dreilinger explained that sharing household responsibilities with her husband was “par for the

¹³⁹ Pogrebin, “The Working Woman,” 32, 34.

¹⁴⁰ Theodore Isaac Rubin, “Fantasies That Make You Happy,” *LHJ*, January 1973, 26.

¹⁴¹ Rubin, “Fantasies,” 26.

¹⁴² Theodore Isaac Rubin, “Dr. Rubin,” *LHJ*, January 1972, 38.

course among young marrieds, of my generation.”¹⁴³ The column later described one couple as “coequals” and another as a “companionate relationship—what they refer to as an egalitarian rather than a traditional marriage.”¹⁴⁴ A third woman declared marriage “delighted” her because “teamwork was our forte.”¹⁴⁵ Even leisure activities were equal according to a woman who “omnivorously” read the same books as her husband “because we seem to like the same kind.”¹⁴⁶ Dr. Rubin echoed his earlier comment about respectful partnerships by stating men and women “must be open to learn about themselves and each other and the world they live in.”¹⁴⁷ But like any major societal shift, the road was rocky. The transition from a traditional male-led marriage to a modern coequal partnership was fantasy, not reality, for many women. The *Journal* described women whose husbands tried to corral their independence, outrank them, strip their identity, or confine them to the home. Mary Beal confessed she “came to feel less than a whole person” within her marriage.¹⁴⁸ Mary eventually remedied her feelings of frustration and developed her individuality by returning to school. The depiction of wives who successfully fulfilled their own desires was a vast improvement from the *Journal*’s previous encouragement of wifely subservience. Although egalitarian marriage remained

¹⁴³ Evan Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, July 1972, 88.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, February 1973, 54; March 1973, 60.

¹⁴⁵ Eileen Herbert Jordon, “Beautiful, Beautiful Me,” *LHJ*, January 1972, 199.

¹⁴⁶ Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, February 1973, 54.

¹⁴⁷ Rubin, “Dr. Rubin,” *LHJ*, January 1972, 38.

¹⁴⁸ Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, June 1973, 36.

a fantasy for many women, the heroine of the 1970s *Journal* was simultaneously coequal with, independent of, and partner to her husband.

During the 1970s, the *Journal* depicted women who defied the stay-at-home Supermother ideal. Although most mothers raised children within a traditional marriage, some women had children out of wedlock and one considered adoption, even though it would make her a single mother.¹⁴⁹ The *Journal* described women who divorced their husbands and others who remained happily unattached. Diane Christensen, a teacher and single parent, described how in the aftermath of her divorce she had “come alive—physically, spiritually, intellectually.”¹⁵⁰ These women were living proof that life could be fulfilling with or without a man. For a generation fresh out of the conformist fifties and the tumultuous sixties, this was still a radical thought.

Women who graced the pages of the *Ladies' Home Journal* in the 1970s possessed a better understanding of their own needs and dreams. Letty Pogrebin prompted women to consider their own happiness, rather than cater solely to husband and children. “The time has come for our needs to be respected, too... Just as many men find diverse gratifications in being loving husbands and fathers as well as productive workers, women also may want to live fuller, richer lives.”¹⁵¹ Editor John Mack Carter promised readers the magazine would “endeavor to guide the contemporary woman through all

¹⁴⁹ Dale Eunson, “The Wise Child,” *LHJ*, May 1973, 56-61; Libbie Block, “Certain Secret,” *LHJ*, October 1973, 104-110; Sherry Levy, “Meet the World’s First Woman Rabbi,” *LHJ*, June 1972, 75-79, 110.

¹⁵⁰ Evan Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, December 1973, 52.

¹⁵¹ Pogrebin, “The Working Woman,” 62.

manner of change, within herself and the world around her.”¹⁵² The *Journal* published more profiles of wise, compassionate, accomplished women who pursued careers, took part-time jobs, and attended school.¹⁵³ Columnists spoke about egalitarian marriages, unequal pay, and birth control, and encouraged women to pursue lives that felt fuller and more rewarding romantically, socially, academically, and professionally. Stories showed women who stood up to domineering husbands and pursued their own dreams outside of marriage. Within the pages of the *Journal*, women of the 1970s appeared independent, spirited, enthusiastic, charming, confident and, most importantly, they were true to themselves.¹⁵⁴

Motherhood remained a heroic characteristic in the 1970s, but children were not a requirement for success just as marriage was no longer the only path to fulfillment. The 1973 “Women of the Year” awards did not include motherhood as an accomplishment. Although the *Journal* never said so explicitly, its fictional and nonfictional role models were evidence enough that not only were motherhood and marriage no longer essential to a woman’s life, they might even hinder her happiness. “Childbearing still has an honored place in our culture—except in the labor market. Here, it’s a problem situation,” Pogrebin

¹⁵² John Mack Carter, “Editor’s Diary,” *LHJ*, January 1972, 9.

¹⁵³ Dale Eunson, “Tiger,” *LHJ*, March 1972, 123; Evan Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, June 1973, 36; Evan Frances, “How America Lives,” *LHJ*, September 1972, 76.

¹⁵⁴ See the following articles for examples of the many independent women who appeared in the *Journal* during the seventies. Mary Carson, “The Girl in the Miracle Room,” *LHJ*, February 1972, 70+; Lenore Hershey, “The New Pat Nixon,” *LHJ*, February 1972, 89-93; Lenore Hershey, “How Rose Keeps Growing,” *LHJ*, May 1972, 83-86; Sherry Levy, “Meet the World’s First Woman Rabbi,” *LHJ*, June 1972, 75-79; Will Stanton, “A Walk in the Rain,” *LHJ*, September 1972, 122+; Joan Cage, “The Wallace Women,” *LHJ*, October 1972, 98+; Willie Morris, “The Last of the Southern Girls” *LHJ*, March 1973, 137+; “Women of the Year 1973,” *LHJ*, June 1973, 67.

wrote.¹⁵⁵ For the first time motherhood was framed as a handicap, not a blessing. After listing corporations' most discriminatory practices against mothers, Pogrebin concluded the working mother was "the most maligned and misunderstood member of American society."¹⁵⁶

The *Journal* did not become a glossier sort of *Ms. Magazine*. However, the magazine evolved beyond its original focus on food, fashion, and beauty, and addressed the major social issues of the day in a frank, if not deep or radical, way. Carolyn Bird addressed "Myths that Keep Women Down" and an excerpt from *Our Bodies, Ourselves* told women how to defend themselves against rape.¹⁵⁷ Religion was touched upon in a description of the Virgin Mary as a "liberated" woman and an article detailed "How I Won My Fight to Become the First Woman Rabbi."¹⁵⁸ A January 1973 cover asked, "Is the Pope Unfair to Women? Should He Resign?" The resounding conclusion was "yes" and one interviewee boldly claimed that the Pope's ultraconservative stance "only confirms that the Church is a sexist institution. It is spiritual suicide for women to remain in the Church."¹⁵⁹ The "Power of a Woman" series encouraged women's emergent

¹⁵⁵ Pogrebin, "The Working Woman," 62.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Caroline Bird, "Myths that Keep Women Down," *LHJ*, November 1971, 68+; Boston Women's Health Collective, "Defending Yourself against Rape, Our Bodies, Ourselves," *Ladies' Home Journal*, July 1973, 62.

¹⁵⁸ John O'Connor, "The Liberation of the Virgin Mary," *LHJ*, December 1972, 75+; "How I Won My Fight to Become the First Woman Rabbi," *LHJ*, June 1972, 75+.

¹⁵⁹ The *Journal's* critical discussion of the Pope and Church in January 1973 was unprecedented for the magazine. The article outlined how Catholic men and women responded to the Pope's encyclical on women in the Church. Out of the *Journal's* twenty-six interviewees, only four reinforced the Pope. One interviewee brashly stated that

economic opportunities more than it preached volunteerism.¹⁶⁰ Economist Marina Whitman discussed sexism in the government. And psychiatrist Theodore Rubin described men as fearful, dependent, and emotionally childlike characters who often felt threatened by their wives' confidence.¹⁶¹ At least temporarily, the *Journal* had diverged from its traditional content and conclusions.

According to *Journal* editors, the eight "Women of the Year" in 1973 served as "a message for all women who are looking for answers to the questions, 'Who am I? Who can I be if I want to?'"¹⁶² To honor its Women of the Year nominees, the *Journal* created a television program as "a symbolic tribute to the many advances women have made in the past few years." Readers were invited to vote for one of ten nominees in eight categories: Public Affairs, Human Rights, Economy and Business, Youth Leadership, Arts and Humanities, Voluntary Action, Science and Research, and Quality of Life. The television program ran from its debut in 1973 until 1979. Nobel laureate Rosalyn Yalow is the only woman known to refuse what she considered "a ghetto award."¹⁶³ Yalow

"asking if the Pope is unfair to women is like asking if the KKK is unfair to Blacks." John O'Connor, "Should the Pope Resign?" *LHJ*, January 1973, 90+. In contrast, just four years earlier, the *Journal* published an explanation (rather than a condemnation) of the Pope's ruling on birth control. See Morris West, "The Pope and the Pill: A Modern Tragedy," *LHJ*, May 1969, 94+.

¹⁶⁰ "Power of a Woman," *LHJ*, May 1972; Herbert Stein, "Women's Second Economic Revolution," *LHJ*, October 1972, 28+.

¹⁶¹ Theodore Rubin, "What Women Don't Understand about Men," *LHJ*, September 1973, 24.

¹⁶² "Women of the Year 1973," 67.

¹⁶³ Rosalyn Yalow believed the award harmed professional women by comparing them to one another, rather than peers of both genders. In Yalow's opinion, it is "unwise to have awards restricted to women or to men in fields of endeavor where excellence is

believed women's inequality in the workplace could "only be changed by women who regard themselves and are regarded by others as being plain excellent not excellent only in comparison to other women."¹⁶⁴ On the *New York Times* Op-Ed page, Yalow and *Journal* editor Lenore Hershey debated the merit and usefulness of such awards. Hershey insisted the awards provided much-needed role models for women, who continued to face a long and difficult path to professional parity.¹⁶⁵

Mainstream magazines introduced millions of women to new occupations, opportunities, and feminist ideas. Within the familiar pages of their favorite magazines, women consumed articles that encouraged them to reenter school, to develop their individuality, and to demand just treatment from husbands. During an interview, Barbara Shields told professor Ruth Rosen how she learned about the women's movement. Pointing at a stack of publications Shields explained:

"It was the women's magazines. You know, they had all these articles about learning how to dress for work, how to ask for a raise, how to juggle your family's needs and your work. I began to realize that I had followed my mother's life without even questioning it."¹⁶⁶

Shields' life followed a typical pattern; she married at twenty-two, supported her husband through law school, and left work to raise her sons full-time. The women's movement transformed her traditional attitude towards marriage:

not inherently sex-related." "Nobelist Yalow Refuses Sex-Rated Award," *The Decatur Daily Review*, July 8, 1978, 4.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ "Editor's Diary," *LHJ*, April 1973, 4; "Women of the Year," *LHJ*, February 1973, 67; Hershey, *Between Covers*, 97-101.

¹⁶⁶ Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Group, 2000), 310.

“I felt that I wanted to be more assertive. I know that my marriage is in some sense different than it was in the beginning because I felt that I wanted to be more central in it, instead of always following someone else all the time. I’m sure the women’s movement was the influence. I read magazines and books; I heard people speak and I felt more important as an individual.”¹⁶⁷

After her sons enrolled in high school, Shields went back to graduate school. When the husband she faithfully followed for thirty years suddenly ended their marriage, Shields wondered whether her increasing age or her growing independence was the cause.¹⁶⁸

The *Journal* continued to periodically reinforce stay-at-home mothers. In “Women Lib, the Tooth Fairy, and other Myths,” a working mother is forced to return home after a mysterious dizziness overcame her at work. After some time at home, she discovered with dismay that her job caused her to miss important family milestones. This out-of-touch working mom chose to stay home full-time after she came to a surprising conclusion:

“I was right when I said Women’s Liberation wasn’t titles on the door or salary raises, but I was wrong when I said it didn’t exist. It does exist, and I’ve just been liberated from leading two fragmented lives, liberated from doing a juggling act on a tight rope— keeping sitters, children, husband, employer and myself, almost, but not quite satisfied. I was confusing liberation with freedom, because of course I am not free.... I am liberated, but I am not free. With luck I will never be free, but bound forever.”¹⁶⁹

This woman claimed that liberation, rather than tradition, limited her life. Although many women believed the women’s movement changed their lives for the better, some continued to see liberation as a myth and a hindrance.

¹⁶⁷ Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 311.

¹⁶⁸ Ruth Rosen conducted her interview with Barbara Shields (whose name was changed for privacy reasons) in a Connecticut suburb in May and October of 1988. Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 311.

¹⁶⁹ Marnie Ellingson, “Women’s Lib, the Tooth Fairy, and Other Myths,” *LHJ*, March 1971, 116, 184-87.

The *Journal* revered domesticity even as it glamorized careerism. In 1979 the *Journal* introduced a new section called, “It’s not easy to be a woman today!” Over the following year the column featured such varied titles as “How I Went from Ruffles to Hard Hat,” “I Won’t Apologize for Being a Housewife,” “It Took Me a Long Time to Grow Up,” “I Learned to Love Myself after He Stopped Loving Me,” “Can a [Single] Woman Live without a Man?” and “Will I Ever Find a Liberated Man?” Of course, the magazine’s steady diet of food, fashion, and furnishings continued. The publication sought to balance its past and its future and to appeal to traditional readers and women whose roles were changing drastically. The *Journal*’s contradictory content, which offered advice on homemaking and broken homes within the same breath, reflected the multidimensional, fluctuating, and tension-filled lives of women of the seventies.

As the number of women in the labor force swelled, magazines expanded self-help columns to include harried housewives and worried working women. Advice columns taught divorced women to cope with change and to practice assertiveness instead of deference. Columnists urged women to make choices that would earn them raises and respect. Doctors reassured working mothers their children could endure their absence and suggested working wives schedule dates to maintain their marriages.¹⁷⁰ Just as the *Journal* encouraged women to cultivate confidence, independence, and careers, subscriptions to *Ladies’ Home Journal* dropped from 6 million in 1981 to 5 million in 1983.¹⁷¹ Despite editors’ best efforts to introduce new content, columnists, and attitudes,

¹⁷⁰ These overviews come from examining various *LHJ* issues between 1960 and 1980.

¹⁷¹ Gaye Tuchman, “Introduction: The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media,” in *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*, eds. Gaye Tuchman et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 3-38.

many professional women set aside traditional publications for newer, more feminist magazines.¹⁷² Perhaps the *Ladies' Home Journal* was simply unable to change as quickly as its audience evolved.

Supermother I and II

In 1976, Ellen Goodman believed the original Supermother ideal had evolved into a new set of standards and responsibilities. Goodman had observed a shift in society, like “we’ve passed through time zones in our notions of mothering and especially in our tyrannies of supermothering.” The Supermother “is that Perfect Person against whom we compare ourselves in order to fully experience failure, not to mention self-loathing, and a complex labeled inferiority. She is the lady we carry around in our heads just for the guilt of it.”¹⁷³

Goodman differentiated between “two generations” of the Supermother. Supermother I was the reigning ideal when Goodman first became a mother during the mid-1960s. Supermother I was your “basic, devoted selfless Total Mother whose children never had running noses” and who always had artful lunches made by “following the instructions in a women’s magazine.” This “relentlessly cheerful” creature was “delighted to clean up the kitchen after those helpless urchins—daddy and the kiddies.” However, at a time when nearly half the mothers in the country were also employed

¹⁷² Kathy Kaiser suggested the dip in magazine circulation during the 1980s might be due to the nontraditional, career-minded women who chose to read newer feminist magazines instead of the traditional women’s magazines. See Kathy Kaiser, “The New Women’s Magazines: It’s the Same Old Story,” *Frontiers* 4 (1979): 14-17.

¹⁷³ Ellen Goodman, “Supermother, Updated,” *Washington Post*, May 7, 1976, A27.

outside the home, Supermother I had fallen to the wayside. Goodman was delighted to watch her demise; she assumed that the unsustainable, perfectionist ideal had fallen out of vogue.

Supermother I was reincarnated as Supermother II, a stronger, shinier version of her former self. The “new, revised, updated model went from traditional to transitional. She is now ‘Supermom at Home and on the Job.’” According to Goodman, this superhuman model managed her many obligations with ease:

“The All-Around Supermom rises, dresses in her chic pants suit, oversees breakfast and the search for the sneakers and then goes off to her glamorous high-paying job at an advertising agency where she seeks Personal Fulfillment and the kids’ college tuition. She has, of course, previously found a Mary Poppins figure to take care of the kids after school. Mary Poppins loves them as if they were her own, works for a mere pittance and is utterly reliable.”

After work, the Supermother II returns home and easily tackles hours of unpaid labor; she cooks, cleans, folds laundry, mediates conflict, teaches her children, and entertains her husband. She does it all diligently and cheerfully; if she feels overwhelmed, it never shows. “The transitional Supermother does not ask for help, by the way, because she has ‘chosen to work,’” Goodman explains. “Therefore, she reasons, it’s her problem. Besides, she can do it all.”

Goodman believes that a strong sense of guilt motivates women to chase this lofty ideal:

“Supermom II, you see, is still overcompensating like mad for not being Supermom I. She probably is anxious because she doesn’t put raisin faces in the kids’ oatmeal. She is making up for her guilt-trip to the office.”

The evolution from Supermother I to II suggests that women of the 1970s were expected to meet an even more challenging measure of success compared to women of the 1950s and 1960s. Version II is doubly unattainable because it requires twice the work; women

were required to perform *two* jobs flawlessly. Goodman rejects both versions outright, and encourages readers to “dump the Supermothers of today and yesterday overboard.”

Women Wanted “Moore” Than Motherhood

By the dawn of the 1970s literate America was well aware of the women’s movement and television series began to reflect how Americans dealt with major shifts in women’s lives. *Maude* openly discussed abortion, *All in the Family* argued about women’s liberation, and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* followed modern women who worked, dated, and attended consciousness-raising sessions. Off screen, American women actively explored those issues and challenged the status quo. Women marched down Fifth Avenue in New York City as part of the “Women Strike for Equality” demonstration on August 26, 1970. National Organization for Women President Betty Freidan called it “a twenty-four hour general strike... of all women in America against the concrete conditions of their oppression.”¹⁷⁴ As the seventies unfolded, women’s rights continued to be explored subtly and overtly in television series.

The first episode of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* aired in September 1970, fresh off a wave of publicity generated by feminist activity. The show revolved around Mary Richards, an unmarried, thirty-year-old working woman and her network of friends and co-workers at the WJM-TV station in Minneapolis. Mary was a breath of fresh air; she had real male and female friends, excelled in a career she loved, dated men she liked, rejected the men she didn’t, and took birth control pills. Female viewers admired her. Marriage anxiety did not affect her. The show’s theme song asks, “How will you make it

¹⁷⁴ Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women’s Movement in America since 1960* (New York: Touchstone, 1991), 115.

on your own? This world is awfully big, and girl, this time you're all alone." Mary not only "made it" on her own, she flourished. For what seemed like the first time in prime-time television, viewers had an accomplished, relatable, feminine and feminist character to emulate. The show maintained top ratings, won twenty-five Emmys, and gave rise to successful sitcom spinoffs.

In the series' premier "Love Is All Around," Mary leaves her hometown, her family, and her ex-fiancée to make it on her own in Minneapolis. During a job interview at the WJM-TV station, director Lou Grant asks Mary a series of invasive questions:

Mr. Grant: What religion are you?
Mary: Uh, Mr. Grant, I don't quite know how to say this, but you're not allowed to ask that when someone's applying for a job. It's against the law.
Mr. Grant: Wanna call a cop?
Mary: No.
Mr. Grant: Good. Would you think I was violating your civil rights if I asked if you're married?
Mary: Presbyterian. Well, I-I decided I'd answer your religion question.
Mr. Grant: Divorced?
Mary: No.
Mr. Grant: Never married?
Mary: No... There's no simple answer to why a person isn't married.
Mr. Grant: Look, miss, would you try answering the questions as I ask 'em?
Mary: Yes Mr. Grant, I will, but it does seem that you've been asking a lot of very personal questions that don't have a thing to do with my qualifications for this job.
Mr. Grant: You know what? You've got spunk.
Mary: Well, yes.
Mr. Grant: I hate spunk!

Mary's unease and indignation at Lou's inappropriate job interview questions invites equal-opportunity rhetoric into the storyline. Lou offers Mary the associate producer

position but admits, “I figured I’d hire a man for it.”¹⁷⁵ The sexism continues when Lou clarifies that the position pays “ten dollars less a week than a secretarial job.” As Darrell Hamamoto explains, “the unspoken implication was that the ten dollar differential between the window dressing secretarial job and the position of substance as associate producer represented the price of ‘making it’ in a male-dominated profession.”¹⁷⁶ If Mary were male, she would not have been ordered to relinquish money for a meaningless title. When Lou declares, “If I don’t like you, I’ll fire you,” and a coworker calls Mary the newsroom’s “token woman,” it becomes clear that Mary does not begin her job on equal footing with male colleagues.¹⁷⁷ Mary’s personality, not ability, won her the job.

The show gives a comic nod to the second-wave feminist belief that traditional marriage suffocates women. At the end of the debut episode, Mary’s former fiancée Bill attempts to rekindle their romance. Before he arrives, Mary’s friend and landlord Phyllis offers sage advice. Marriage can be “beautiful... if you look at it realistically,” Phyllis states. “Face the fact that it means a certain amount of sacrificing, of unselfishness, denying your own ego, sublimating, accommodating, surrendering.”¹⁷⁸ As she lists the numerous sacrifices marriage demands, Phyllis grows increasingly agitated and grips Mary’s hand tighter. “Believe me, I know about marriage,” Phyllis says tiredly. Phyllis, whose husband is perpetually absent, is no paragon of marital bliss.

¹⁷⁵ *Mary Tyler Moore*, “Love Is All Around,” season 1, episode 1, directed by Jay Sandrich, written by James L. Brooks and Allan Burns, CBS, September 19, 1970.

¹⁷⁶ Darrell Hamamoto, *Nervous Laughter: Television Situation Comedy and Liberal Democratic Ideology* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 115.

¹⁷⁷ *Mary Tyler Moore*, “Love Is All Around,” 1970.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Bill attempts to win Mary back with flowers, but their exchange quickly sours. After noticing that Bill's feeble and insincere declaration of love "doesn't come out too well" Mary opts to dismiss him a second time. After she patiently "waited two years" to wed Bill, Mary finally chose to build a different future for herself in Minneapolis rather than allow a selfish, pretentious man to continue to define their relationship. Throughout their conversation, Mary never acted angry or cold towards Bill. She remained unwaveringly vulnerable and caring, which made her even more likeable. Clearly Bill is at a loss, not her. "I could have married him," Mary later told Lou in a noticeably distressed tone. "He missed out on the best wife." Mary's rejection of marriage (to a doctor no less) in favor of her new life and new job is a key defining moment in the origin story of the show. The scene demonstrates that a woman's rejection of marriage does not automatically spell disaster, loneliness, or loss. Instead, Mary's choice to remain single is a declaration of self-respect and the start of a new, exciting life. Although Mary's voice wavers her words are clear: "You know, I'm really lucky."¹⁷⁹

Mary Richards' persona was comprised of various feminist themes prevalent in popular media during the seventies. The sitcom adopted and adapted a model of television's "new woman" who was young, attractive, white, single, and middleclass. Mary Richards possessed many of the same qualities of another popular poster girl – Gloria Steinem. Like Richards, Steinem was attractive, heterosexual, thirtyish, and unmarried. Steinem was the movement's most popular symbol and magazines regularly

¹⁷⁹ *Mary Tyler Moore*, "Love Is All Around," 1970.

profiled her glamorous single woman lifestyle.¹⁸⁰ Dubbed “the women’s movement’s most persuasive evangelist” by *McCall’s*, Steinem was often praised for her warmth, beauty, style, and modesty.¹⁸¹ *Newsweek* proclaimed Steinem “The New Woman” and crowned her “A Liberated Woman Despite Beauty, Chic, and Success.”¹⁸² *Esquire* called Steinem “the intellectual’s pin-up,” and “the one the ad men meant when they wrote ‘You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby.’”¹⁸³ *McCall’s* chose Steinem as its 1972 “Woman of the Year” for her ability “to bridge the gap between the early militants, whose vehemence frightened away the people they wanted most to reach, and the thoughtful, dedicated women who understand that women’s status *must* change. She is, in short, a transitional figure, proof that change is not so frightening after all.”¹⁸⁴ Susan Douglas described Steinem as “the exemplar of the new, liberated young woman; she was the compromise the news media had been looking for, a feminist who looked like a fashion model.”¹⁸⁵ With her golden locks and conventional beauty, Gloria Steinem was a “transitional figure” who made change seem more appealing and less frightening.¹⁸⁶ Bearing an

¹⁸⁰ Richard Boeth, “Gloria Steinem: The New Woman,” *Newsweek*, August 16, 1971, 51-55; Leonard Levitt, “She: The Awesome Power of Gloria Steinem,” *Esquire*, October 1971, 88-90+; “Woman of the Year,” *McCall’s*, January 1972, 67.

¹⁸¹ Marilyn Mercer, “Gloria: The Unhidden Persuader,” *McCall’s*, January 1972, 68.

¹⁸² Boeth, “Gloria Steinem,” 51.

¹⁸³ Levitt, “She,” 88.

¹⁸⁴ “Woman of the Year,” *McCall’s*, January 1972, 67.

¹⁸⁵ Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Random House, 1994), 230.

¹⁸⁶ “Woman of the Year,” 67.

endearing smile and lithe figure, Mary Richards played a similar role. Both possessed the potential to market liberation. Producers and various critics claimed *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* explored women's lifestyles, not politics. But that is precisely the point: the show was about *lifestyle* feminism. Mass media increasingly equated feminism with lifestyle, especially when feminism appeared in the form of an attractive, articulate spokeswoman like Gloria Steinem. Mary Richards was a character rooted in much more than earlier sitcoms; she was a product of the relationship between media and feminism and, like Gloria Steinem, she was a symbol of "The New Woman" many Americans would come to embrace.

The Mary Tyler Moore Show gained much of its appeal from its novel heroine and progressive use of women's liberation discourse. According to early reviews, it was truly a new kind of sitcom. In a 1970 review for *Life* magazine, John Leonard praised the show's defiance of typical sitcom clichés:

"If women have a profession, it's usually nursing, where they minister to men. If they are superior to men, it's because they have magical powers. If they are over 30 years old, they've got to be widows, almost always with children, so that they can't run around enjoying themselves like real people. And they're guaranteed to be helpless once every fifteen minutes."¹⁸⁷

In contrast, the "subversive Mary Tyler Moore," is a self-sufficient, self-respecting heroine who is "over thirty without being either a widow or a nurse." Leonard predicted that "if *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* ever goes into weekday reruns, vampirized

¹⁸⁷ Leonard alludes to a number of television shows. Popular sitcoms about women with supernatural powers include *Bewitched* (1964-1972), *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-1970), and *The Flying Nun* (1967-1970). A widowed nurse was the focus of *Julia* (1968-1971) and widowed mothers populated *The Doris Day Show* (1968-1973), *Here's Lucy* (1968-74), *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1968-1970), and *The Partridge Family* (1970-1974). John Leonard, "The Subversive Mary Tyler Moore," *Life*, December 18, 1970, 8.

homemakers may get their consciousness raised to the point where they will refuse to leave their brains in the sugar canister any longer.”¹⁸⁸ A 1971 *TV Guide* article on “TV and the Single Girl” also praised Mary Richards and Rhoda Morgenstern for “surviving without the comfort of a brood of children or a steady boyfriend.”¹⁸⁹ Compared to other sitcoms of the 1970s, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* was innovative and fresh because its heroine was simultaneously charming and ambitious, beautiful yet unwed, and capable but never callous.

Mary Tyler Moore defied traditional representations of women and paved a new path for onscreen heroines. When television first entered American households in the 1950s, sitcoms firmly situated women at home and men at work to “naturalize woman’s place in the home.”¹⁹⁰ Moore, however, made professional choices that departed from the “good wife” stereotype.¹⁹¹ After she rocketed to fame during the sixties as model good wife Laura Petrie on *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-1966), Moore opted to play perky career woman Mary Richards throughout the seventies.¹⁹² By populating screens first as

¹⁸⁸ Leonard, “The Subversive Mary Tyler Moore,” 8.

¹⁸⁹ Diane Rosen, “TV and the Single Girl,” *TV Guide*, November 6, 1971, 14.

¹⁹⁰ Mary Beth Haralovich, “Sit-coms and Suburbs: Positioning the 1950s Homemaker,” in *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, eds., Denise Mann and Lynn Spigel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 112.

¹⁹¹ In addition to *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-1966), some of the most popular shows with a “good wife” at their center included *Mama* (1949-1956), *Father Knows Best* (1954-1963), *Leave It to Beaver* (1957-1963), and *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* (1952-1966). Diana Meehan, *Ladies of the Evening: Women Characters of Prime-Time Television* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1983).

¹⁹² Mass media outlets noted Mary Tyler Moore’s onscreen shift from good wife to working woman. For example, see Dwight Whitney, “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby,” *TV Guide*, September 19, 1970, 34-38.

the consummate “good wife” and later as a fashionable “new woman,” Moore portrayed the shift from domesticity to liberation as approachable, even desirable.

The sitcom pushed the parameters of typical storylines limited by marriage anxiety, husband hunting, widowed motherhood, and charming ineptitude. Mary Richards opposed standard tropes; she was not anxious about marriage, she dated but was not desperate for a ring, she was neither a widow nor a mother, and she was both competent and charming. She was single by choice and did not receive obvious financial support from a protective male relative. In stark contrast to the string of onscreen female teachers and secretaries, Mary worked as an associate producer – a job traditionally assigned to men.

Mary Tyler Moore was not the first working-woman sitcom, but it was the most popular and long-running television series to feature a female lead who made her career the center of a satisfying life, rather than a prelude to marriage. The independent lifestyle Mary led as a young, beautiful, heterosexual, white woman provided a new model for television portrayals of single women, working women, and feminism. Although creators claimed the show was not political, writer-producer James Brooks said he “sought to show someone from Mary Richards’ background being in a world where women’s rights were being talked about and it was having an impact.”¹⁹³ Another sitcom writer explained, “To me, Mary Richards represented a new attitude, that you could be single and still be a whole person, that you didn’t need to be married to have a complete life.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Serafina Bathrick, “*The Mary Tyler Moore Show: Women at Home and at Work*,” in *MTM: Quality Television*, ed. Jane Feuer et al. (London: British Film Institute, 1984), 103-104.

¹⁹⁴ Robert S. Alley and Irby B. Brown, *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (New York: Delta, 1989), 50.

Mary validated women's ability to be simultaneously attractive, autonomous, likeable, and successful, and viewers identified with the show as a positive representation of female independence.¹⁹⁵

Working Nine to Five

Feminism briefly captivated the film industry during the late 1970s. Housewives left the home to find their voice and independence in films like *Diary of a Mad Housewife*, *An Unmarried Woman*, *The Turning Point*, *A Woman under the Influence*, *Up the Sandbox*, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, and *Private Benjamin*. Rather than husband hungry over-thirty single women who were equal parts pathetic and neurotic, the women who go mad in 1970s films are suburban housewives driven crazy by domineering husbands and household drudgery. Husbands turn housewives into robots in *The Stepford Wives* and drive women to constant pill popping in *Diary of a Mad Housewife* and *A Woman under the Influence*. Male characters are quick to call these women mad. However, the women's nervous breakdowns stem from crippling domestic conditions, which makes their reactions seem less like neuroticism and more like a form of feminist resistance. By the end of the 1970s, movie studios had noticed the struggle for women's independence could be a profitable subject.

American audiences loved the cult comedy *9 to 5*, a war of the sexes set in a corporate office. The bold film earned over \$100 million at the box office, making it the

¹⁹⁵ Andrea Press found that working-class women did not identify with Mary Richards and, sometimes, they actively disliked the character. In contrast, middle-class women felt affinity for Mary. The show's mixed messages about feminism appealed most to middle-class women, who were the demographic advertisers hoped to reach. Andrea Press, *Women Watching Television: Class, Gender, and Generation in the American Television Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 77-79.

second highest-grossing movie of 1980 after *The Empire Strikes Back*, which made slightly more. The movie pits three women, played by Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, and Dolly Parton, against their boss Franklin Hart Jr., a “sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot.” Hart spends his days making inappropriate passes at his assistant, Miss Doralee Rhodes. After purposefully knocking pencils on the floor to catch a glimpse of Doralee’s cleavage, Hart assures Doralee that she means much more to him than “just a dumb secretary.”¹⁹⁶ Doralee resists Hart’s advances yet he claims to sleep with her anyways, which prompts coworkers to silently shun her. Jane Fonda plays the nervous new hire Judy Bernly, a mousy divorcée who lacks any sense of self or paid work. When Hart discovers Judy struggling with the copy machine, he gives her a threatening ultimatum rather than encouragement. The office is portrayed as a toxic environment where women endure predatory management, daily harassment, and cliquish colleagues.

Hart heaps his most poignant abuse upon Violet Newstead, who is a capable, fair, and hardworking employee. Hart humiliates Violet in a million ways large and small; he assigns her servile tasks, steals her ideas, and takes credit for her work. But Violet, who is an industrious and intelligent mother-of-four, grins and bears the abuse because she desperately wants a raise. After Hart awards a less qualified male employee yet another of her hard-earned promotions, Violet becomes livid and confronts Hart. In response he merely snaps, “spare me the women’s lib crap.”

Hart is soon taught the meaning of liberation – and restraint – when the women kidnap and confine him to his home. The ruse begins after Hart unlawfully fires an employee for comparing her salary with coworkers; the National Labor Relations Act of

¹⁹⁶ *9 to 5*, directed by Colin Higgins (1980; Beverly Hills, CA: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2006), videodisc.

1935 failed to protect her right to discuss salary.¹⁹⁷ Upon learning of her dismissal, Violet, Judy, and Doralee head to the bar to drown their misery and exhaustion. The women bond over shared humiliations and, after smoking a joint and spinning hilarious revenge fantasies, they return to work. The next day Violet accidentally adds rat poison to Mr. Hart's coffee and, in a flurry of panicked confusion, the women kidnap and imprison Hart in his home. With Hart and his philandering safely tucked away, the women set out to run the company according to their rules.

The women quickly create a workplace that is efficient, fair, and supportive. They implement flexible schedules and a job-sharing program, eliminate sterile cubicles to allow for personalization, organize a daycare center, and introduce equal pay. Employees become happier and office productivity increases by 20 percent – a vast improvement that soon attracts praise from upper management. By removing traditional rules and implementing policies favorable for women, Violet, Judy and Doralee create a utopic workplace that increases efficiency and improves conditions for employer and employee alike. Unfortunately, nearly forty years after the movie debuted, many of the workplace improvements made onscreen have yet to materialize off-screen. Paid parental leave, pay equity, and affordable, quality daycare remain a dream now, just as they were in 1980.

Movies, Motherhood, Marriage... and Divorce

Films of the 1970s turned a critical eye to American marriage, rather than American women. “A woman like me works twice as hard and for what?” housewife

¹⁹⁷ The themes explored in *9 to 5* were timely. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 should have prevented Hart from firing the employee who shared salary specifics, but it did not. And the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Council, which clarified sexual harassment as unlawful under Title VII, did not protect Doralee from constant sexual harassment.

Margaret asks her husband in *Up the Sandbox*. “Stretch marks and varicose veins, that’s what. You’ve got one job; I’ve got ninety-seven. Maybe I should be on the cover of *Time*. Dust Mop of the Year! Queen of the Laundry Room! Expert on Tinker Toys!”¹⁹⁸ Margaret’s mother crisply paraphrases the imbalance: “Remember, marriage is a 75–25 proposition. The woman gives 75.” During the 1970s, women in films scrutinized, rather than blindly accepted, the inequities of traditional wedlock.

Heroines of the 1970s were no longer content to play the supportive wife. Onscreen women yearned to find their own voices and independence. “This story is going to be all about me,” Sybylla announces at the beginning of *My Brilliant Career*, an Australian film that gained popularity in the United States.¹⁹⁹ “Maybe I’m ambitious, selfish,” she declares after turning down a marriage proposal. “But I can’t lose myself in somebody else’s life when I haven’t lived my own yet.” Sybylla “grows to understand that life is a series of trade-offs, and that no one can have it all.”²⁰⁰ She rejected her suitor because marriage would spell an end to her story and independence before it had even developed. Judy in *Private Benjamin* begins with less moxie than Sybylla but arrives at a similar revelation. When Judy’s husband-to-be suddenly dies, her “life’s desire” – marriage – abruptly collapses. “If I’m not going to be married, I don’t know what I’m supposed to do with myself,” Judy wails. She enlists in the army and develops emotional

¹⁹⁸ *Up the Sandbox*, directed by Irvin Kershner (1972; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2003), videodisc.

¹⁹⁹ *My Brilliant Career*, directed by Gill Armstrong (1979; West Hollywood, CA: Blue Underground, 2005), videodisc.

²⁰⁰ The Internet Movie Database explains: “Sybylla Melvyn struggles with the conflicts that we all have between ambition, family, love, and guilt in a most remarkable manner. Sybylla grows to understand that life is a series of trade-offs, and that no one can have it all.”

and economic independence. Eventually Judy becomes engaged again (this time to a French doctor) but, once his philandering comes to light, Judy halts the wedding, flees the church, and flings her veil to the sky. Rather than curate her life around a subpar spouse simply because traditional marriage was the expectation, Judy became the liberated master of her own destiny.

While Sybylla and Judy escaped the clutches of traditional marriage before it broke them, Joanna Kramer was less lucky. The opening scene of *Kramer vs. Kramer* shows Joanna bent over the bed of her sleeping son, Billy. Joanna appears poised to leave and when her husband Ted returns home we understand why: Ted is utterly self-absorbed. When Ted urges Joanna back into the apartment she pleads like a caged animal, “Don’t make me go in there, please, please.”²⁰¹ Desperate to escape marriage, Joanna cites herself as the problem: “It’s me, it’s my fault. I just married the wrong person, that’s all. I can’t hack it, I can’t hack it.” Depressed and hysterical, Joanna also blames herself for poor parenting; “I’m no good for Billy. I’m terrible with him. I have no patience. He’s better off without me.” Other characters are quick to offer theories, and judgments, about her departure. Margaret, Joanna’s close friend, lectures Ted: “You may not want to hear this but it took a lot of courage for her to walk out of here.” “How much courage does it take to walk out on your kid?” Ted snaps before he expels Margaret from the apartment and blames Joanna’s disappearance on feminism. “Sisterhood” Ted snarls. The next day, Ted blames female friendship and women’s liberation again for Joanna’s departure. “She’s got this friend, Margaret, downstairs,” Ted tells his boss. And Margaret and Joanna chitchat about “you know, women’s lib... And I think they may have cooked

²⁰¹ *Kramer vs. Kramer*, directed by Robert Benton (1979; Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures), Amazon Video.

this up but who knows, you know what I mean? I mean it worked. I'm going crazy!" Both men burst into laughter. "Look, not to worry. She'll be back," his boss reassures. But Joanna does not intend to return, which Ted finally understands when Joanna sends Billy a letter. "I have gone away because I must find something interesting to do for myself in the world. Everybody has to and so do I," Joanna tells her son. "Being your mommy was one thing, but there are other things too, and this is what I have to do... I just won't be your mommy in the house." The letter is utterly clear: Joanna is gone. At the end of the movie Joanna suddenly reappears and explains that she left because "I didn't know who I was." After a lifetime spent as someone's wife, mother, or daughter, Joanna lacked her own identity; "And that's why I had to go away." Her abandonment was a rejection of one set of ideals – marriage and motherhood – in exchange for personal autonomy.

Joanna represented many women's desire to be more than just a housewife. Ted, who began the story as a clueless and selfish husband, served as a foil for all American men. Ted blamed women's liberation, his wife's friends, and society for the deterioration of his marriage. Eventually Ted realized that his selfishness and conventional marriage expectations triggered Joanna's depression and hysteria. Following this revelation Ted told Billy,

"I think the reason why Mommy left was because for a long time now I've kept trying to make her be a certain kind of person, Billy. A certain kind of wife that I thought she was supposed to be. And she just wasn't like that. And now that I think about it, I think that she tried for so long to make me happy, and when she couldn't, she tried to talk to me about it, see, but I wasn't listening, 'cause I was too busy. I was too wrapped up just thinking about myself."

Ted's introspective confession surprised moviegoers at the time; the idea that a husband would take responsibility for his wife's abandonment was unheard of. In a sea of self-

help advice that urged women to look inwards to fix themselves and their marriages, it was a radical move to identify anyone but a wife or mother as the root of the problem. Unrealistic and oppressive social expectations were also responsible for Joanna's depression; her abandonment was a rejection of American society's strict vision and division of happy housewife and workaholic breadwinner.

Kramer vs. Kramer addresses the incompatibility of parenthood and professions. From the beginning, there is a strict division between Joanna's wifely duties and Ted's job obligations. After Joanna leaves, Ted quickly realizes he knows nothing about housework or childcare. His first attempt at breakfast is a comic farce that ends in burnt fingers, black toast, and sharp curses. Ted's learning curve is steep as he stumbles his way through grocery shopping, dinner preparation, school pickups, and birthday parties. "Life can go on without Mommy," Ted reassures Billy. "Daddy can bring home the bacon and cook it up too." But the ability to earn and cook the proverbial bacon is not so easy, Ted quickly learns. Ted's boss Jim swiftly frames Billy as a "problem" and suggests Ted "send Billy away to stay with relatives for a while." According to Jim, who represents the typical corporate workplace, childcare conflicts are simply solved by removing children from the equation altogether. After reminding Ted about the important Mid-Atlantic account Jim warns,

"I've gotta depend on you. I gotta count on you for 110%, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. I gotta have that, Ted. I mean, I can't be concerned about you worrying about a kid with a runny nose."

Not only is Billy framed as a distraction and a nuisance to pass off to relatives, Jim also suggests Billy threatens to derail Ted's entire career trajectory. In no uncertain terms, the boss has declared that childcare and career cannot mix. Ted hastily reassures his

manager; “You can count on me 25 hours a day, eight days a week. Because I’m not a loser, Jim, you know that. And I’ve never let anything at home, you know, come into the office.” Weeks later, Ted arrives fifteen minutes late to a meeting juggling groceries and looking disheveled. Jim chides, “Look. I can’t let your family problems interfere with my responsibilities. I got a shop to run.” Jim’s demarcation between permissible and unacceptable conduct at work illuminated a strict line between public and private duties, and traditional male breadwinner and female caregiver roles. His attitude mirrored a corporate structure in which unwavering devotion to one’s job indicated success, and any attempt to compartmentalize parenting and professional roles was guaranteed to be a Sisyphean effort.

Jim’s character is a direct counterpoint to the women’s movement and its advocacy of a flexible and family-friendly workplace. Ted, like many primary caregivers, struggles to reconcile work and home responsibilities. He can no longer work late evenings without interruption, socialize endlessly with new clients, or linger over drinks and gossip with his boss. When the film began Ted was absorbed in his career, driven by ambition, and blind to his wife’s depression. The division between home and work was so sharply defined that Ted was oblivious to his own son’s grade in school; by the end of the film, Ted appreciates the immense joy and effort of raising a child. But as Ted’s relationship with Billy blossoms his work slips. It is impossible to be available “25 hours a day, eight days a week” to both a boss and child. By the end of the film, Ted realizes what every working mother knows to be true: that success at work and at home is impossible.

By the end of the film, it becomes clear why the Kramer marriage crumbled. Ted and Joanna were children of the fifties, programmed from birth to embrace the traditional roles of breadwinner and housewife. But housewife was an ill-fitting standard Joanna was forced to meet. In a storyline Betty Freidan would approve, Joanna graduated from Smith College and worked for *Mademoiselle* magazine before marriage; after her son's birth, she quit her job to care full-time for her family. Joanna yearned to tell her husband of her unhappiness, but he was too absorbed in his career to notice her deepening depression. Only after a painful split and crash course in childcare did Ted awaken to his absurd attempt to mold his educated wife into a happy homemaker.

Kramer vs. Kramer questions the gender roles Americans are taught to play and challenges the incompatibility of home and work life. Although Joanna remained impulsive, individualistic, and absent throughout the film, Ted grew more compassionate and capable. Ted's transformation proves that even workaholic fathers can become loving and dependable caregivers. His transformation, as well as the court's decision to award custody to an irresponsible mother, challenged the deeply ingrained belief that women make better parents. Both gave credence to the claim feminists want to have their cake and eat it too. Although Joanna never identified herself as a feminist, characters and critics were quick to assign her that label. By demonizing Joanna, the film trivialized the feminist aim to make family and work available to both men and women.²⁰² The film fails to encourage husbands and wives to share responsibilities at home and at work.

²⁰² For a contemporary review of *Kramer vs. Kramer*, see *Time*, December 3, 1979, 74; and "Custody: Kramer vs. Reality," *Time*, February 4, 1980, 77. For an analysis of the film see Judith Maybe, "The Woman at the Keyhole: Women's Cinema and Feminist Film Criticism," in *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. Mary Anne Doane et al. (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984), 61-62.

Instead, the film implies that men should have the right to women's work, just as women won the right to enter male professions. Both parents irresponsibly abandon their child; Ted withdraws into work and Joanna disappears to California. But Joanna is more harshly ridiculed for her decision to opt out of parenting while Ted is celebrated for his ability to assume a mothering role. One of the movie's central tenets is the father figure's ability to meet challenges head-on and succeed while the mother runs from responsibility. Although the film temporarily bucks tradition by inserting a father into a mother's role, traditional values persist as the care-giving parent realizes that ambition and autonomy are secondary to a child's wellbeing.

According to Gary Bauer, who served as the head of the Family Research Council during President Ronald Reagan's tenure, two things were to blame for the decline of the American family: "militant feminists" and nontraditional movies.

"Take *Kramer vs. Kramer*. There's that poignant letter the mother leaves behind addressed to her son, where she says, 'That's not all there is in life. Mommy has to do some other things.' I think that was a real symbol of the times. An excuse for women to run out on their responsibilities."²⁰³

Bauer believed that "feminists who seemed to hold sway ten years ago couldn't help but have a negative influence on the family." After he condemned the fictional Joanna Kramer, Bauer grappled for more proof that feminism harms American families. Pointing to textbooks he observed,

²⁰³ Bauer disliked *Kramer vs. Kramer* but he adored *The Cosby Show*. He believed that "the values taught on the 'Cosby' show would do more to help low-income and minority children than a bevy of new federal programs... [A] lot of research indicates that values are much more important, say, than the level of welfare payments." According to Bauer, the way "children respect their father" was the show's most enlightening lesson. All quotes come from an interview Susan Faludi conducted with Bauer. Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1991), 275-276.

“Twenty years ago, women in textbooks were housewives and in the home. Now, you look at a textbook and what’s missing is any sign of women in a nurturing role in the family. Now our daughters are being taught that life is not full unless they’re stewardesses, reporters, etc.”²⁰⁴

Bauer’s central concern is that women will neglect traditional homemaking and childrearing roles in favor of fewer children and careers. “We’re running at 1.8 children per woman in this country,” Bauer exclaimed from his West Wing office. “That’s below replacement level... there are going to be serious consequences for free society if we continue down this path.” Throughout his time as council president, Bauer remained preoccupied with the impact of fictional heroines, moderate textbooks, and “militant” feminists upon the alleged decline of the American family.

The Backlash Begins

Hollywood welcomed the liberated single woman for a time but, by the dawn of the 1980s, conservatism reared its head once more. Headstrong heroines of the seventies faded into the background as eighties actresses yet again ran towards alters and lusted after husbands, babies, and white picket fences. Morality tales regressed to the black and white image of the good wife who wins and the headstrong woman who fails. A woman who chose to be independent, liberated, and strong denied herself marriage and motherhood – the only true and pure source of happiness. Women’s anger at social circumstances was framed, and cunningly depoliticized, as personal depression. As the New Right gained speed and Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency in 1980, the backlash against liberated women began in earnest. Women were once again told they were unhappy precisely because they were free.

²⁰⁴ Faludi, *Backlash*, 276.

Films repeated and reinforced the conservative belief that liberation caused unhappiness. In *Baby Boom*, a male boss informs his ambitious female employee that she must choose between the corner office and the cradle. “Do you understand the sacrifices?” Fritz Curtis asks J.C. Wiatt, an aspiring management consultant, when he suggests she could become a firm partner. “A man can be a success. My wife is there for me whenever I need her. I’m lucky. I can have it all.”²⁰⁵ The film frames his comment as realistic, not callous. *Baby Boom* was co-written by Nancy Meyers, the creator of *Private Benjamin*. Unlike *Private Benjamin*, which chronicled a heroine’s journey from dependence to liberation and ended as she ran from the alter, *Baby Boom* featured a corporate careerist who ran towards domesticity. In many ways, the story reflects Meyers’ personal path. After working as a director and producer for years, Meyers stepped back from her career to care for her two children with director Charles Shyer. In an interview, Meyers explained how her personal observations of women inspired the film. “I don’t see them in the corporate world,” she remarked; “I don’t see women having it all and achieving great things.” By the late 1980s, fewer films portrayed single professional women as strong and admirable.

Primetime television shows from *thirtysomething* to *Family Man* depicted feminists as harpies or losers. Mental breakdowns or professional burnout forced women to repeal their headstrong ways and trade boardrooms for babies. Actresses who previously played spunky working heroines now pleaded for a ring. Many an onscreen lead renounced professional aspirations in favor of husband hunting. Women who refused to reform quickly paid a price. “We blew it by waiting,” a careerist sobs in *Singular*

²⁰⁵ *Baby Boom*, directed by Charles Shyer, 1987, Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2001, videodisc.

Women upon realizing that she, like other professional women, was “condemned to be childless forever.” Women who failed to recant their ambitious feminist ways were doomed to a lifetime of loneliness.

Popular psychology quickly latched on to this cry for redemption. The era’s self-help classic *Smart Women/Foolish Choices* squarely condemned feminism. According to the authors, distressed women were “an unfortunate consequence of feminism,” which “created a myth among women that the apex of self-realization could be achieved only through autonomy, independence, and career.”²⁰⁶ “Feminism, having promised her a stronger sense of her own identity, has given her little more than an identity crisis,” the bestseller *Being a Woman* quipped.²⁰⁷ In *Any Woman’s Blues* the author bluntly outlines her goal “to demonstrate what a dead end the so-called sexual revolution had become, and how desperate so-called free women were in the last few years of our decadent epoch.”²⁰⁸ Previously “liberated” women joined the tales of bereavement, in which “recovering Superwomen” tell all. In *The Cost of Loving: Women and the New Fear of Intimacy*, Megan Marshall claims the feminist “Myth of Independence” made her generation unhappy.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Connell Cowan and Melvin Kinder, *Smart Women/Foolish Choices* (New York: Signet, 1986).

²⁰⁷ Toni Grant, *Being a Woman: Fulfilling Your Femininity and Finding Love* (New York: Random House, 1988).

²⁰⁸ Susan Faludi quotes Erica Jong in her book; see Faludi, *Backlash*, 3. For the bestselling book she references see Erica Jong, *Any Woman’s Blues* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990).

²⁰⁹ Megan Marshall, *The Cost of Loving: Women and the New Fear of Intimacy* (New York: Putnam, 1984).

The mass media rushed to warn women about professional “burnout,” the “infertility epidemic,” and the “man shortage.” Erica Jong reported on “The Awful Truth about Women’s Lib” for *Vanity Fair* in 1986.²¹⁰ Women of the eighties “no longer need to examine the whys and hows of sexism,” *Elle* argued, “all those ideals that were once held as absolute truths—sexual liberation, the women’s movement, true equality—have been debunked or debased.”²¹¹ Widely circulated publications like *Vanity Fair*, *Elle*, and *Time* described women who renounced their ambitious ways and fled the workplace in droves for the comfort of home and hearth. Authors agreed that “the hard-core feminist viewpoint” condemned educated careerists to loneliness, alcoholism, and other illnesses. Even worse, women who prioritized profession over family became unloved, “uncertain of their gender identity,” and “dehumanized” by their careers.

A 1986 *Fortune* cover story entitled “Why Women Are Bailing Out,” argued that businesswomen trained at elite schools were fleeing the corporate suite in droves.²¹² Similar articles in *Forbes*, *USA Today*, and *U.S. News & World Report* spread the “bailing out” trend. The *Fortune* story and its imitators left a troubling impression on young, aspiring businesswomen. In 1987, a year after its publication, women continued to discuss how “bailing out” stories affected their outlook. Phyllis Strong, an MBA candidate at Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business, planned to have a less demanding career after reading that a challenging business job means “you give up too much... you lose that sense of bonding and family ties.” Fellow MBA candidate Marcia

²¹⁰ Erica Jong, “The Awful Truth about Women’s Lib,” *Vanity Fair* 49, no. 4 (April 1986): 118.

²¹¹ Faludi, *Backlash*, 124.

²¹² Alex Taylor, “Why Women Are Bailing Out,” *Fortune*, August 18, 1986, 16.

Walley claimed she now knew “how impossible it is to have a successful career and a good family life. You can’t have it all and you have to choose.”²¹³ During their senior performance, women at the business school lamented the costs of a successful career. In a song set to Paul Simon’s “You Can Call Me Al,” they sang:

When I was at B-school, they said...
Girl, you can have it all. But I
Didn’t think I’d lose so much.
Didn’t want such long hours.
Who’d think my only boyfriend
Would be a blow-up doll? ...
Where are my old boyfriends now?
Nesting, nesting,
Getting on with their lives,
Living with women who get off at five.²¹⁴

A year after *Fortune* launched the “bailing out” trend, young women had registered the backlash message loud and clear: a successful career precluded romantic success.

In May 1986, *Newsweek* issued a cover story entitled “Making It Work: How Women Balance the Demands of Jobs and Children.” The inside headline, “A Mother’s Choice,” underlined the article’s true point – that the balancing act is destined to fail.

Newsweek began the story with a cautionary tale:

“Colleen Murphy Walter had it all. An executive at a Chicago hospital, she earned more than \$50,000 a year, had been married for a dozen years and had two sons.... But there was a price. Late at night, when everyone else was sleeping, she would be awake, desperately trying to figure out how to survive ‘this tangle of a lifestyle.’ Six months ago, Walter, thirty-six, quit, to stay home and raise her children. ‘Trying to be the best mother and the best worker was an emotional strain,’ she says. ‘I wanted to further myself in the corporate world. But suddenly I got tired and realized I just couldn’t do it anymore.’”²¹⁵

²¹³ Faludi, *Backlash*, 99.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

²¹⁵ Barbara Kantrowitz, “America’s Mothers—Making It Work: How Women Balance the Demands of Jobs and Children,” *Newsweek*, March 31, 1986, 46.

When forced to choose between the professional realm and the domestic domain, Walter prioritized the latter. “Today the myth of Supermom is fading fast—doomed by anger, guilt and exhaustion,” *Newsweek* declared. “An increasing number” of mothers choose to work from home and “a growing number” of mothers have arrived at “the recognition that they can’t have it all.”²¹⁶ The article, which was addressed to “America’s Mothers,” communicated a common backlash theme: go home, or risk a meltdown.

In June 1986 *Newsweek* published the headline, “If You’re a Single Woman, Here Are Your Chances of Getting Married.” According to the article, the chances were grim for unwed women over thirty. The accompanying graph, which was striated like a thermometer, indicated that loveless professional women were doomed to be single forever. According to the article,

“The traumatic news came buried in an arid demographic study, titled innocently enough, ‘Marriage Patterns in the United States.’ But the dire statistics confirmed what everybody suspected all along: that many women who seem to have it all—good looks and good jobs, advanced degrees and high salaries—will never have mates.”²¹⁷

Once again, the mass media of the 1980s pedaled the backlash belief that professional women were inevitably condemned to lives of loneliness.

By the end of the 1980s, authors were expert at pinpointing their scapegoats. If a problem pertained to women, then it must derive from women’s ill-fated quest for independence and equality. The mass media effusively endorsed the trend stories of the day, which lamented the so-called “spinster boom,” the “curse of the career woman,” and

²¹⁶ Kantrowitz, “America’s Mothers—Making It Work: How Women Balance the Demands of Jobs and Children,” 47.

²¹⁷ Eloise Salholz, “The Marriage Crunch: If You’re a Single Woman, Here Are Your Chances of Getting Married,” *Newsweek*, June 2, 1986, 54.

“hypermaidenism.” “Having It All: Postponing Parenthood Exacts a Price,” read the cover of *Boston Magazine* in 1987.²¹⁸ “The Quiet Pain of Infertility: For the Success-Oriented, It’s a Bitter Pill,” the *Washington Post* wrote the same year.²¹⁹ According to a *New York Times* columnist, the feminist generation was to blame for the “walking cliché” of the infertile woman “on the cusp of forty who put work ahead of motherhood.”²²⁰

Rise of the Right

The shift from spunky heroines to cowering careerists on film and in print reflected a society-wide swing towards conservatism. Economic conditions allowed the New Right, the most powerful and prominent conservative faction at the time, to thrive. The decade’s economic troubles polarized classes to the greatest extreme since 1946, when the American government began tracking income in earnest, and doubled the number of Americans who considered themselves “powerless.”²²¹ Many middle-income families were unable to maintain their lifestyle and status with one paycheck, which spurred women to enter the workforce *en masse*.

As more women went to work, male and female roles appeared to converge symbolically, if not in actuality. For the first time in American history, women outranked

²¹⁸ “Having It All: Postponing Parenthood Exacts a Price,” *Boston Magazine*, May 1987, 116.

²¹⁹ Mary C. Hickey, “The Quiet Pain of Infertility: For the Success-Oriented, It’s a Bitter Pill,” *Washington Post*, April 28, 1987, DO5.

²²⁰ Anne Taylor Fleming, “The Infertile Sisterhood: When the Last Hope Fails,” *New York Times*, March 15, 1988, B1.

²²¹ The pollster Louis Harris observed this stark attitudinal change. See Faludi, *Backlash*, 79-80.

men as new entrants to the workforce, and men outpaced women in terms of unemployment. The dawn of the '80s saw many other firsts: the first time more women than men enrolled in college, the first time more than fifty percent of married women worked, and the first time more than fifty percent of mothers worked.²²² It was also the first time white men comprised less than fifty percent of the work force and the first time no new manufacturing jobs were created.²²³ In the 1970s and the 1980s, the entry of married women greatly expanded the labor force and potential GDP. In 1980, the U.S. Census stopped automatically defining the husband as the head of the household.²²⁴ Conditions had changed for blue-collar workers, and not for the better. As the nation shifted to a service economy and manufacturing plants closed in droves, many blue-collar

²²² The labor force participation rate of women aged 20 to 60 years was 43.7% in 1969, 56.1% in 1979, and 67.5% in 1989. See Table 2, "Labor Force Participation Rate of Women Aged 20-60 by Marital Status, Children, Race and Education." Chinhui Juhn and Simon Potter, "Changes in Labor Force Participation in the United States," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 33. For the rate of maternal employment, see the graph titled "Labor Force Participation Rate of Mothers by Age of Youngest Child: March 1975-2015," in U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Facts Over Time: Women in the Labor Force*, last updated July 2016, <https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/facts_over_time.htm>.

²²³ Patricia Atkins et al., "Responding to Manufacturing Job Loss: What Can Economic Development Policy Do?" The Brookings Institution, June 2011, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/06_manufacturing_job_loss.pdf>.

²²⁴ Beginning with the 1980 Current Population Survey, the Bureau of the Census "discontinued the use of the terms 'head of household' and 'head of family.' Instead, the terms 'householder' and 'family householder' are used. Recent social changes have resulted in greater sharing of household responsibilities among the adult members and, therefore, have made the term 'head' increasingly inappropriate in the analysis of household and family data. Specifically, beginning in 1980, the Census Bureau discontinued its longtime practice of always classifying the husband as the reference person (head) when he and his wife are living together." U.S. Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey: Subject Definitions," last revised August 25, 2015, <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/subject-definitions.html>>.

men were laid off. Only sixty percent found new jobs and those new jobs often paid less.²²⁵ Younger baby-boomer men lost earning power as well. During the early '80s, the average man under thirty years old earned twenty-five to thirty percent less than his seventies-era counterpart. Men without a college degree earned even less; their average salary was cut in half.²²⁶ Unlike his forefathers, the typical middle-class man struggled to provide for his family.

As the economy shifted towards two-income households, traditionally minded men struggled to relinquish their status as sole breadwinners. For many men, the inability to earn an adequate income undercut their sense of self. The Yankelovich Monitor survey, a nationwide poll that tracked social attitudes, reported:

“For twenty years, the Monitor’s pollsters have asked its subjects to define masculinity. And for twenty years, the leading definition, ahead by a large margin, has never changed. It isn’t being a leader, athlete, lothario, decision maker, or even just being ‘born male.’ It is simply this: being a ‘good provider for his family.’”²²⁷

Earning power was key to the identity of American men, who came to view the large influx of women into the workforce as a direct threat to their power and status at work and at home.

Angered by economic difficulties and social shifts, blue-collar workers and conservative leaders were quick to pin their troubles on a culprit: women. In venomous rants, conservative pundits blamed feminists for the decline of the American family. Paul

²²⁵ Atkins, “Responding to Manufacturing Job Loss,” 2.

²²⁶ Economic Policy Institute, *Upper Tail Inequality Growing Steadily: Men’s Wage Inequality, 1973-2009* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, May 11, 2011), <<http://www.stateofworkingamerica.org/charts/view/192>>.

²²⁷ Faludi, *Backlash*, 79.

Weyrich, the “Father of the New Right,” led the charge to tar and feather offenders. In a 1980 *Conservative Digest* article, Weyrich alerted readers to the feminist threat:

“There are people who want a different political order, who are not necessarily Marxists. Symbolized by the women’s liberation movement, they believe that the future for their political power lies in the restructuring of the traditional family, and particularly in the downgrading of the male or father role in the traditional family.”²²⁸

Conservative leaders across the nation echoed his zealotry. The paper *Listen, America!* called feminism a “Satanic attack on the home.” Reverend Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority claimed “the Equal Rights Amendment strikes at the foundation of our entire social structure.” “With all my heart,” he vowed, “I want to bury the Equal Rights Amendment once and for all in a deep, dark grave.”²²⁹ New Right followers pledged themselves to the cause with equally aggressive rhetoric. As a minister at an early strategy session for the Heritage Foundation explained, “We’re not here to get into politics. We’re here to turn the clock back to 1954 in this country.”²³⁰

The conservative crusade strove to restore nuclear family conformity, reinforce patriarchal power, and rescind women’s hard-won rights. New Right leaders were among the first to articulate the principal thesis of the backlash: that women’s equality is responsible for women’s unhappiness. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was particularly problematic for staunch conservatives, who fought its ratification tooth and nail. In 1972, the ERA had already been ratified by 28 of the required 38 states. By 1982, the amendment met a bitter, narrow defeat; its ratification in 35 states fell short. The

²²⁸ Faludi, *Backlash*, 244.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 242.

defeat was due in large part to Phyllis Schlafly, who launched a successful campaign against the ratification of the ERA to the U.S. Constitution, despite the legions of women's rights activists who had lobbied, marched, and picketed in support of the amendment for a decade.

A staunch social and political conservative, Schlafly was the driving force behind the "STOP ERA" campaign. Through STOP, which stood for "Stop Taking Our Privileges," Schlafly argued the ERA would revoke gender-specific privileges currently enjoyed by women, including "dependent wife" benefits under Social Security and separate restrooms for men and women. Women should remain exempt from the Selective Service Army draft, Schlafly argued; "The goal of feminists, however, is to impose a mindless equality, regardless of how many people it hurts."²³¹ Years later, the fierce anti-feminist claimed that the "ERA means abortion funding, means homosexual privileges, means whatever else."²³²

The "ERA was defeated when Schlafly turned it into a war among women over gender roles," Joan Williams argues.²³³ In her 1986 reflection, *Why We Lost the ERA*, Jane J. Mansbridge concludes:

"Many people who followed the struggle over the ERA believed—rightly in my view—that the Amendment would have been ratified by 1975 or 1976 had it not

²³¹ Phyllis Schlafly, "Male and Female Still Matter in Combat," *Breitbart*, May 17, 2016, <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2016/05/17/male-female-still-matter-combat/>.

²³² Beth Fouhy, "A New Version of the ERA," *CNN*, August 25, 1999, <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/stories/1999/08/25/fouhy.maloney/>.

²³³ Joan Williams, *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What To Do about It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 147.

been for Phyllis Schlafly's early and effective effort to organize potential opponents."²³⁴

Women's rights groups such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), the ERAmerica coalition, and the Homemakers' Equal Rights Association, opposed Schlafly; ultimately, the ultraconservative activist outmaneuvered their ratification efforts. Judith Glazer-Raymo explains:

"As moderates, we thought we represented the forces of reason and goodwill but failed to take seriously the power of the family values argument and the single-mindedness of Schlafly and her followers. The ERA's defeat seriously damaged the women's movement, destroying its momentum and its potential to foment social change.... Eventually, this resulted in feminist dissatisfaction with the Republican Party, giving the Democrats a new source of strength that when combined with overwhelming minority support, helped elect Bill Clinton to the presidency in 1992 and again in 1996."²³⁵

By framing the debate of the ratification of the ERA as a matter of gender roles and rights, Schlafly cast a wide net that brought typical traditionalists as well as Evangelical Christians into her fold. Although Schlafly was an advocate for the full-time mother and wife, she was also a trained lawyer, newsletter editor, popular speaker, and activist. Ironically, Schlafly's many professional pursuits carried her onto a vast political platform, far from the constraints of domesticity.

In her landmark study *Backlash, the Undeclared War against American Women*, Susan Faludi examines how New Right dogma manifested in popular culture, politics, and paychecks. Faludi explains that New Right leaders condemned the women's movement for two popularly cited, yet contradictory, sins. According to rural

²³⁴ Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 110.

²³⁵ Judith Glazer-Raymo, *Shattering the Myths: Women in Academe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 19.

fundamentalist ministers, feminists were guilty of “promoting materialism over moral values” and “dismantling the traditional familial support system.”²³⁶ But more than moral erosion or broken families, these men feared empty pews. Church attendance had slipped as evangelicals migrated from the countryside to the suburbs and cities. Although mainstream America would reject the “fevered rhetoric and hellfire imagery” of fundamentalists, Faludi argues their political message survived, “to be transubstantiated into the media’s ‘trends.’”²³⁷

The press was the first to embrace the paradoxical idea central to the backlash that “women have achieved so much yet feel so dissatisfied.”²³⁸ Similar contradictions reverberated loudly throughout the ’80s as television news and newsmagazines echoed the New Right. “What has happened to American women?” ABC asked with bewilderment in a 1986 special report. News anchor Peter Jennings supplied the answer: “The gains for women sometimes come at a formidable cost to them.” *Newsweek* reported on symptoms of the “new problem that has no name” and offered an identical diagnosis. The feminist “emphasis on equality” forced women to “sacrifice” their natural maternal rights and to suffer the “emotional fallout of feminism.” According to *Newsweek*, unhappy ambitious women had only themselves to blame. “‘When the gods wish to punish us, they answer our prayers,’ Oscar Wilde wrote. So it would seem to many of the women who looked forward to ‘having it all.’” But Faludi, like other feminists, knew that neither God nor women’s prayers were responsible for the backlash.

²³⁶ Faludi, *Backlash*, 230.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

While the press chose to peddle the backlash rather than probe it, the roots of the New Right grew deeper and a misogynistic White House grew bleaker by the day. After Ronald Reagan assumed the Presidency in 1981, women's circumstances took a turn for the worse. The number of women appointed to the White House staff quickly dropped by half, from 123 women in 1980 to 62 in 1981.²³⁹ A paltry 8 percent of new judicial appointments were women, compared to 15 percent under former President Jimmy Carter.²⁴⁰ The Reagan administration went so far as to inflate counts of women in the White House; one report claimed that 62 women held political appointments, when in fact many of those women held lower-ranking, window-dressing jobs.²⁴¹

The reduction of women from federal office coincided with budget cuts to women's programs. Although programs dedicated to women comprised a mere ten percent of the federal budget, a full one-third of budget cuts targeted programs created for women. These reforms were supposedly gender neutral, but the conservative budget voted in June 1981 chiefly targeted social programs that helped women, especially single and poor minority mothers. Cuts were made to social programs such as food stamps, Medicaid, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, federal subsidies to school lunches,

²³⁹ Françoise Coste, "'Women, Ladies, Girls, Gals': Ronald Reagan and the Evolution of Gender Roles in the United States," *Miranda* 12 (2016): 1-17.

²⁴⁰ While in office, President Jimmy Carter appointed 41 female judges – five times as many as all his predecessors combined. Gwyneth Kelly, "Jimmy Carter's Most Important Legacy: Female Judges," *New Republic*, August 13, 2015, <<https://newrepublic.com/article/122538/jimmy-carters-most-important-legacy-female-judges>>.

²⁴¹ "White House Staff: Alphabetical List, 1981-1989," Reagan Library Archives, <<https://reaganlibrary.archives.gov/archives/reference/whitehousestaffalpha.htm>>.

and milk and summer food programs in poor neighborhoods.²⁴² Reagan's first-term government budget cuts plunged roughly five million women, and nearly two million families supported by women, below the poverty line. In short, cuts thrust women in the lowest income bracket even lower. After Reagan was elected to a second term in November 1984, he faced little pressure to continue even nominal equal opportunity efforts. The administration quickly dismantled the Coalition on Women's Appointments and the Working Group on Women. The Federal Women's Program, which was established in 1967 to recruit women to government agencies, was disbanded. For the first time since 1977 there were no women who ranked high enough to attend daily senior staff meetings or to report directly to the president. Director Ed Meese simply disregarded federal regulations that required the Justice Department to hire women; by 1986 there were no female senior policymakers. With few women on staff, no women in power, and hiring rules utterly ignored, women's ability to influence politics from within a staunchly conservative administration looked bleak.

The Reagan administration's highest-ranking woman, Faith Whittlesey, experienced White House misogyny firsthand. In the administration's only policy speech on the status of American women – confidently titled “Radical Feminism in Retreat” – Whittlesey called feminism a “straitjacket” for women.²⁴³ Although she worked, Whittlesey proudly announced plans to help men earn a higher “family” wage so that “all those women can go home and look after their own children.” During the 1984 address,

²⁴² Coste, “Women,” 5.

²⁴³ Faith Whittlesey, “Radical Feminism in Retreat,” speech delivered on December 8, 1984, at the Center for the Study of the Presidency, 15th Annual Leadership Conference, St. Louis, Missouri, p. 7.

Whittlesey declared, “I know the president is deeply committed to providing women with the broadest range of options in exercising their choice.”²⁴⁴ All action proved otherwise. Whittlesey gave lip service to issues Reagan never intended to address and, unfortunately, she recognized her role a little too late. After a humiliating demotion, Whittlesey eventually quit. In an interview with Susan Faludi she recalled, “I began to think, ‘Maybe they’re right. Women aren’t welcome in the White House.’”²⁴⁵

Presidential budget cuts signaled the start of a rising tide of antifeminist sentiment that overflowed into all areas of life. At home, women’s status worsened. More women sought refuge at domestic violence shelters than ever before.²⁴⁶ Crimes against women far outpaced the overall crime rate in the United States. For example, rape reports more than doubled during the ’80s. Police departments reported the number of murdered women increased by 160 percent between 1976 and 1984; murderers were often husbands or boyfriends who knew the women intimately. As violence increased, child support decreased. By the mid-eighties, divorced men paid 25 percent less for child support compared to decades prior.²⁴⁷

Unhappiness mounted as women’s inequality worsened. The number of women who complained of unequal employment opportunities climbed by ten points during the Reagan administration. By the end of the decade, between 80 and 95 percent of women

²⁴⁴ Whittlesey, “Radical Feminism in Retreat,” p. 7.

²⁴⁵ Faludi, *Backlash*, 270.

²⁴⁶ Between 1983 and 1987, the number of women who sought refuge at domestic violence increased by 101 percent.

²⁴⁷ Anne C. Case, I-Fen Lin, and Sara S. McLanahan, “Explaining Trends in Child Support: Economic, Demographic, and Policy Effects,” *Demography* 40, no. 1 (February 2003): 187.

reported at least one case of job discrimination and unequal pay. Sexual harassment complaints doubled and sex discrimination charges rose nearly 25 percent during Reagan's tenure, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. A Virginia Slims poll reported a surge in women's belief that men wanted to "keep women down." In 1970, 70 percent of women considered men "basically kind, gentle, and thoughtful" but by the end of the '80s, that number dropped to 50 percent, according to Roper surveys. After years of positive poll results in which women expressed optimism about the future, American women of the '80s felt they faced an "erosion of respect."²⁴⁸

As women's inequality, mistreatment, and unease mounted, men's open opposition to gender equality swelled. The proportion of men who opposed feminist objectives (like gender parity) rose from 48 percent in 1988 to 60 percent in 1990, according to *Gentlemen's Quarterly*. The magazine, which conducted the American Male Opinion Index, also found the number of men who supported changes to women's roles dropped from 52 to 40 percent.²⁴⁹ Only one-fourth of men polled supported the women's movement. Sixty percent said wives with small children should stay home and a majority preferred traditional roles for women. Another national poll reported a four-percent jump from 1986 to 1988 in men who "strongly agreed" in "traditional" families composed of a male breadwinner and female housewife. By the end of the eighties, half as many men as women considered working mothers as capable as stay-at-home mothers.

²⁴⁸ The study was conducted in July and August of 1989; the sample size was 3,001 adult women and 1,001 adult men. Virginia Slims, "The 1990 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll," The Roper Organization (Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, 1990).

²⁴⁹ Significance Inc., "The American Male Opinion Index," I (New York: Condé Nast Publications, 1988), 26.

A 1989 *New York Times* poll reported that a majority of women believed American society had not evolved enough to grant women equality.²⁵⁰ In stark contrast, many men claimed the women's movement "made things harder for men at home." Anthony Astrachan found that a mere 5 to 10 percent of men "genuinely support women's demands for independence and equality."²⁵¹ Other men supported equal pay in theory however, "when the issues change from social justice to personal applications, the consensus crumbles."²⁵² By decade's end, the women's movement lost even nominal support from men. Polls revealed a deepening disdain for egalitarianism and a burgeoning preference for patricentric households.

Few New Right pundits longed for the revival of the traditional home more than Gary Bauer. As a Reagan devotee, Bauer believed women belonged at home, not the workplace. He embodied the conservatism of the '80s. In an interview with Susan Faludi, Bauer uttered the usual myths about professional women. He claimed "most women" in America were evolving to share his views because "they are discovering you can't have it all. There's some statistical evidence that women who decided early on to establish a career, and now are getting close to the end of the time they can start a family, feel cheated. Their clock is running out."²⁵³ Bauer considered his wife Carol a prime

²⁵⁰ Lisa Belkin, "Bars to Equality of Sexes Seen as Eroding, Slowly," *New York Times*, August 20, 1989, 16.

²⁵¹ Anthony Astrachan, *How Men Feel: Their Response to Women's Demands for Equality and Power* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1986), 402.

²⁵² "American Male Opinion Index," 26.

²⁵³ Faludi, *Backlash*, 276-277.

example: “For my wife, it’s been a slow process of concluding you can’t have it all.”²⁵⁴ Carol, who served as top assistant to Congresswoman Margaret Heckler, remembers things differently: “I enjoyed the intellectual stimulation of the work. I loved work... I mean, when I had Elyse, I literally took my work with me. After I got out of the hospital, I was working the next day at home.”²⁵⁵ Carol, whose childhood dream was to work in politics, considered Congresswoman Heckler the epitome of success. “There was something about working for a woman who had managed to do it all.”²⁵⁶ Contrary to his wife’s attitude, Bauer firmly believed working mothers “are realizing they’d rather be at home with their children. Most women work only because they have to.” Whether a job was necessary or not, working mothers had to find alternate childcare. Daycare was a common option, but Bauer bashed this too; he regarded daycare facilities as “Marxist” institutions sure to irreparably harm children. Surprisingly, Bauer’s own children were subjected to daycare for roughly a decade while his wife worked. More importantly, Bauer failed to provide the “many studies” and “statistical evidence” that proved “most women” agreed with him. An illustrated cartoon, rather than solid data, bolsters his point. Bauer’s work is fiction – not fact – and his hypocritical New Right arguments are sermon, pure and simple.

In 1986, Bauer penned a petulant fifty-two-page report on the status of American families. More prejudiced rant than policy statement, Bauer decried everything from divorce to contraceptives to daycare. “The Family: Preserving America’s Future” began

²⁵⁴ Faludi, *Backlash*, 277.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 278.

with a quote from the stalwart Victorian Teddy Roosevelt: “If the mother does not do her duty, there will either be no next generation, or a next generation that is worse than none at all.”²⁵⁷ According to Roosevelt, a mother’s duty was to care for her children full-time at home. Bauer’s report proceeded to attack women who deviated from that norm. Working women, divorced women, and unmarried women with children were all strung out for castigation. In Bauer’s view, nontraditional women reject the “good wife” ideal and discard marriages “like paper towels.”²⁵⁸ Divorce and illegitimate children are framed as the disease itself, rather than symptoms of societal dysfunction. In Bauer’s opinion, poverty is personal. Poor choices resulted in poor women.

Bauer’s solution to social ills and deviant women are equally harsh. His belief that financial troubles “result from personal choices” drove his proposal to withdraw various choices from American women. Bauer proposed that the government abolish contraceptives, revive stringent divorce laws, and deny public housing to young, single mothers. All measures would pull support from the people who needed it most, yoke women more closely to marriage, and cement the American ideal of a nuclear family. Stay-at-home mothers who bore multiple children would receive tax breaks. These “recommendations” embraced a classic carrot and stick approach that rewarded the “good wife” and punished nontraditional women. The report implied the American family’s revival depended on wresting options away from women. Bauer was not “pro family” – he was pro paternal power.

²⁵⁷ Gary L. Bauer, “The Family: Preserving America’s Future: a Report to the President from the White House Working Group on the Family,” Washington, DC: The Working Group, 1986, 1, <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pur1.32754076773534;view=1up;seq=3>>.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

The New Right blamed feminism for declining wages, job instability, and overpriced housing. “There had to be a deeper cause [for the decade’s materialism] than the Reagan era and Wall Street... The women’s movement had to have played a key role,” claimed a columnist for the *New York Times Magazine*.²⁵⁹ Every backlash movement has a scapegoat. The Ku Klux Klan targeted Blacks, the American Protective Association harassed Catholics, and Father Coughlin’s “social justice” movement condemned Jews. The New Right demonized feminists. “Feminism kind of became the focus of everything,” recalled Edmund Haislmaier, a Heritage Foundation research fellow.²⁶⁰ As an economic conservative who did not share the Foundation’s desire for social regression, Haislmaier disliked his colleagues’ constant antifeminist focus.

“The women’s movement didn’t really cause the high divorce rate, which had already started before women’s liberation started up. The feminists certainly didn’t have anything to do with disastrous economic policies. But the feminists became this very identifiable target. Ellie Smeal [former president of the National Organization for Women] was a recognizable target; hyperinflation and tax bracketing were not.”²⁶¹

If an enemy is faceless, fanatics will invent a target. “In retrospect, I’d have to say they blamed the feminists for an awful lot more than they actually deserved,” Haislmaier concluded.

Women became unwarranted recipients of New Right anger and blue-collar frustration. “A backlash may be an indication that women really have had an effect,” feminist psychologist Jean Baker Miller, M.D., wrote. However,

²⁵⁹ Mary Anne Dolan, “When Feminism Failed,” *New York Times Magazine*, June 26, 1988, <<http://www.nytimes.com/1988/06/26/magazine/when-feminism-failed.html?pagewanted=all>>.

²⁶⁰ Susan Faludi interviewed Edmund Haislmaier. See Faludi, *Backlash*, 247.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

“backlashes occur when advances have been small, before changes are sufficient to help many people... It is almost as if the leaders of backlashes use the fear of change as a threat before major change has occurred.”

Women in politics gained some ground during the 1970s, only to be wiped from the White House after Ronald Reagan rose to power and removed women’s rights from his agenda. A short two years after the Office of Domestic Violence opened in 1979 the government shuttered the program. Support for the Equal Rights Amendment reached an all-time high, only to be defeated by 1982. Just as women grew increasingly supportive of abortion, the U.S. Supreme Court considered revoking the right. Countermeasures came just as women began to make big strides, but before the solidification of significant power. The ’80s backlash hindered women before they achieved parity, and restricted feminists to the losing side of a dangerous game of cat and mouse.

Chapter III

Super-rich but Unlucky in Love:

The Cost of Success in the 1990s and 2000s

A 1989 *Newsweek* cover story on “Networking Women” in television attributed the new wave of “womanpower” programming to an increase in female talent behind the scenes. The article argued that powerful onscreen women were modeled after “the formidable image of their behind-camera female creators,” and that “only the sexual integration of TV’s creative community could have blessed us with a ‘Murphy Brown.’”²⁶² The article overemphasizes a few exceptionally strong female leads, ignores the legions of stereotypical television characters, and implies women’s issues were far behind them. They were not. The authors claimed female producers “in the post-Reagan, post-feminist ’90s” create characters like Roseanne Barr and Murphy Brown to tell female viewers that “it’s okay to mouth off.”²⁶³ But television’s strong female leads were the deviations – not the norm – at the start of the 1990s.

Perhaps *Newsweek* was correct to fear Murphy Brown’s headstrong example. A *People* article called Murphy Brown a “feminist figurehead” and a “merciless careerist” and, unlike her sitcom foremothers, she was a powerful network co-anchor not a struggling producer-cum-secretary.²⁶⁴ More importantly, she was a far cry from the

²⁶² Harry F. Waters and Janet Huck, “Networking Women,” *Newsweek*, March 13, 1989, 49-52.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

²⁶⁴ Jim Jerome, “Murphy’s Laws,” *People*, December 2, 1991, 160-162.

desperate housewives of yesteryear. Murphy Brown proves that “TV women have come a long, long way since Mrs. Cleaver whipped up her last breakfast for the Beav.”²⁶⁵

Murphy Brown was a reincarnation of the single, workingwoman sitcoms characteristic of earlier decades. Murphy Brown was often likened to Mary Tyler Moore; both belong to the “emerging woman” genre and both feature a single, workingwoman newsroom employee. *USA Today* described the sitcom as “Mary Tyler Moore Updated for the Eighties” and the show’s producers stated that they “intend Murphy to be for the 90’s what Mary Richards was for the 70’s.”²⁶⁶ Waters and Huck claimed critics “haven’t lavished so much attention on an unmarried woman since Mary Richards walked into that other TV newsroom in Minneapolis.”²⁶⁷ Critic Jane Feuer claimed *Murphy Brown* is a “program based almost entirely on intertextuality,” and that “the two shows [*Mary Tyler Moore* and *Murphy Brown*] really represent a continuation of the same cultural theme—the earlier show riding the crest of the feminist movement, the later one detailing its ebb in the ‘postfeminist’ era.”²⁶⁸ When CBS celebrated the twentieth anniversary of *Mary Tyler Moore* in February 1991, *Murphy Brown* served as the lead-in show for a special titled “An evening with Murphy and Mary.” Shortly after, in July 1991, *Primetime Live* (an ABC news magazine show) featured a roundup of “liberated woman” sitcoms that

²⁶⁵ Waters et al., “Networking Women,” 48.

²⁶⁶ Joy Horowitz, “On TV, Ms. Macho and Mr. Wimp,” *New York Times*, April 19, 1989, 1H; Robert S. Alley and Irby B. Brown, *Murphy Brown: Anatomy of a Sitcom* (New York: Delta, 1990), 204.

²⁶⁷ Waters et al., “Networking Women,” 49.

²⁶⁸ Jane Feuer, “Genre Study and Television,” in R. Allen, ed., *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 156.

linked *Mary Tyler Moore* and *Murphy Brown*. Linda Bloodworth-Thomason framed *Mary Tyler Moore* as the model for workingwoman sitcoms: “When Mary Richards threw that hat in the air for the last time, it stayed up. The contemporary TV woman is making it on her own.”²⁶⁹

Murphy Brown was billed as the premier portrait of professional women, yet the sitcom contained subtler themes about the downsides of liberation. The show simultaneously validated women’s progress, power, and self-possession and explored the costs of that evolution. In a 1989 *Playboy* interview Candice Bergen notes, “Murphy is at the top of her profession but... she is, in a very realistic way, paying the price for it.”²⁷⁰ Murphy was a powerful and wealthy network co-anchor of a prime-time news show who possessed the chutzpah to throw biting remarks whenever she felt fit. In contrast, Mary struggled as a producer, mothered her coworkers, and grappled for professional respect. Though she was less powerful, Mary’s coworkers acted like a loving, tightly knit family. Murphy, on the other hand, was often alone. Eldin, the perennially present housepainter, appears to be Murphy’s only friend in her “desolate personal life.”²⁷¹ As *Newsweek* explained, “beneath their self-assured veneers,” television’s powerful women “carry stretch marks on their psyches. They’ve been roughed up by life and are coming to terms with their limits.”²⁷² Progress had a price.

²⁶⁹ Waters et al., “Networking Women,” 50.

²⁷⁰ David Sheff, “Candice Bergen,” *Playboy*, December 1989, 62.

²⁷¹ Candice Bergen plays Murphy onscreen, and articles often contrasted the actress’s wonderful life as a happy wife and mother against Murphy’s barren personal life. Roger Rosenblatt, “Candy Can,” *Vanity Fair*, December 1992, 258.

²⁷² Waters et al., “Networking Women,” 50-51.

Murphy's decision to bear a child deviated from her personality and lifestyle. Her pregnancy sent the message that all women, even the irascible Murphy Brown, contain a natural and irrepressible desire to procreate. After welcoming a son in the episode "Birth 101," Murphy cradles her newborn and sings "Natural Woman" by Aretha Franklin. She croons: "I didn't know what was wrong with me, 'til you helped me name it... You make me feel like a natural woman."²⁷³ Some 38 million viewers tuned in and saw how the birth process transformed Murphy from an "unnatural" professional to a "natural" maternal woman. Murphy eventually reverts back to a driven persona, but her temporary motherliness proved that even ambitious professionals could surrender to ticking biological clocks, the emptiness of childlessness, and nature's overwhelming and undeniable call for women to be mothers.

Media reaction to Murphy's pregnancy varied. Some writers accepted her pregnancy as part of a trend of baby-related storylines.²⁷⁴ Others complained the show distorted single motherhood.²⁷⁵ One fan expressed her dissatisfaction in *USA Today*; "Television writers, take a hint: not every woman has to be fulfilled through the joys of motherhood."²⁷⁶ Another reader demanded,

²⁷³ *Murphy Brown*, "Birth 101," season 4, episode 26, directed by Barnet Kellman, written by Diane English and Korby Siamis, CBS, May 18, 1992.

²⁷⁴ For example, see Mona Charen, "Sitcoms Treat Unwed Motherhood as Laughing Matter," *Cincinnati Post*, October 3, 1991, 15A; Caryn James, "A Baby Boom on TV as Biological Clock Ticks Cruelly Away," *New York Times*, October 16, 1991, B1, B7.

²⁷⁵ "Murphy Is Not Reality," *USA Today*, May 20, 1992, 10A; "Mixed Messages," *USA Today*, May 20, 1992, 10A.

²⁷⁶ "Aghast at Writers," *USA Today*, May 20, 1992, 10A.

“Why can’t [Murphy] ‘feel like a natural woman’ without a child? Why does the entertainment industry insist on showing childless women as less than whole? Is having a child supposed to ‘tame’ Murphy and make her softer and more feminine? The entertainment industry’s message seems to be that liberation has made women unhappy and unfulfilled. What’s wrong with exalting an intelligent female character who is happy with her life and her choices?”²⁷⁷

Some viewers felt the show had yielded to societal pressure; they wished Murphy had remained childless. Others faulted the show for inauthenticity; they accused Murphy of sugarcoating single motherhood. Conservative critics, however, condemned the show for incorporating single motherhood at all; they believed that unwed, single mothers were deplorable onscreen and off. A columnist lashed out at the show’s producers for undercutting “the rule against illegitimacy [that] helps to prevent women and children from being abandoned by men.”²⁷⁸ Candice Bergen declared, “I myself, as a parent, believe that the ideal is that you have a two-parent family. I’m the last person to think fathers are obsolete.”²⁷⁹ Viewers, editorial columnists, and the show’s lead actress expressed moral disapproval and even outrage at the portrayal of Murphy’s single motherhood.

On May 19, 1992, Vice President Dan Quayle sparked a media frenzy when he claimed Murphy Brown set a poor example for American women because she encouraged single motherhood. Standing before the Commonwealth Club of California during the Bush/Quayle campaign for reelection, Quayle claimed the recent Los Angeles riots stemmed from a “poverty of values” among “Black Americans” and poor single mothers. He argued,

²⁷⁷ “A ‘Natural’ Woman?” *USA Today*, May 20, 1992, 10A.

²⁷⁸ Charen, “Sitcoms Treat Unwed Motherhood,” 15A.

²⁷⁹ Joe Rhodes, “When Baby Makes Two,” *TV Guide*, September 19, 1992, 6-10.

“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.’”²⁸⁰

Quayle believed that “the lawless social anarchy which we saw is directly related to the breakdown of family structure, personal responsibility, and social order in too many areas of our society.” Quayle proceeded to tell his audience that baby boomers like himself had joined the “war against traditional values” during the 1960s and 1970s but, after becoming “middle-aged and middle-class... the responsibility of having families has helped many recover traditional values.” In his opinion, the nontraditional example set by cultural icons like Murphy Brown, encouraged the breakdown of traditional values and structures. According to Quayle, Murphy was a visible scapegoat for America’s broken families and moral crises.

Quayle’s criticism was something of an aside in a lecture meant to blame blue-collar African American single mothers for the Los Angeles riots; however, his remarks on Murphy became the focus. The *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *World News Tonight* reported on his derogatory comments. White House press spokesperson Marlin Fitzwater attempted to ameliorate Quayle’s remarks while feminist commentators picked him apart. Diane English, a creator and producer of *Murphy Brown*, argued that if Quayle truly meant what he said about single mothers, then he should support abortion rights.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ John Fiske, *Media Matters: Everyday Culture and Political Change* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 21.

²⁸¹ The response to Quayle’s comments are well documented in Fiske, *Media Matters*, 21-74, and Bonnie J. Dow, *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women’s Movement since 1970* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 153.

As a well-known cultural symbol, Murphy Brown was a convenient culprit for America's so-called moral crises.

Producers gave Murphy a platform to defend her actions, address her alleged glamorization of single motherhood, and counter Quayle's narrow-minded definition of family. In the episode "You Say Potatoe, I Say Potato," Murphy watches footage of Quayle's speech and then remarks:

"Glamorize single motherhood? What planet is he on? Look at me, Frank, am I glamorous? ... And what was that crack about just another lifestyle choice? I agonized over that decision. I don't know if I could raise a kid myself. I worried about what it would do to him, I worried about what it would do to me. I didn't just wake up one morning and say 'Oh gee, I can't get in for a facial, I might as well have a baby!'"²⁸²

Murphy's response to Quayle is humorous but oversimplified; she, like the press, completely ignores how race and the Los Angeles riots relate to his criticism.

At first, Murphy tries to avoid the publicity generated by Quayle's attack. Instead of offering a response to the legions of hungry journalists circled outside her house and the *FYI* studios, Murphy hides at home and reads a 1956 copy of *Life* magazine (which predates the feminist movement). Eventually, Murphy's housepainter Eldin persuades her to address Quayle directly on air. "He's a baby, not a political statement," Murphy exclaims. "Why can't I just get the time to know him without fifteen million people watching. Why can't they just leave us alone?" Murphy's broadcast on *FYI* frames the incident as a debate on the correct definition of the American family:

"These are difficult times for our country, and in searching for the causes of our social ills, we could choose to blame the media, or the Congress, or an administration that's been in power for twelve years, or we could blame it on

²⁸² *Murphy Brown*, "You Say Potatoe, I Say Potato," season 5, episode 2, directed by Peter Bonerz, written by Diane English, Gary Dontzig, Steven Peterman, and Korby Siamis, CBS, September 21, 1992.

me... I doubt that my status as a single mother has contributed all that much to the breakdown of Western civilization... The Vice President says he felt it was important to open a dialogue about family values, and on that point we agree. Unfortunately, it seems that for him, the only acceptable definition of family is a mother, a father, and children, and in a country where millions of children grow up in non-traditional families, that definition seems painfully unfair. Perhaps it's time for the Vice-President to expand his definition and recognize that, whether by choice or circumstance, families come in all shapes and sizes, and ultimately what really defines a family is commitment, caring, and love."²⁸³

The episode ends with a procession of allegedly non-standard families meant to represent various definitions of the American family. Some hail from different racial backgrounds but most are white and assumed to be heterosexual. The show treats Quayle's remarks as an assault on the definition of family, rather than a politically charged attack on race and gender.

The "You Say Potatoe" episode is driven by a desire to stigmatize Quayle and to shame the news media for involving *Murphy Brown* in a political discussion. Rather than address the political questions of race and gender Quayle suggests, rather than dissect societal expectations and limitations for women, *Murphy Brown* defends its heroine's personal and private "lifestyle choices." Quayle smears Murphy's status as a working mother but Murphy successfully proves that she – not Quayle – is fit to lead the national debate on family values. After all, Quayle is a male politician incapable of experiencing childbirth (and incapable of correctly spelling "potato") while Murphy provides both economic and emotional support for her child. Murphy has true experience as a mother and Quayle does not. By combining her private and public roles, Murphy situates the professional, working mother as the natural arbiter of the American debate on family

²⁸³ *Murphy Brown*, "You Say Potatoe, I Say Potato."

values. Murphy Brown reinterprets the 1970s feminist slogan “the personal is political” in an effective, if overly simplified, way.

Private and public spheres remain solidly separate in *Murphy Brown*; the qualities required for professional success differ radically from those necessary for success in the private world of relationships. Murphy succeeds professionally because she successfully adapts to the masculine culture of television journalism. Rather than play a domestic role in the workplace (like Mary Tyler Moore), Murphy rises through the ranks, wins awards, and achieves star status, because she is unfailingly individualistic. Murphy embodies the liberal feminist hegemony that Sylvia Anne Hewlett believes required women to “clone the male competitive model.”²⁸⁴ She has become what Phyllis Japp calls “a male persona in a female body.”²⁸⁵ The reasoning is fairly cut and dry; Murphy succeeds in a man’s world because she acts like a man.

Murphy’s appearance, mannerisms, and speech are masculinized. She sports untraditional clothes, like boxy suits, baseball caps, high collars, and man-tailored pants. Even her name would traditionally suit a man. While Murphy wears flats and minimal makeup, her ultra-feminine coworker Corky prances about in high heels, light hair, and bright lips. Corky dons subdued pastels, soft scarves, and feminine bows, while serious colors like black and brown dominate Murphy’s wardrobe. Murphy dresses to gain creditability in a male-dominated profession whereas Corky, who is a former Miss America, opts to highlight her femininity. Murphy’s sartorial assertiveness is mirrored in

²⁸⁴ Sylvia Ann Hewlett, *A Lesser Life: The Myth of Women’s Liberation in America* (New York: Warner Books, 1986), 186.

²⁸⁵ Phyllis Japp, “Gender and Work in the 1980s: Television’s Working Women as Displaced Persons,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 14 (1991): 71.

her forceful mannerisms, stride, and stance. Abrasive and aggressive comments are her hallmark and Murphy rarely shies from confidently expressing her opinions, even if they rub others the wrong way. For example, after becoming frustrated with her male coworkers' inability to settle a dispute, Murphy instructs: "just pull down your pants, I'll get a ruler, and we'll settle this once and for all."²⁸⁶ In "The Unshrinkable Murphy Brown," Murphy pushes an interviewee so relentlessly that he has a heart attack and dies.²⁸⁷ In the wake of his death Murphy repents by acting empathetically; however, her sudden softness causes her to be less capable at work. Eventually, Murphy reverts back to her original behavior and performance. One clear message is that the building blocks of Murphy's personality – aggression, competitiveness, and insensitivity – guarantee her professional success in a male-controlled sphere.

The traits responsible for Murphy's public success are the ruin of her private life. Childless and unmarried, Murphy's character embodies what mass media billed as the negative consequences of female independence. In an interview for *Playboy*, Candice Bergen commented on her high-powered character:

"I know many journalists, including television journalists, and I don't know any women in that position who haven't paid a very high price... I've heard from a lot of women who already do what she does that Murphy's life is not desperate enough. The women who really do what she does are so despondent that the landscape of their personal lives is so bleak. Murphy can hardly have a date."²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ *Murphy Brown*, "The Strike," season 2, episode 12, directed by Barnet Kellman, written by Diane English, Gary Dontzig, and Steven Peterman, CBS, December 11, 1989.

²⁸⁷ *Murphy Brown*, "The Unshrinkable Murphy Brown," season 1, episode 19, directed by Barnet Kellman, written by Diane English, Sy Dukane, and Denise Moss, CBS, May 1, 1989.

²⁸⁸ Candice Bergen, *A Fine Romance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 150.

Eldin Bernecky, the ever-present housepainter, appears in most of the scenes set in Murphy's home and seems to be her only friend outside of work. Her love life is similarly sparse.

Murphy's professional drive prevents enduring personal relationships. In a 1988 episode Murphy's ex-husband, a political activist, appears on *FYI*. They rekindle their romance and agree to remarry. However, Murphy calls off their wedding plans citing various career-related reasons like "I can't plan that far in advance—I've got to be ready to hop on a plane at a moment's notice." In the 1990-1991 season, Murphy strikes up a romantic relationship with sharp-tongued talk show host Jerry Gold. Eventually Murphy ends the relationship, explaining, "I'm good at a lot of things, but this isn't one of them. I start saying things I don't normally say, I start doing things I don't normally do... Oh, God, I'm wearing an apron. See what I mean?" Murphy equates her relationship failure with her domestic ineptitude, which further reinforces the divide between private and public life.

The rivalry and lack of friendship between Murphy and Corky feeds the recurring media portrayals of female enmity and lack of solidarity. The implicit message seems to be that sisterhood, especially in the professional world, was a feminist fantasy. From the start Murphy and Corky are at odds with one another. Corky, who is a former pageant star, produces "soft" news features that appeal to female viewers. Murphy does not consider Corky her professional equal nor does she encourage Corky's professional development. Murphy's disdain for Corky's journalistic ability is a common theme of their relationship and competition between the women crops up frequently. In "Devil with a Blue Dress" Miles assigns Corky to support Murphy on a difficult story, but

Murphy is unwilling to collaborate with an inferior journalist. To her surprise, Corky discovers a key piece of information. Murphy tries to take credit for the angle but, in a turn of events, Corky reads the entire story on air and takes full credit. Although Murphy is furious and outmaneuvered, she commends Corky: “You saw your brass ring and you went for it... I have to respect a person for that.”²⁸⁹

Corky is not helpless, however, and she directs a number of biting remarks at Murphy. Corky criticizes Murphy’s lack of femininity by slyly suggesting that Murphy will “make a wonderful mother. Once she gets a little practice and maybe some estrogen supplements.” During a television special Corky interviews Murphy; she swiftly focuses the conversation on Murphy’s troubled personal life and asks a series of probing questions. Her relentlessness leads Murphy to blurt out private revelations, such as “maybe I deliberately sabotage my personal relationships because I fear losing some professional edge.” An underlying tension permeates the women’s interactions and they rarely encourage one other’s progress. Murphy’s fiercely competitive attitude, and her inability to make or maintain female friendships, reinforces the idea that there are limited spaces for women at the top. The unspoken message is that ambitious women are their own worst enemy, not the patriarchy. Whether intentional or not, *Murphy Brown* is infused with an anti-sisterhood, anti-women’s movement undercurrent.

Perhaps the reason why Corky and Murphy are incompatible is because the spheres they represent are at odds; Murphy symbolizes the public masculine world and Corky embodies the private feminine sphere. Not only does their competition play into the postfeminist trope that women tear each other down rather than support one another;

²⁸⁹ *Murphy Brown*, “Devil with a Blue Dress,” season 1, episode 2, directed by Barnet Kellman, written by Diane English and Korby Siamis, CBS, November 21, 1988.

their lack of friendship is one more example that masculine and feminine qualities simply do not mix. The sitcom's refusal to allow women to possess both masculine and feminine qualities keeps the traditionally divided public and private spheres largely separate.

Murphy is subjected to embarrassment and ridicule when she proves to be too powerful or outspoken. Murphy's extreme, competitive personality and brusque behavior often cause problems for which the solution is symbolic discipline. Murphy is simply too curt, self-assured, and vocal to operate unchecked. She is never portrayed as having it all; in order to have a thriving career, Murphy must forgo a loving spouse and a fulfilling social life. Both the punishments she endures and the shortcomings she exhibits remind viewers that success creates problems. Murphy is professionally successful, but personally deficient; although she is a paragon of feminist success she is also a representative of postfeminist ills.

In the world of *Murphy Brown*, feminism and the problems feminism creates for women are problematic; patriarchal patterns are not the issue. Liberal feminism critiqued women's exclusion from the public sphere, but *Murphy Brown* shows a woman who has entered – and excelled – in public. Her failures are due to the way she acts, rather than the way society is structured. On the surface, Murphy is a freewheeling woman who says what she pleases and acts as she likes. And yet, whenever she steps too far outside the bounds of her created persona, Murphy is ridiculed. In short, she pays for her aggression. *Murphy Brown* adheres to the typical sitcom structure in which a character represents an ideology or behavior; when that character is disciplined the ideology they embody is ridiculed or discredited too. Earlier shows followed this pattern. For example, the 1950s sitcom *Father Knows Best* lived up to its title; problems were resolved thanks to the

father's wisdom.²⁹⁰ In *I Love Lucy*, Lucy Ricardo made futile attempts to escape drab domesticity for flashy show business. Although Lucy tried to become a performer, by the end of the episode she was always ushered back to her original place as a traditional housewife. The fact that Lucy's plucky attempts were always botched did not diminish her appeal. The same goes for Murphy; although ritual humiliation corralled her power, Murphy remained forceful, smart, and aggressive. The chastisement Murphy endured for overstepping boundaries, much like Lucy's failure to transgress domestic limits, does not completely diminish her appeal.

In 1992, *Esquire's* annual "Women We Love" issue featured Candice Bergen as the "Woman of the Year." Inside, the feature framed Murphy Brown as a "product of the Eighties backlash against women Having It All, Murphy embodies a belated recognition that it is not possible all-at-once to do the deal, cook the dinner, give a man good lovin', and still flounce about with a chirpy Mary Tyler Moore bob and a smile."²⁹¹ The sitcom's producer Diane English described *Murphy Brown* as "a sort of cautionary tale about getting what you wished for."²⁹² Murphy achieved what many feminists desired; she possessed a level of status, fame, and wealth equal to that of her male coworkers. However, despite her achievements, Murphy lacked the friends, partner, and children her male counterparts possessed. Even after Murphy decided to become a mother, the

²⁹⁰ Nina Leibman, *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

²⁹¹ This *Esquire* article appears to support the backlash thesis that women cannot have it all. However, the authors neglect to explore how societal conditions limit women's ability to manage work and motherhood. Jimmy Breslin and Tom Robbins, "Women We Love 1992," *Esquire*, August 1992, 79.

²⁹² Hilary De Vries, "Laughing Off the Recession All the Way to the Bank," *New York Times Magazine*, January 3, 1993, 20.

producers still created a storyline that left her lacking; Murphy would mother her child alone. By framing Murphy as a single mother, the producers wrote a storyline that denied Murphy a crucial piece of the conventional puzzle. Sure, she could have a fabulous job and she could even have a loving child, but Murphy could never get the guy. Thus, the sitcom is discussed both as an affirmation of women's progress and as a reminder of the perceived duplicity (and costs) of feminist aspirations.

Murphy's pregnancy and birth illustrates how politics, media, and feminism intersected in the 1990s. Murphy's decision to become a single mother barely altered the sitcom; her professional life flourished despite motherhood. Because she prioritized work over childrearing, Murphy did not adhere to the "unstated but ever-present normative implication of postfeminist television... that women should combine work with family, and that normal women prioritize the latter."²⁹³ Murphy is a caricature of the successful professional woman in what Katha Pollitt calls "the most feminist sitcom in TV history."²⁹⁴ She embodies the liberal feminist argument that "women are capable of participating in male culture and of living up to male values."²⁹⁵ The sitcom simultaneously celebrates Murphy's achievements and reinforces the costs of success and the conflicts between work and motherhood. The show's producers and writers demonstrate little regard for how societal expectations shape women's difficult "choices." Murphy is responsible for her own success and her own failure. The show fails

²⁹³ Press, *Women Watching Television*, 146.

²⁹⁴ Katha Pollitt, *Reasonable Creatures: Essays on Women and Feminism* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 32.

²⁹⁵ Alison M. Jagger, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), 250.

to frame women's problems "not as symptoms of individual failure but as symptoms of oppression by a system of male dominance."²⁹⁶

Although Murphy initially contends that her son is "a baby, not a political statement," the show solidifies motherhood as a site where national identity is constructed. By criticizing the fictional reporter during a presidential campaign, Dan Quayle did more than define desirable and undesirable forms of femininity. Quayle insisted American women be put at the service of the nation. This sentiment was hardly new; American women had been called on to bolster the nation before. It was however new and unusual for a fictional television character to be the focal point in a discussion on the importance of maternity to national identity. Quayle's comments marked a new chapter in the intersection of American political speech, femininity, maternity, and mass media.

The Great Escape

Near the end of the cult classic *Thelma & Louise*, Thelma tells Louise that she refuses to surrender to police because their journey has gifted her with a new sense of self. Thelma is no longer the meek browbeaten young wife who began the trip; now she is an assertive, self-possessed gunslinger. She explains, "Something has crossed over in me. I can't go back." Over the course of the movie, Thelma and Louise shift from imprisonment to freedom, as they escape initially rigid gender roles for hybrid identities as female fugitives. Both women loosen their initial personas and adopt signals (like costumes) and postures (like stance and hand gestures) associated with male outlaws. Not only do they cross over into new behaviors (Thelma becomes more assertive while Louise loses

²⁹⁶ Jagger, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, 85-86.

rigidity), they also cross over the barriers marking conventional gender roles in American movies. The open road, a fast car, and guns, allow them physical mobility as well as mobility of identity. Their hard-won mobility and newfound identities are so precious that Thelma and Louise are willing to die rather than surrender and return to a life defined by conformity, punishment, hardline rules of law, and constrictive societal norms.

The plot revolves around an attempted rape. When Thelma and Louise stop at a roadside bar to drink, a smarmy man named Harlan approaches Thelma. They drink, dance, flirt, and go to the parking lot together. But when Harlan kisses Thelma she resists, so Harlan pushes, slaps, and bullies Thelma before he unzips his jeans and attempts to rape her. Luckily Louise finds them in the parking lot and brandishes Thelma's gun which forces Harlan to stop. "In the future," Louise informs him, coldly, "if a woman's crying like that, she ain't having any fun." Harlan yells back "I shoulda fucked her" and Louise snaps – and she shoots him dead. As Harlan's lifeless body lies slumped against the car, his punishment seems fitting. Harlan had likely raped before and, judging by his comment, was likely to do so again. But the incident felt larger than Harlan, bigger than Louise's loyalty to Thelma, and different from her frustration with intolerable men. By the end of the movie we learn Louise was a rape victim herself. Harlan's death is a statement that there should be repercussions for unrepentant offenders. Just as women must pay for their actions, so too should men pay a price – perhaps the ultimate price – for their atrocities.

Louise's shot was a snap-second decision that changed the course of their lives. As newly minted outlaws, Thelma and Louise rob a gas station, imprison a police officer, and explode the oil tanker of a man who repeatedly harasses them. Some of their actions

are based on justice while others are propelled by the realization that there's no going back. Sometimes they choose violence; at other times they have no choice but misconduct. At first, Louise attempts to escape to Mexico with money she legally earned. However, after the handsome thief J.D. (played by Brad Pitt) steals her cash, the women are forced to become thieves themselves. At every point they try to flee – from Harlan, the police, their unrewarding relationships – they are pursued. “Oh my God, it looks like the Army!” Thelma exclaims as law enforcement officers surround them. “All this, for us?” Louise marvels. As their dream of escaping to Mexico recedes, the women face a choice: return to a society made and governed by men or keep driving towards the ultimate escape. Thelma and Louise choose to evade their oppressors' clutches and soar off the cliff to their death.

Thelma & Louise is driven by a fundamental fact: that women cannot trust the law. “No one would believe us,” echoes like a chorus throughout the film. At first, Thelma and Louise consider confessing to the police. Quickly, they realize it would be their word against a dead man's and that his word would win. “Just about 100 people saw you dancing cheek to cheek with him,” Louise scolds Thelma, explaining why no one would believe the attempted rape was an unwelcome advance. “We don't live in that kind of world, Thelma!”

The kind of world they live in is shaped by and for men, and retribution will not be issued equally. So the women take justice into their own hands. In one instance, Thelma and Louise become fed up with a truck driver who verbally harasses them. In order to lure the lurid truck driver off the road and “teach him a lesson” about civility and respect towards women, Thelma and Louise make an over-the-top performance of female

sexual availability. Once the trucker approaches them on foot, Thelma and Louise drop their act and shame him. In an effort to destroy his fantasy of harassing women into a roadside rendezvous, Thelma and Louise state that his tongue wagging and salacious nicknames are neither wanted nor enticing. They remind the trucker that they are not objects like the silver naked ladies emblazoned on his truck mud flaps; they are subjects worthy of respect, just like his mother, sister, or wife. Before resorting to violence, Thelma and Louise prompt the trucker to apologize for his offensive behavior. Unashamed, he spits back: "I ain't apologizing for shit." Louise pulls her gun, swearing to "make him sorry." The women let loose and shoot the trucker's gas rig, which ignites a massive explosion. The tanker truck, like his fantasies, has been blown to smithereens. The imagery in this scene is strong and plain. The women employ traditionally masculine tools of violence (phallic guns) to wreck the trucker's (equally phallic) tanker and to deflate his salacious sexual fantasy. Thelma and Louise pull a bait and switch, shifting from meek to mean, from submissive to dominant. In the end, the women get to point and shoot, not him.

The film set off a similar detonation in the mainstream press. In order to attract VHS orders of *Thelma & Louise* in 1992, MGM/UA proclaimed it to be "the most talked about film of 1991." They were right. Following its release, *Thelma & Louise* garnered a significant number of critical, journalistic, and scholarly responses. Stars Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon appeared on the cover of popular magazines from *Time* to *Sight and Sound*, and the film was analyzed by scholarly publications from *Film Quarterly* to *Cineaste*. Columnists and film critics, scholars and editorialists, dissected and reassembled the film's symbols and social implications according to their own

worldviews. Some critics viewed the truck explosion scene as hyperbolic, even dangerous. Others read the scene as a satiric extrapolation of the “gender wars” leading public discourse in 1991 and 1992, during the film’s production and release. As its social meanings were made, unmade, and remade, the film generated a complex and remarkably intense discourse.

Women who supported equal rights celebrated *Thelma & Louise*, but those who reinforced patriarchal values abhorred the film. The social struggle over the film’s meaning in popular media intersected with clashes over gender equity in the early 1990s. The gender wars escalated in 1991 after Senate Judiciary Committee members mocked Anita Hill’s charges of sexual harassment against Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. Struggles over education policy also intensified in 1991, after the American Association of University Women (AAUW) issued a report titled *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*.²⁹⁷ Using a national poll of students aged nine to fifteen, the report argued the existing education system discouraged girls from achieving academically, particularly in traditionally male subjects such as math and science. When *Thelma & Louise* was in preproduction in 1991, journalist Susan Faludi published *Backlash*, her phenomenal bestselling analysis of the social, cultural, political, and economic efforts to limit women’s gains. Both *Backlash* and *Shortchanging Girls* agreed that the continued subjugation of women throughout the 1980s foretold “devastating consequences for the future of girls and the future of the nation.”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ American Association of University Women, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*, researched by Greenberg-Lake, 1991, <<http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/shortchanging-girls-shortchanging-america-executive-summary.pdf>>.

²⁹⁸ AAUW, *Shortchanging Girls*, 1991.

In 1992 the AAUW issued a second report titled *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, which elicited a series of news articles that challenged the association's findings.²⁹⁹ John Leo, a writer for *U.S. News & World Report's* "Outlook" section, attacked the report in 1992 and again in 1994 and 1999. In "Bias, Bias Everywhere," Leo complained that it was not gender bias itself but rather feminists' criticism of gender bias that was problematic. "Bias politics polarize, focusing almost entirely on complaint, attack and publicity," Leo argued.³⁰⁰ It was "fringe feminist ideas" that would victimize boys and jeopardize their academic performance by unfairly allotting girls more attention and resources. Boys were the true victims compared to girls who blithely pushed the "bias-victimization button" for attention. In an effort to preserve male privilege, Leo accused the AAUW of bias, extremism, and ideology, while propagating those very things himself.

In 1991, John Leo penned the most vitriolic attack on *Thelma & Louise*, titled "Toxic Feminism on the Big Screen."³⁰¹ Leo hated the AAUW reports and he hated the film too; like his articles on education policy, the film review reeked of his signature tone, ideology, and emphasis on male privilege. John Leo shared company with critics who defended the patriarchal status quo in order to ensure men maintained their power and privilege within American society. Although conservative pundits like Leo slammed

²⁹⁹ American Association of University Women, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, researched by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, 1992, <<http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/how-schools-shortchange-girls-executive-summary.pdf>>.

³⁰⁰ John Leo, "Bias, Bias Everywhere," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 16, 1992.

³⁰¹ John Leo, "Toxic Feminism on the Big Screen," *U.S. News & World Report*, July 10, 1991.

the film in negative opinion pieces, liberal film critics penned positive reviews.³⁰² The argument between conservative masculinists and progressive feminists over the film's symbols, merits, and meanings, turned the film into a battleground for gender equity disputes. But John Leo, like the trucker in *Thelma & Louise*, refused to apologize "for shit." The overlap between Leo's film review and his response to the AAUW report demonstrate the significant cross-pollination between media and its context.

In 2003 MGM/UA released a DVD package that included a "making of" documentary short entitled *Thelma & Louise: The Last Journey*. Produced for Scott Free Productions, the brief pseudo-documentary was another promotional piece that discussed the film's creative process, clarified lingering ambiguities, and defined the importance of the film for future viewers. Director Ridley Scott smokes a fat cigar throughout his interview, appearing every inch a member of the old boys' club and an emblem of stereotypical Hollywood masculinity. Despite his appearance, Scott positions himself as the forward thinking, sensitive savior of a film that elicited confusion and disinterest from studios. Many studio executives failed to grasp the film's premise; Scott recalls how one particular executive rejected the idea; "Two bitches in a car. I don't get it."

The executive's casually misogynistic use of "bitches" suggests that the very patriarchy *Thelma and Louise* sought to evade was alive and well in Hollywood. Like other studio heads, he did not care to grasp the appeal of a film that allows women freedom of movement and agency.³⁰³ The hint of anger in his word choice echoes the

³⁰² While John Leo wrote a scathing review for *U.S. News & World Report*, others penned positive reviews, including Janet Maslin for the *New York Times*, Richard Schickel for *Time*, and Jack Kroll for *Newsweek*.

³⁰³ Screenwriter Callie Khouri also reported that Hollywood heavyweights failed to "get" the attraction of a film about two women's clash with patriarchal authority.

repressive male violence in the film. Harlan, who assaults Thelma, and the trucker, who harasses the women, both use the word “bitches” to categorize the women as a threat. For example, when Thelma and Louise discipline the trucker, he labels them “bitches from hell.” Thelma and Louise threaten male privilege because they have access to both fight and flight. Their car grants them mobility and they wield guns, which are symbolically phallic weapons; they address male threats by making threats of their own. The executive’s flippant and angry reaction to the film’s pitch forewarns of the angry reviews the finished film garnered from conservative male pundits.

Thelma & Louise appealed to a wider range of viewers than MGM studio executives initially predicted. *Thelma & Louise* earned \$45.4 million in U.S. domestic gross income in its theatrical release, making it the year’s second top-grossing film behind *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, which earned \$205 million. The movie earned three times its production budget and topped box office charts despite drastically less promotion than other top films. Movie theater lobbies across America received a simple one-sheet poster that promoted the film’s key themes: female friendship, the exciting possibilities of a car on the open road, and the inviting landscape of the American West. The poster advertised itself as a buddy comedy about female friendship, but it was so much more; *Thelma & Louise* was a revenge fantasy, a gun-slinging Western, a feminist proclamation, and a rip-roaring road trip all rolled into one. In the middle of the poster is a Polaroid picture of Thelma and Louise grinning with the film’s first tagline: “Somebody said *get a life*... so they did.” The tagline, however, conceals the surprise ending. Although the phrase “get a life” is often offered dismissively, the characters take the suggestion literally. The women transition from a state of timidity and rigidity to lives

of assertive mobility. Partway through the film, Thelma asks if they're the "only ones with dreams that didn't work out" and Louise responds, "No, we get what we settled for." By the end of the film, the women no longer settle for patriarchal authority. In their quest to "get a life" they taste freedom and, rather than return to a cycle of settling and a world of patriarchal authority, they choose death.

The Meaning of "Ms."

In 1990, *Ms. Magazine* rebranded itself as an advertising-free publication. What began as an insert in 1971 had undergone a turbulent relationship with advertisers for two decades. In its first ad-free issue, Gloria Steinem wrote "Sex, Lies, and Advertising," to detail the pressures *Ms. Magazine* fielded from advertisers. Steinem decried how advertisers viewed women's magazines as simple "catalogs" in which smart editorial content served as window dressing for product placements. Articles served to increase consumer desire and to prime readers to absorb corporate messages. Steinem wrote:

"Except as moneymaking machines—'cash cows' as they are so elegantly called in the trade—women's magazines are rarely taken seriously. Though changes being made by women have been called more far-reaching than the industrial revolution—and though many editors try hard to reflect some of them in the few pages left to them after all the ad-related subjects have been covered—the magazines serving the female half of this country are still far below the journalistic and ethical standards of news and general interest publications. Most depressing of all, this doesn't even rate an exposé. If *Time* and *Newsweek* had to lavish praise on cars in general and credit General Motors in particular to get GM ads, there would be a scandal—maybe a criminal investigation. When women's magazines from *Seventeen* to *Lear's* praise beauty products in general and credit Revlon in particular to get ads, it's just business as usual."³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Gloria Steinem, "Sex, Lies, and Advertising," *Ms. Magazine*, July/August 1990, 19.

Years later, Steinem echoed this sentiment to Abigail Pogrebin, the daughter of Letty Cottin Pogrebin, one of the founders of *Ms. Magazine* and a frequent columnist. Advertisers regularly refused to purchase space in women's magazines that focused on serious journalism, much to Steinem's frustration. "You know," she said, "I have made lots of mistakes all on my own, and I have done all kinds of things that I would like to change, but most of all, I would like to take back all the time I spent trying to sell advertising."³⁰⁵

When Steinem first voiced the need for a national feminist newsletter in 1971, she was more receptive to advertising. Already a popular feminist figure, Steinem had little trouble convincing feminist activists and writers to collaborate on a kind of "connective tissue" among women.³⁰⁶ At first Steinem preferred a barebones newsletter, but eventually she was convinced to create a glossy women's magazine.³⁰⁷ According to Patricia Carbine, who served as executive editor at *Look* magazine and *McCall's*, women's magazines were an "extraordinary medium."³⁰⁸ Easily portable, readable, and visual, magazines were the ideal lure for advertising dollars. While newsletters would

³⁰⁵ Abigail Pogrebin, "How Do You Spell Ms.," *New York*, November 7, 2011, 104.

³⁰⁶ Amy Erdman Farrell conducted an interview with Gloria Steinem in New York on August 2, 1990. Amy Erdman Farrell, "From a Tarantula on a Banana Boat to a Canary in a Mine: 'Ms. Magazine' as a Cautionary Tale in a Neoliberal Age," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 393-405.

³⁰⁷ Those in favor of a women's magazine instead of a newsletter included Patricia Carbine, Brenda Feigen Fasteau, and Elizabeth Forsting Harris.

³⁰⁸ Amy Erdman Farrell conducted an interview with Patricia Carbine in New York on August 1, 1990. Farrell, "Banana Boat," 393-405.

reach avid feminists, glossy magazines could attract the as-yet-unenlightened masses of housewives who passed newsstands, grocery checkouts, and doctor's offices daily.³⁰⁹

“We’re going to make a lot of money out of it,” Clay Felker of *New York* magazine promised.³¹⁰ Felker had agreed to publish the first version of *Ms.* as an insert in *New York* magazine in 1971. Steinem had written extensively for the magazine in the past and Felker was willing to help. “We owe Gloria a great deal, and wanted to help her get started. It isn’t all altruistic, of course,” Felker explained during an interview for *Newsweek*.³¹¹ *New York* magazine would secure all the advertising and collect all the profits for both the insert and the first issue of *Ms.* Any worries about the publication’s ability to sell copies were swept aside after it sold out in just eight days. Further investment followed; Katharine Graham of the *Washington Post* offered \$20,000 and Warner Communications invested \$1 million. This amount was relatively small for a magazine launch but large enough to differentiate *Ms.* from struggling feminist periodicals.

Warner Communications invested in *Ms. Magazine* for capitalistic, not altruistic, reasons. “By 1970 the most financially successful magazines—that is, those that attracted advertisers—were closely targeted at specialized audiences,” Patricia Bradley explains.³¹²

³⁰⁹ Following the post-suffrage era, writer Freda Kirchwey had urged women to create a magazine that united feminists and homemakers. A hundred years later, *Ms. Magazine* appeared to have the potential to do so. Freda Kirchwey, “A Woman’s Magazine and Why,” *The Suffragist* 9, no. 1 (1921): 356.

³¹⁰ “Feminist Forum,” *Newsweek*, November 8, 1971, 104.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² Patricia Bradley, *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism, 1963-1975* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 169.

Warner bet that *Ms.* and its feminist readers were one of those specialized audiences with a high return. Warner's investment also signaled an early deviation from the founders' initial goals; they intended to keep the magazine women-controlled, to produce non-traditional content, and to uphold strict policies regarding advertising content. Whether Warner's investment would strengthen or weaken *Ms.* remained to be seen.

The first issue of this "new magazine for women" was emblazoned with a Hindu-like goddess. A fetus danced in her womb and her eight outstretched arms held the markers of an American woman's life: a frying pan, an iron, a mop, a mirror, a phone, a typewriter, and a steering wheel. This magazine would be nothing like the others, if its articles were any indication. "Women Tell the Truth about Their Abortions," "Letty Pogrebin on Raising Kids without Sex Roles," and "Gloria Steinem on Sisterhood" were just a few of the titles that beckoned readers. Decades later, readers would continue to reference Jane O'Reilly's article on "The Housewife's Moment of Truth," which describes the "click of recognition" women experience upon realizing their unequal status.³¹³ Judy Syfer's "I Want a Wife" was similarly life changing. Race was addressed in "The Black Family and Feminism," poverty in "Welfare is a Women's Issue," and childcare centers in Dorothy Pitman Hughes's how-to article. Editors explained exactly why they selected the title "Ms." for their magazine:

"In practice, Ms. is used with a woman's given name: *Ms. Jane Jones*, say, or *Ms. Jane Wilson Jones*. Obviously, it doesn't make sense to say *Ms. John Jones*: a woman identified only as her husband's wife must remain a Mrs. ... The use of Ms. isn't meant to protect either the married or the unmarried from social

³¹³ Jane O'Reilly, "The Housewife's Moment of Truth," *Ms. Magazine*, Spring 1972, 54.

pressure—only to signify a female human being. It’s symbolic, and important. There’s a lot in a name.”³¹⁴

The thoughtful definition of “Ms.” exemplified the magazine’s desire to offer instructive content to readers, who were already well-versed, well-educated, socially conscious women. The initial issue set the tone of *Ms.* as a commercial, feminist magazine with thoughtful underpinnings.

The editors of *Ms. Magazine* prided themselves on creating a magazine that differed from other women’s publications. The pluralistic vision of women as “sisters,” the belief in feminism as a humanizing force, and the confidence in an individual’s ability to transform and awaken, were present throughout the magazine’s history. Steinem believed mainstream magazines received troubling pressure from advertisers who wanted to shape editorial content to facilitate the sale of their products. With *Ms. Magazine*, she promised to reject the kind of “harmful” or “downright insulting” ads *Time* and *Newsweek* accepted; instead, Steinem and her employees swore to select ads to “reflect the real balance of our lives.”³¹⁵

Although Steinem and Carbine were optimistic about their ability to control advertisers, advertising was the largest obstacle *Ms. Magazine* faced. As a commercial magazine, *Ms.* had a circulation between 300,000 and 500,000 and an estimated 3 million readers. *Ms.* also had a coveted spot on American newsstands; each new month and each new magazine was a reminder to readers nationwide that a group of dedicated feminist writers covered pertinent issues like the Equal Rights Amendment, domestic violence,

³¹⁴ “What’s a Ms.?” *Ms. Magazine*, Spring 1972, 4.

³¹⁵ “Personal Report from Ms.,” *Ms. Magazine*, July 1972, 7; “Everything You Wanted to Know about Advertising and Were Not Afraid to Ask—Personal Report from Ms.,” *Ms. Magazine*, November 1974, 58.

and sexual harassment. For all its bark *Ms.* struggled to get advertisers to bite. Companies dismissed the magazine on the assumption that feminists did not purchase food and cosmetics (unlike homemakers) and that women did not purchase expensive items like plane tickets and cars (but men did). Mainstream women's magazines agreed to write copy (like recipes) that directly helped advertisers (like Jell-O mix). *Ms. Magazine* was loath to comply. However, advertisers still shaped content to a certain extent by recoiling at the mention of anything that did not fit their idea of what educated and wealthy readers sought. Editors had to hide or cut articles about poor women, uneducated women, imprisoned women, or women of color. Some advertisers requested notification of any remotely controversial topics.³¹⁶ Pocketbooks were firmly shut at any mention of the words "abortion," "lesbianism," or "gun control."

The Height of Neoliberalism

When Bill Clinton assumed office in January 1993, he wasted no time in committing his administration to a neoliberal economic push toward fiscal stability. The annual budget deficit was nearly \$300 billion by the time President George H. W. Bush desperately tried to reverse this dangerous dynamic in 1990 by raising taxes on upper-income earners. The 1991 recession following the Savings and Loan Crisis of the 1980s and early 1990s dragged the nation into a severe financial crisis. These conditions led

³¹⁶ The advertising staff at *Ms.* was allegedly asked to notify Proctor and Gamble whenever words like "witch craft" were scheduled for print so the company could opt out of the issue. Lorraine Calvacca, "Forbidden Four," *Folio*, 15 (October 1993): 25.

Clinton to listen to a slew of advisors who urged him to prioritize reduction of the budget deficit.³¹⁷ The goal was to return the American economy to its former glory.

Clinton's neoliberal policies reaped positive rewards by the mid-1990s. Flush with cash, Americans indulged in full-blown consumerism; expensive items like cars, computers, and real estate were purchased with abandon. This newfound prosperity, however, resulted in political pressure to reduce taxes. Unlike his predecessor Ronald Reagan, who offered breaks for high-income earners, Clinton's tax breaks were aimed at capital gains investments made by homeowners, securities and stocks, and businesses with new research or technology. The tax cuts helped some powerful U.S. corporations including Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, and Johnson and Johnson. It also helped corporate leaders; compensation packages of American CEOs ballooned in the 1990s. In contrast, most wages stagnated or grew only marginally. In 2000 National Census Data exposed a dramatic widening of economic disparities in America.

The administration's commitment to neoliberal ideology was further underscored as Clinton commenced some of the most comprehensive deregulatory reforms of the twentieth century. The 1999 Financial Services Modernization Act dissolved the legal divisions between commercial and investment banking, and between insurance companies and brokerage houses. Clinton had effectively erased one of the main Keynesian regulations of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, which sought to right the aftermath of the Great Depression. The potential catastrophe of such deep

³¹⁷ So-called "deficit hawks" with Wall Street ties led Clinton's large economic team. They included Alice Rivlin, Lloyd Bentsen, Robert Rubin, Leon Panetta, and Larry Summers. Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Chairman, recommended an ambitious inflation target of 3% to 3.5%.

deregulations of the finance sector would not become fully apparent until the financial crisis of 2008.

As the world became increasingly globalized, and as cultural and ethnic tensions rose, nationalist forces on the political Right gathered strength in the late 1990s. Right-wing groups criticized market globalism for the breakdown of traditional ways of life, and bemoaned increased immigration and the displacement of small farmers. Populist political leaders the world over, including Patrick Buchanan in the United States, Gianfranco Fini in Italy, and Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, denounced neoliberal “fundamentalism.” These populists blamed the decline in living standards and moral values on “unpatriotic” practices and developments such as the increase in free trade, the growing power of global investors, and the outsourcing of domestic manufacturing jobs.

The traumatic events of September 11, 2001 brought fear into the equation as radical jihadists attacked the symbol of what they considered the most “godless,” “materialistic,” and neoliberal society in the world. As President George W. Bush turned the security crisis into an opportunity for extending the hegemony of neoliberalism in a new way, the neoliberal market language merged with a neoconservative security agenda. The United States invaded Iraq in 2003, and by 2007 Osama Bin Laden unleashed a videotaped rant against neoliberalism and the “corrupt American political system.”³¹⁸ When the American real-estate market collapsed in late 2007 and triggered the global financial crisis, neoliberalism had already been under fire from both the radical Left and Right for years.

³¹⁸ Manfred B. Steger, “Religion and Ideology in the Global Age: Analyzing al Qaeda’s Islamist Globalism,” *New Political Science* 31, no. 4 (December 2009): 529-541.

As the world's stock markets dropped dramatically, unemployment ballooned. The Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted from 14,000 in October 2007 to below 7,000 in early 2009. By the end of 2009, the crisis had obliterated 14.3 trillion dollars, or roughly 33% of the value of the world's companies. Economic experts agreed the global economy was in a recession that threatened to become another Great Depression. Some commentators blamed "greedy Wall Street bankers" for spurring the crisis while others blamed global financial elites for following neoliberal beliefs. Leaders on both sides of the political spectrum questioned the tenets of neoliberalism.

Across the globe, politicians sounded the death knell for neoliberalism. In January 2009 in France, President Nicolas Sarkozy simply said, "Laissez-faire is finished." Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd explained that the "prevailing neoliberal economic orthodoxy... underpinned the national and global regulatory frameworks that have so spectacularly failed to prevent the economic mayhem which has been visited upon us." By April, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced that "the old world of the Washington Consensus is over." When Barack Obama delivered his 2009 Inaugural Address during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, he bluntly denounced the reigning economic paradigm his predecessors had so vehemently championed. In his view, the global financial disaster had arisen out of the greed and negligence of a few, and the unwillingness of the many to adapt to changing times. The question was not whether government was too big or too small, but whether it worked. Looking squarely into the cameras Obama said,

"Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched. But this crisis has reminded us that without a watchful eye, the market can spin out of control."

News pundits swiftly reported that Obama's address indicated an imminent end to the age of neoliberalism.

The Close of the Twentieth Century – Liberté, Égalité, Anxiété

By the end of the twentieth century, the number of women in the American workforce was at an all-time high. In 1940, less than 10 percent of American mothers with children under 18 participated in the workforce.³¹⁹ By 1990, that number had ballooned to 63 percent. The proportion of women with preschool children rose as well, to 59.4 percent by 1990.³²⁰ By 1999 women's labor force participation peaked at an all-time high of 60 percent.³²¹ As the number of employed mothers grew, the acceptance of working mothers spread.

While economic and demographic factors drew mothers into the workforce, women's activism and consciousness drove the major improvements to their working conditions. Feminists fought for respect and recognition from employers and colleagues. They confronted discrimination in courts and Congress. Wives pressed husbands to share housework and childcare responsibilities. Women encouraged one another to view

³¹⁹ The labor force participation statistics for mothers of preschool-aged children prior to 1950 are unavailable. "Who Are the Working Mothers?" Women's Bureau Leaflet 37 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, October, 1970), 1.

³²⁰ By 1990 the number of married mothers in the workforce with children younger than six was higher than ever before. The employment rate of divorced mothers was even higher; by 1990 more than 70 percent participated in the workforce. Phyllis Moen, *Women's Two Roles: A Contemporary Dilemma* (New York: Auburn House, 1992), 14.

³²¹ "Changes in Men's and Women's Labor Force Participation Rates," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 10, 2007, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2007/jan/wk2/art03.htm>, accessed January 20, 2017.

themselves as more than secondary earners, second-class citizens, and members of the second sex.

At the close of the twentieth century, women were told to count themselves lucky. Not only could women work, women could enroll at any university, join any law firm, or open any bank account. Women had access to infinite opportunities, corporate leaders claimed, so there was no need for equal opportunity policies. Women were so equal, lawmakers reassured, that there was no need for an Equal Rights Amendment. Many argued the struggle for women's rights had been won. Soon another (more distorted) message emerged: women are so free and equal now, that they are more miserable than ever before. Mass media featured anxious and unhappy women who chose to chase professional goals at the cost of domestic dreams. Doctors declared women had gained control of their fertility only to squander their childbearing years. Paul Weyrich the "Father of the New Right" proclaimed,

"At last the lie of feminism is being understood. Women are discovering they can't have it all. They are discovering that if they have careers, their children will suffer, their family life will be destroyed. It used to be we were the only ones who were saying it. Now, I read about it everywhere."³²²

By the end of the twentieth century, the resounding conservative conclusion was that women were unhappy precisely because they were free; equality was the cause of their pain.

Media coverage of women's uneasy and unhappy liberation continued into the twenty-first century. As the decade unfurled a new slew of backlash articles emerged. "Babies versus Career" and the "Harsh Facts about Fertility" adorned a *Time* cover in

³²² Susan Faludi interviewed Paul Weyrich at his Washington DC offices during the winter of 1988. Faludi, *Backlash*, 242.

2002. “The Case for Staying Home: Why More Young Moms Are Opting Out of the Rat Race,” *Time* wrote in 2004.³²³ “Women who are at the top of their game could have had it all, children and career, if they wanted it,” argued Pamela Madsen, executive director of the American Infertility Association, in a 2002 *Time* cover story. “The problem was, nobody told them the truth about their bodies.”³²⁴ “Truth” was the oft-cited impetus behind the antifeminist media onslaught at the turn of the century. A report from the *Harvard Business Review* on “Executive Women and the Myth of Having It All,” found that ambitious women’s prioritization of career resulted in a “creeping nonchoice” to miss out on motherhood. The more successful a man is the more likely he will be to have a spouse and children, Sylvia Ann Hewlett reported; “the opposite holds true for women.”³²⁵

On the eve of the 2008 financial crisis, the conservative message that wealthy career women were unlucky in love and doomed to be childless had made its mark. In the decade prior to the crash, women’s views on work took a turn towards the traditional; mothers in particular expressed a more old-fashioned set of attitudes. From 1997 to 2007, the share of mothers with children younger than eighteen who said working full time was their ideal situation dropped from 30 to 20 percent. During that same ten-year period, the share of mothers who said they would prefer to work part time rose from 44 to 50 percent. The number who said not working at all would be best grew slightly from 26

³²³ Claudia Wallis, “The Case For Staying Home,” *Time*, March 22, 2004, <http://academics.wellesley.edu/Polisci/Han/Pol199/Syllabus/Moms_Staying_Home.pdf>.

³²⁴ Nancy Gibbs, “Making Time for Baby,” *Time*, April 15, 2002, 48.

³²⁵ Sylvia Ann Hewlett, “Executive Women and the Myth of Having It All,” *Harvard Business Review*, April 2002, <<https://hbr.org/2002/04/executive-women-and-the-myth-of-having-it-all>>.

percent in 1997 to 29 percent in 2007.³²⁶ When the recession hit, everything shifted. Immediately the number of women who saw full time work as preferable grew. Between 2007 and 2012, the share that said full-time work would be ideal rose sharply, from 20 to 32 percent, while the number who hoped to not work at all fell from 29 to 20 percent.³²⁷ The market crash left fewer women with the luxury to choose when, where, and how much they worked. As circumstances pushed more mothers into the workforce either by necessity or choice, more women became secondary and even primary breadwinners. But as women and men's roles converged financially in the wake of the Great Recession, a gap remained when it came to care-giving and housework. Women had to assume more financial responsibility, and they were also expected to complete the bulk of traditionally female work. The prospect of effortlessly "having it all" was hardly a concern for women exhausted at the reality of doing it all – the housework, childcare, and breadwinning.

³²⁶ Kim Parker and Wendy Wang, "Modern Parenthood: Roles of Moms and Dads Converge as They Balance Work and Family," Pew Research Center, March 14, 2013, <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/03/14/modern-parenthood-roles-of-moms-and-dads-converge-as-they-balance-work-and-family/>>.

³²⁷ Parker et al., "Modern Parenthood."

Conclusion:

Having It All in the Twenty-First Century

A sea of protestors in pink-pointed “pussyhats” swarmed the streets of Washington D.C. on January 21, 2017. Over two hundred thousand people gathered for the Women’s March on Washington to protest President Donald Trump’s first full day in office. In marches across the world, from Seattle to Singapore to Sydney, over two million people marched in solidarity with American women.³²⁸ On handmade signs, protestors articulated their fury, fear, resolve, and indignation at Trump and the current political climate. Some signs were concise. “Progress not regress,” one woman urged. Another defined the President-elect as “Trump: (n.) Anti-woman.” Many more bore the unofficial rallying cry of millions of protestors: “Pussy Grabs Back.”³²⁹ A picture of Mary Richards smiled back at protestors from a bright yellow background as images of Carrie Fisher and Gloria Steinem floated by on the walking tide. “A feminist is anyone

³²⁸ Various news outlets estimated that over two million people around the world marched on January 21, 2017 in protest against President Donald Trump. *USA Today* estimated 2.6 million protesters. Heidi M. Przybyla and Fredreka Schouten, “At 2.6 Million Strong, Women’s Marches Crush Expectations,” *USA Today*, January 21, 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/01/21/womens-march-aims-start-movement-trump-inauguration/96864158/>.

³²⁹ Donald Trump received considerable backlash after he boasted about grabbing women “by the pussy.” The phrase “Pussy Grabs Back” became the unofficial rallying cry of women outraged by Trump’s misogyny. Jessica Bennett, author of *Feminist Fight Club* (2016), turned the phrase into a widely shared image with a cat in mid-snarl. Bennett, along with Female Collective, a feminist brand and online community, sold shirts emblazoned with the image and donated proceeds to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. Nicole Puglise, “‘Pussy grabs back’ becomes rallying cry for female rage against Trump,” *The Guardian*, 10 October 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/oct/10/donald-trump-pussy-grabs-back-meme-women-twitter>.

who recognizes the equality and full humanity of women and men,” adorned a poster. An Audre Lorde quote echoed the sisterly sentiments: “I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.” Signs ranged from clever to cute to blunt; some associated the suppression of women’s rights with imprisonment, death, and darkness. A large sign quoted poet Dylan Thomas, who shunted the usual Christian attitude of acquiescence and acceptance of death in favor of ungentle rage. “Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” An older woman with long gray hair and thin black glasses simply wrote: “I will not go quietly back to the 1950s.”

In every city, speakers and famous performers offered words of encouragement and criticism. In the capitol, actress Scarlett Johansson thanked a Planned Parenthood doctor for offering her compassion years earlier; “no judgment, no questions asked.” Johansson then cut to the chase. “President Trump, I did not vote for you,” she continued,

“But I ask that you support me. Support my sister. Support my mother... I ask you to support all women and our fight for equality in all things, including the fight to be recognized as individuals, who know better for ourselves what is right for our bodies, better than any elected official, popular or otherwise... Support my daughter, who may actually as a result of the appointments you have made grow up in a country that is moving backwards, not forwards, and who may potentially not have the right to make choices for her body, and her future, that your daughter, Ivanka, has been privileged to have.”³³⁰

A slew of other popular figures joined Johansson’s appeal. America Ferrera and Jessica Chastain, both known for playing boundary-breaking heroines onscreen, appeared

³³⁰ Reflect, “Scarlett Johansson’s Speech at The Women’s March on Washington,” YouTube video, 08:33, posted January 21, 2017, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6ofCjjUz-Q>>.

onstage.³³¹ Among the stars were media moguls and nonprofit heads. Cecile Richards, the President of Planned Parenthood, joined civil rights activist Angela Davis and *ELLE* magazine editor Melissa Harris-Perry. Notable activists for civil, LGBTQ, and women's rights represented groups such as NARAL Pro-Choice America, Girls Who Code, Black Girls Rock, and the Muslim Women's Alliance.

In a rousing speech, Gloria Steinem lamented the current political climate and urged attendees to continue protesting after the January march. At 83 years old, Steinem claims to “remember when things were worse” in the United States. But she indicated the march, characterized as “an outpouring of energy and true democracy like I have never seen in my very long life,” proved things could become better. “We are united here for bodily integrity,” Steinem stated, “which means the right to decide whether and when to give birth without government interference.” After citing how some six million Polish women overturned antiabortion laws in 2016 by protesting in the streets, Steinem urged American women to “introduce yourselves to each other and decide what we're gonna do tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.”

Steinem quoted a letter sent from Judith Herman, M.D., to President Obama on November 29, 2016. A professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, Herman wrote to Obama “to express our grave concern regarding the mental stability of our President-Elect.” Herman reasoned,

“His widely reported symptoms of mental instability—including grandiosity, impulsivity, hypersensitivity to slights or criticism, and an

³³¹ Actress Ashley Judd, who earned a Master's of Public Administration at Harvard, also attended. In August 2016, she enrolled in a PhD program at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. <<https://gspp.berkeley.edu/directories/phd-students/ashley-judd>>.

apparent inability to distinguish between fantasy and reality—lead us to question his fitness for the immense responsibilities of the office.”³³²

Along with her colleagues at the American Psychiatric Association, Herman requested Trump undergo “a full medical and neuropsychiatric evaluation” before assuming office. Unsurprisingly, Donald Trump did not submit to a critique.

The War on Abortion

With control of the Presidency, House, Senate, and a newly appointed Supreme Court Justice, the Republican Party is positioned to make sweeping changes over the next four years. Out of all the contentions between Republicans and Democrats, one subject remains constantly and deeply divisive: abortion. Over the decades, Trump’s stance on abortion has wavered. In 1999, Trump declared himself “very pro-choice” to NBC’s Tim Russert. A year later, Trump withdrew his previous assertion and promised to support a ban on late-term abortions. In 2011, Trump came out as pro-life. By 2015, he continued to express strong opposition to abortion, except in cases of rape, incest, or threats to the mother’s health. By 2016, he told MSNBC’s Chris Matthews that women who have abortions should be punished legally, regardless of health-related exemptions.

Although Trump has vacillated on abortion rights and repercussions, his second-in-command, Mike Pence, has not. A self-described “evangelical Catholic,” Vice President Pence staunchly supports a total ban on abortion. As governor of Indiana last

³³² Richard Greene, “Is Donald Trump Mentally Ill? 3 Professors of Psychiatry Ask President Obama to Conduct ‘A Full Medical and Neuropsychiatric Evaluation,’” Huffington Post, 17 December 2016, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-greene/is-donald-trump-mentally_b_13693174.html>.

year, Pence signed the draconian legislation HEA 1337 “with a prayer.”³³³ The March 2016 law is designed to prevent women from accessing abortions. It forces patients to undergo an ultrasound exam at least 18 hours before an abortion; bans abortions sought due to fetal anomalies; and mandates the burial of aborted remains versus their use in medical research. Mike Fichter, the president of anti-abortion group Indiana Right to Life, saluted Pence for forbidding women to discriminate against “the unborn.” The bill drew criticism from medical professionals and several female Republican members of the Indiana Legislature who deemed the bill excessively restrictive. Ilyse Hogue, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, called the law “one of the most extreme anti-abortion measures in the country” because it penalizes women for accessing “constitutionally protected abortion care.” Hogue accused Pence of “betraying” Americans “instead of confronting the very real challenges our nation faces,” and she pledged to “continue to oppose his dangerous attempts.”³³⁴

Exactly one year after Pence signed the restrictive legislation, U.S. District Court Judge Tanya Walton Pratt (an Obama nominee for the federal bench) found the law put “undue burden” on patients, especially low-income women. Judge Pratt ruled it

³³³ Shortly after he signed the law, Mike Pence issued a statement as Governor. “Throughout my public career, I have stood for the sanctity of life. HEA 1337 is a comprehensive pro-life measure that affirms the value of all human life, which is why I signed it into law today... By enacting this legislation, we take an important step in protecting the unborn, while still providing an exception for the life of the mother. I sign this legislation with a prayer that God would continue to bless these precious children, mothers and families.” Associated Press, “Indiana Governor OKs Fetal Defects Abortion Ban,” March 24, 2016, <<http://www.wndu.com/content/news/Indiana-governor-signs-bill-banning-abortions-sought-because-of-fetal-genetic-abnormalities-373416261.html>>.

³³⁴ Dwight Adams, “Reaction to Indiana’s New Abortion Restrictions,” *Indianapolis Star*, March 24, 2016, <<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2016/03/24/reaction-indianas-new-abortion-restrictions/82230984/>>.

unconstitutional to require women to have an ultrasound 18 hours prior to abortion as this posed “significant financial and other burdens” for women who already “face lengthy travel to one of PPINK’s now only six health centers.” Overall, Judge Pratt found HEA 1337 to be baseless, especially “when weighed against the almost complete lack of evidence that the law furthers the State’s asserted justifications of promoting fetal life and women’s mental health outcomes.”³³⁵ Judge Pratt’s decision was a win for pro-choice activists like Ilyse Hogue. However, by spring 2017, Mike Pence was already enjoying greater power and prestige as Vice President. Pence, who has never shied away from measures deemed “dangerous” and “discriminatory” by women’s rights activists, is in a prime position to support legislation that advances the agenda of social conservatives.

Eight out of ten white evangelical Christians voted for President Donald Trump, as did a record-high number of Catholics.³³⁶ Conservatives celebrated Trump’s quick action against abortion. On January 23, 2017, in one of his first official acts, Trump issued an executive order restoring the Mexico City Policy, which President Ronald Reagan first issued in 1984 at the United Nations population conference in Mexico City. The policy prevents federal funds from benefiting foreign non-governmental organizations that “perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family

³³⁵ Federal Judge Tanya Walton Pratt issued her decision on March 31, 2017 in the Indianapolis Division of the Southern District of Indiana in the United States District Court. The name of the case is *Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky, Inc., v. Commissioner, Indiana State Department of Health*. It can be found at <https://ecf.insd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/show_public_doc?12016cv1807-42>.

³³⁶ Gregory A. Smith and Jessica Martínez, “How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis,” Pew Research Center, November 9, 2016, <<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/>>.

planning.”³³⁷ In the memorandum, Trump directs the Secretary of State “to ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars do not fund organizations or programs that support or participate in the management of a program of coercive abortion.”³³⁸ U.S. aid will continue to pay for humanitarian relief and health care overseas – but not abortion. Under the Trump administration, the policy was renamed as “Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance.” Among opponents, it is known as the “Global Gag Rule” because it also prohibits foreign NGOs from using non-U.S. funds to lobby foreign governments to legalize abortion or to provide information about the procedure. Trump’s swift reversion to a Reagan-era stance on abortion was warmly welcomed by evangelicals. “I thank President Trump for issuing an executive order in keeping with his campaign promise that he will protect taxpayers from having to pay for abortions,” said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council. Perkins praised the stringent rule by echoing Trump’s campaign slogan: “This is a vital step in the journey to make America great again.”³³⁹

In an April 2017 interview Margaret Atwood explained the Biblical reason behind evangelical support for Trump. Evangelicals believe “God has often used ungodly figures

³³⁷ Jennifer Kates and Kellie Moss, “What Is the Scope of the Mexico City Policy: Assessing Abortion Laws in Countries That Receive U.S. Global Health Assistance,” Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, May 03, 2017, <<http://kff.org/global-health-policy/issue-brief/what-is-the-scope-of-the-mexico-city-policy-assessing-abortion-laws-in-countries-that-receive-u-s-global-health-assistance/>>.

³³⁸ Donald J. Trump, “Presidential Memorandum Regarding the Mexico City Policy,” The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, January 23, 2017, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/23/presidential-memorandum-regarding-mexico-city-policy>>.

³³⁹ J. P. Duffy and Alice Chao, “Family Research Council Applauds Pres. Trump’s Executive Order Restoring Policy against Funding Foreign Abortion Groups,” Family Research Council, January 23, 2017, <<http://www.frc.org/newsroom/family-research-council-applauds-pres-trumps-executive-order-restoring-policy-against-funding-foreign-abortion-groups>>.

to advance God’s agenda like the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.” Sinful divorcé Donald Trump is seen “as an ungodly figure who nonetheless has been used by God to advance God’s agenda, namely theirs.” According to Atwood, the nation’s “supposedly Christian” evangelicals “voted for Donald Trump hoping that he would help them get what they wanted.”³⁴⁰ For ultraconservative churchgoers, the brash businessman is a necessary evil. Trump’s loudmouthed insults and domineering drama detract from the administration’s less visible power players who are working diligently towards their own goals. It is time to pull back the curtain on the bigger picture and answer a far more pressing question: who supported him and why?

On February 16, 2017 Trump posted a photo to Twitter in which a group of middle-aged men surround him in the Oval Office.³⁴¹ Clad in dark blue suits and smug smiles, the men stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their hands in a “thumbs up” sign. The shot was taken shortly after Trump signed a bill undoing President Obama’s stance against coal mining. Not surprisingly, the caption reads #MakeAmericaGreatAgain. Only one woman stands with them.

Like the photo, Trump’s cabinet is the textbook definition of an “old boys’ club.” More worrisome than the cabinet’s collective lack of diversity, however, is the history of oppression several individuals exhibit. More than one is poised to undercut the very

³⁴⁰ Jon Wiener, “Margaret Atwood: ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ in the Age of Trump,” *Start Making Sense, The Nation*, podcast audio, April 26, 2017, <<https://www.thenation.com/article/margaret-atwood-the-handmaids-tale-in-the-age-of-trump/>>.

³⁴¹ On February 16, 2017 Trump posted a photo to his social media account, [Twitter.com/POTUS](https://twitter.com/POTUS). The photo featured Trump and twelve cabinet members (only one was female). Everyone made a “thumbs up” sign with one or both hands. The photo was captioned with Trump’s campaign slogan #MakeAmericaGreatAgain. For the original photo see <<https://twitter.com/POTUS/status/832447477391491073/photo/1>>.

agency he was appointed to protect. Scott Pruitt is a stark example. Thanks to a nomination from Trump and approval from the Republican-controlled Senate, Pruitt now heads the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A fierce critic of the EPA, the former Oklahoma attorney general spent years fighting the role and reach of the organization he now heads. Hundreds of former EPA staff members publicly objected to his appointment in an open letter, calling Pruitt an “unqualified extremist.”³⁴² Democrats highlighted his unsettling intimacy with energy companies. With Pruitt in place, environmentalists fear the administration will overturn hard-won regulations, such as Obama’s Clean Power Plan and the “Waters of the U.S.” However, Pruitt should be wary of overreach. President Ronald Reagan appointed Anne Gorsuch Burford to reform the EPA back in 1981. After several failed attempts to downsize the agency, Burford was discharged.

Tom Price, the current Secretary of Health and Human Services, is another controversial appointment. Price has a long legislative record of adamant opposition to women’s access to reproductive health care. At the 2012 Conservative Political Action Conference, Price articulated his desire to see the Affordable Care Act (ACA) repealed. In blatant disregard for the low-income women who stood to lose coverage for contraception should the ACA be repealed, Price infamously declared, “Bring me one woman who has been left behind. Bring me one. There’s not one. The fact of the matter is this is trampling on religious freedom and religious liberty in this country.”³⁴³ In 2013

³⁴² “Scott Pruitt: Controversial Trump Environment Nominee Sworn In,” *BBC*, February 18, 2017, <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39010374>>.

³⁴³ Olga Khazan, “Tom Price: ‘Not One’ Woman Struggled to Afford Birth Control,” *The Atlantic*, November 29, 2016, <<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/11/tom-price-not-one-woman-cant-afford-birth-control/509003/>>.

Price voted for the Blackburn amendment, which would allow companies to deny employees coverage for preventative services like birth control; he opposed a 2015 amendment that prevented employers from firing staff who used birth control or had an abortion; and he supported a bill to eliminate Title X. Price repeatedly called for the defunding of Planned Parenthood even though the organization is already barred from using federal funds for abortion services. As Secretary of Health and Human Services, Price will surely promote his ultraconservative agenda with a sexist streak.

Senator Elizabeth Warren denounced Price's attack on birth control, which "helps women keep their jobs, finish their educations, and financially support themselves." According to Destiny Lopez, Co-Director of pro-choice organization All Above All, his attempts to defund Planned Parenthood and ban abortion "enshrine discrimination under the guise of religious freedom." Lopez views the appointment of Price as "yet another step in the Trump-Pence agenda to shame, bully, and punish women."³⁴⁴ "Price would be right at home in 1917, telling women what we can and can't do with our own bodies," Warren agrees. Senator Patty Murray evaluated his impact holistically:

"Access to birth control is absolutely critical not just to a woman's health, but to her economic security and independence, which is why efforts by extreme politicians to get in the way of that access are so deeply damaging—for women, families, and our country as a whole."³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ "Activists Kick Off Price Nomination Hearing with Over Half a Million Petitions Exposing Price's Anti-Woman Record," All* Above All, January 18, 2017, <<http://allaboveall.org/press/activists-kick-off-price-nomination-hearing-with-over-half-a-million-petitions-exposing-prices-anti-woman-record/>>.

³⁴⁵ Senator Patty Murray, "Murray, Senate Dems Demand GOP Drop Efforts to 'Rip Apart' Health Care System," YouTube video, 08:47, posted January 9, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_Sq8aWXY9I&feature=youtu.be>.

The harms caused by lack of affordable birth control and demolition of the ACA would “undoubtedly fall hardest on young Black women, particularly those of us living in the South,” explained Monica Simpson, Executive Director of SisterSong: Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective.³⁴⁶ “Evidence from across the South already shows us that when reproductive health care isn’t available, Black women suffer and die.” Nursing student Micaela Elizabeth Canales, a self-identified “young Tejana,” explained, “I have struggled to get birth control when I needed it. My story is in no way unique.” Canales believes “Trump has made clear that his only health policy plan is to take health care away from women and individuals who need it.”³⁴⁷ The entire country would suffer should propositions from Price come to fruition, but changes would be most harmful to low-income, Black, and Latina women.

Joining the assault against affordable healthcare is Teresa Manning, an anti-abortion activist who infamously claimed, “contraception doesn’t work.”³⁴⁸ Openly anti-contraception and blatantly incorrect on matters of women’s health, Manning will serve as deputy assistant secretary for population affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services. The office administers the Title X program, which subsidizes health care services such as contraception and Pap smears for four million low-income

³⁴⁶ Jennifer Gerson Uffalussy, “Policy-Makers Speak Out about Tom Price’s Stance on Women’s Healthcare,” *Teen Vogue*, February 1, 2017, <<http://www.teenvogue.com/story/how-tom-price-is-troubling-for-birth-control-access>>.

³⁴⁷ Uffalussy, “Policy-Makers Speak Out,” *Teen Vogue*.

³⁴⁸ “The Pro-Life View: 30 Years after Roe v. Wade,” *The Connection*, NPR/WBUR Boston, hosted by Christopher Lydon, January 14, 2003, <<http://archives.wbur.org/theconnection/2003/01/14/the-pro-life-view-30-years-after-roe-v-wade.html>>.

Americans, roughly half of whom are uninsured.³⁴⁹ Manning formerly worked as a lobbyist with the National Right to Life Committee and as a legislative analyst for the conservative Family Research Council. Manning adamantly opposes federal funding for family planning – the very benefit she is appointed to protect. As gatekeeper to a federal family planning program for low-income Americans, Manning holds the key to making birth control obsolete.

Manning has a long history of promulgating falsehoods. She wrongly stated the link between abortion and breast cancer is “undisputed,” although there is no evidence linking the two. Manning has referred to abortion as “legalized crime” and, in a 2001 news release, she criticized the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for endorsing the idea of advance prescriptions for the morning-after pill. She calls emergency contraception “the destruction of a human life already conceived.”³⁵⁰ In January 2003, during a panel discussion about a book she recently edited, titled *Back to the Drawing Board: The Future of the Pro-Life Movement*, Manning called family planning “something that occurs between a husband and a wife and God. And it doesn’t really involve the federal government.”³⁵¹ “She is a completely inappropriate choice for

³⁴⁹ Laura Bassett, “Donald Trump Taps Anti-Contraceptive Activist To Oversee Family Planning Program,” *Huffington Post*, May 1, 2017, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/teresa-manning-contraception-hhs_us_5907582ae4b05c397680d921>.

³⁵⁰ Juliet Eilperin, “Trump Picks Antiabortion Activist to Head HHS Family Planning Section,” *Washington Post*, May 2, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2017/05/01/trump-picks-antiabortion-activist-to-head-hhs-family-planning-program/?utm_term=.c1cacb26801c>.

³⁵¹ For the clip of Manning’s definition of family planning watch the video from 1:27:52 to 1:28:09. “Back to the Drawing Board: The Future of the Pro-Life Movement,”

this role,” Senator Patty Murray said of Manning. As the ranking Democrat on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Murray is especially keen to prevent backsliding standards. “Trump is stacking his administration with one extreme, antiabortion activist after another and ignoring the millions of men and women who don’t want to see women’s health and rights go backward.”³⁵² Today, the greatest concern for women’s health is not the number of choices women have, or even the degree to which care is accessible or affordable. Under Manning, the very idea of choice could disappear in her effort to make birth control obsolete. Teresa Manning and Tom Price are only two among many ultraconservative officials in Trump’s cabinet, and their appointment is but one sinister signal of a far-reaching return to patriarchy.

Speculative Fiction

When Margaret Atwood began *The Handmaid’s Tale* in 1984, she decided she “couldn’t put anything into the novel that human beings hadn’t actually done.” Everything in the book, from public executions to forced births, the separation of mothers from children, and the punishment of non-conforming women (with physical harm, public shaming, and banishment), has historical roots in American slavery, the Salem witch trials, and the rise of the religious Right. During the mid-1980s, Atwood cut and kept newspaper clippings on “toxic waste, birth control, infertility, sexual equality,

C-SPAN, January 21, 2003, <<https://www.c-span.org/video/?160637-1/back-drawing-board-future-prolife-movement>>.

³⁵² Eilperin, “Trump Picks Antiabortion Activist,” *Washington Post*.

abortion, surrogates, baby stealing, Nazis, American Right.”³⁵³ She filled binders to the brim with stories of abortion and contraception being outlawed in Romania, reports of Canada lamenting its falling birth rate, and articles detailing U.S. Republican attempts to withhold federal funding from clinics that provided abortion services. An Associated Press article reported on a fundamentalist sect that overtook a Catholic congregation in New Jersey and called wives “handmaidens.”³⁵⁴ Atwood noticed these newspaper and magazine clippings projected the “kinds of talking people were doing at that time... talking about what they’d like to do should they get the power to do it. Which recently acquired women’s rights would they like to abolish and roll back among other things.”³⁵⁵ Conservative American pundits and the rise of “dictatorships of the twentieth century” inspired the “theocratic” Republic of Gilead. Atwood believed that if an American dictatorship were to arise, staunch Evangelicals would govern the state according to a “literalist” interpretation of the Bible.

Atwood wrote her famous tome just as conservative politics joined forces with religious fundamentalism to elect Ronald Reagan. During the Reagan administration anti-

³⁵³ Atwood reportedly donated four hundred and seventy-four boxes’ worth of material to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. Newspaper clippings from 1983-1988 are kept in box 96. For a more detailed description of the material Atwood donated to the University of Toronto, turn to the digital collection “Margaret Atwood Papers” located at <<https://discoverarchives.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/margaret-atwood-papers>>.

³⁵⁴ Rebecca Mead, “Margaret Atwood, the Prophet of Dystopia,” *New Yorker*, April 2017, <<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/17/margaret-atwood-the-prophet-of-dystopia>>.

³⁵⁵ Jon Wiener, “Margaret Atwood: ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ in the Age of Trump,” *Start Making Sense, The Nation*, podcast audio, April 26, 2017, <<https://www.thenation.com/article/margaret-atwood-the-handmaids-tale-in-the-age-of-trump/>>.

feminist sentiment lashed out against the women's movement of the late-twentieth century. Magazines, newspapers, and television shows were alight with the perceived costs of women's liberation. Conservative pundits decried single mothers of color that leeched welfare support while traditional self-help books warned of tortured career women doomed to be loveless, childless, and miserable as their biological clocks ticked away.

The United States in 2017 does not show surefire signs of becoming Gilead, Atwood's imagined theocratic republic. Trump, unlike Gileadean leaders, is not an adherent of traditional family values; he has five children from three marriages. Nor is he known to be particularly religious; Trump expresses more interest in "pussies" than Proverbs. What feels prescient in *The Handmaid's Tale* is the blunt misogyny of Gilead. Trump's vocal chauvinism has allowed deep-rooted, rampant sexism to rise to the fore once more. He is an ugly and vocal megaphone for a cabinet of elected officials that are far more threatening than a lurid bully in an orange toupee. The bevy of conservative diehards selected and elected to serve alongside President Trump threaten to trigger far more sinister and longer lasting damage to American citizens' human rights.

The Luckiest Women

An equally pervasive form of anti-feminism comes from women who remain purposefully disengaged from women's rights. Their apathy enables backlash. Mary McCarthy wrote an apathetic review of *The Handmaid's Tale* for the *New York Times* in 1986. Neither shocked nor frightened, McCarthy simply felt "no shiver of recognition" in

the speculative fiction. The tale's imagined future in which "a standoff will have been achieved vis-à-vis the Russians, and our own country will be ruled by right-wingers and religious fundamentalists, with males restored to the traditional role of warriors and us females to our 'place,'" elicited more confusion than concern. "The book just does not tell me what there is in our present mores that I ought to watch out for."³⁵⁶ McCarthy's inability to spot similarities between her contemporary reality and the imagined Gilead, suggested she was either unflappable, ignorant, or apathetic. Although her review was lukewarm, McCarthy correctly noted that Atwood defined Offred by "an unwillingness to stick her neck out," because "we are meant to conclude that such unwillingness, multiplied, may be fatal to a free society."³⁵⁷ McCarthy's antipathy toward second-wave feminism, and her inability to identify contemporary parallels five years into the Reagan administration, is symptomatic of pervasive backlash. Women were falsely told their rights had expanded so far, and their opportunities were so plentiful, that they faced no genuine danger of regression.

"American women today are the luckiest, most privileged women in the history of the world," Phyllis Schlafly declared a month before her death on September 5, 2016.³⁵⁸ The illustrious conservative speaker publically crusaded to block many women's rights; her chief effort was to block ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and, in 1982,

³⁵⁶ Mary McCarthy, review of *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood, *New York Times*, February 9, 1986, <<http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/03/26/specials/mccarthy-atwood.html>>.

³⁵⁷ McCarthy, review of *The Handmaid's Tale*, *New York Times*, 1986.

³⁵⁸ Rebecca Traister, "Rereading *The Handmaid's Tale*, One Month into the Trump Era," *The Cut*, February 23, 2017, <<https://www.thecut.com/2017/02/rereading-margaret-atwoods-the-handmaids-tale.html>>.

she finally succeeded. Women like Schlafly have always been participants and even leaders in the cultural repudiation of feminism. In many ways, Schlafly resembles Serena Joy, the barren Commander's wife in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Both were anti-feminist crusaders who spent successful public-speaking careers preaching "about the sanctity of the home, about how women should stay home."³⁵⁹ Schlafly did not live to see Trump assume the presidency, but her party's fevered fanaticism lived on at a Republican National Convention, where supporters condemned Hillary Clinton with livid screams like "Lock her up!" and "Trump that bitch!"

Schlafly's legacy lives on in her niece Suzanne Venker, who also urges women to be completely subservient to their husbands. In her recently published book, Venker argues that contemporary women have become "too much like men... too competitive... too masculine."³⁶⁰ Venker describes her personal journey from an obstinate "alpha" woman to a caring "beta" wife. All the transformation took was some mindful retraining to approach her husband with deference, "by not arguing with him" and "by being more service-oriented." Venker urged other women to adopt the same attitude in their personal lives because "it's liberating to be a beta!" Relationship experts and professors lavished praise on the book. One promised Venker's advice "will save many marriages" because she tells "women who've been raised to be independent at all costs" how "to be a full partner at home rather than the boss." Another guaranteed that "if you're a woman who feels successful in life but unsuccessful in love... a simple shift in attitude" is all you

³⁵⁹ Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1986), 43.

³⁶⁰ Suzanne Venker, *The Alpha Female's Guide to Men and Marriage: How Love Works* (Nashville, TN: Post Hill Press, 2017).

need.³⁶¹ Venker’s book mimics decades of conservative complaints about the “costs” of liberation and successful yet loveless careerists. She tells the typical tale of a “recovering Superwoman” who transforms into a servile, docile wife. Venker is merely one reincarnation in a long history of backlash women.

The Super-rich Can Have It All

On April 25, 2017 Ivanka Trump attended the W-20 Summit in Berlin to speak about women’s entrepreneurship. Ivanka joined royalty and heads of state, including German chancellor Angela Merkel, International Monetary Fund Director Christine Lagarde, Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland, and Queen Máxima of the Netherlands. The W-20, which is aimed at “boosting the role of women in global economic growth,” was created several years ago by the G-20, a group of the world’s twenty leading economies.³⁶² The overarching goal of the W-20 is “to achieve a gender inclusive global economic growth in the G-20 countries through the economic empowerment of women.”³⁶³ The summit was the first official foreign trip for the President’s daughter, who is neither elected politician nor appointed official. During the panel, Ivanka made sweeping, superficial statements, and swore to better the economic condition of women in the United States. She claimed her father maintained a “solid

³⁶¹ Venker, *Alpha Female’s Guide*, inside cover.

³⁶² “G-20 Members Launch New Grouping to Empower Women for Economic Growth,” *The Oslo Times*, September 6, 2015, <<http://www.theoslotimes.com/article/g-20-members-launch-new-grouping-to-empower-women-for-economic-growth>>.

³⁶³ “Women 20 Calls On G20 Leaders to Promote Women’s Economic Empowerment for Inclusive Economic Growth,” UN Women, October 22, 2015, <<http://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/10/w20-summit>>.

conviction in the potential of women,” although his track record suggests otherwise. “Long before he came into the presidency,” Ivanka explained, “my father... was a tremendous champion of supporting families and enabling them to thrive.”³⁶⁴ In response, the German press booted loudly. Following what German press labeled her “lame” speech, German newspaper *Berliner Zeitung* called Ivanka her father’s “most important whisperer” and “loyal accomplice.”³⁶⁵

Political nepotism aside, Ivanka remains an inappropriate representative for women’s economic empowerment due to her extreme privilege. She is an heiress to her billionaire father’s real estate business, she is married to the heir of another real estate empire, and she runs a multi-million dollar clothing and media company. Money is no object for her. How can Ivanka offer a realistic plan of action for empowering women economically if she does not understand low-income women’s troubles? The gap between their reality and hers is simply too wide, which becomes evident whenever she speaks about “empowerment.” It is unclear whether Ivanka even understands the term.

Although the president’s daughter claims to campaign for economic empowerment, her proposed improvements are best categorized as soft empowerment. First of all, many businesses under her company’s broader retail umbrella do not offer maternity leave or family leave to employees. Both benefits are crucial touch points on the path to economic parity. Second, she sells items that are plainly unaffordable for

³⁶⁴ Noah Friedman, “Ivanka Trump Defends Her Father’s Relationship with Women During a Panel with Angela Merkel,” *Business Insider*, April 25, 2017, <<http://www.businessinsider.com/ivanka-trump-defends-fathers-relationship-women-merkel-panel-trump-germany-g20-2017-4>>.

³⁶⁵ Eugene Scott and Betsy Klein, “German Crowd Hisses, Boos at Ivanka When She Defends Her Dad,” *CNN*, April 25, 2017, <<http://www.cnn.com/2017/04/25/politics/ivanka-trump-germany-hisses/>>.

American women who struggle to support their families. Professionalism is equated with the purchase of her products, as the self-professed feminist uses the rhetoric of economic empowerment to sell inventory like shoes, dresses, and bags. Her eponymous media company is more of the same; articles on how to dress to impress at work and tips for planning the “perfect” summer vacation pepper her website. Quotes from notable figures (herself included) appear in the section #WiseWords. The heiress, former model, and current (if recused) retailer, has traded her father’s reality television show to appear on panels as an international expert in women’s affairs. With a book, family business, and clothing and media company in the mix, is Ivanka truly concerned about micro-finance improvements for the everyday American? Or is she more interested in securing herself some macro profits?

By selling goods under an aspirational guise, Ivanka adheres to an extreme kind of feminist consumerism. In a promotional photograph for her recent book *Women Who Work: Rewriting the Rules for Success*, Ivanka is the very vision of refinement.³⁶⁶ Clad in a beautiful dress, Ivanka sits at her desk in a clean Scandinavian-style office with a baby on one knee and a pen in her hand; she’s signing important documents and her face is serene. Her staged photograph is fake at best and a lie at worst; no mother balances work and childcare so serenely and seamlessly. *New York Magazine* handed Ivanka’s book to lower class women and filmed their reactions. “This is for women with nannies,” said seamstress Mariah Keras. Ivanka is “making it sound like ‘it’s just good sense’” to take vacation time, remarked marketing coordinator Kim Morales. For Morales, time off means lost wages and money for a babysitter. Keras lamented Ivanka’s decision to return

³⁶⁶ Ivanka Trump, *Women Who Work: Rewriting the Rules for Success* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017).

to work six days after giving birth; “when we really celebrate those choices, we harm women,” she explained. The facets of Ivanka’s life that go unsaid are just as important. The unacknowledged yet undeniable presence of nannies, massages, and opulent vacations prompts security guard Jessica Bristol to conclude, “once again, it’s not reality to all parents.”³⁶⁷ When asked to comment on Ivanka’s unsettlingly serene photograph, Amy Willis, a longtime contributing editor for *The Nation*, simply says, “No mother ever does that.” Citing Ivanka’s perfectly chic office, coiffed appearance, and calm baby, Willis explains, “Her idea of female empowerment is a ‘have it all’ (a very old-fashioned to us now) kind of empowerment. And she does of course, have it all, literally.”³⁶⁸

The Myth of Having It All

American women cannot “have it all.” The idea of having it all – a flawless career and a perfect family – is a harmful, perfectionist standard that sets women up for failure. Discussed in headlines, articles, and speeches, these three little words are intended to be aspirational but instead conceal the deep extent to which women are expected to meet an impossible, superhuman standard. The United States moved from one national ideal of true womanhood to another – from Supermother to Superwoman. In the 1950s, girls were told that they should grow up, get married, have children, and keep house. By the 1970s, girls were told the same narrative with one major addition; they should also get a job, or

³⁶⁷ *New York Magazine*, “Working Moms React to Ivanka Trump’s Women Who Work,” YouTube video, 01:55, posted May 17, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHVU_06rGrI>.

³⁶⁸ Jon Wiener, “Margaret Atwood: ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ in the Age of Trump,” *Start Making Sense*, *The Nation*, podcast audio, April 26, 2017, <<https://www.thenation.com/article/margaret-atwood-the-handmaids-tale-in-the-age-of-trump/>>.

better yet, a career. By the 1980s, the Superwoman ideal led women to try to “perform perfectly such multiple and conflicting roles as worker or career volunteer, wife, mother, and homemaker.”³⁶⁹ They were expected to “do it all... glamorously, effortlessly, happily, and perfectly.”³⁷⁰ That lofty ideal remains as unattainable now as when it was conceived. Women are doomed to fail in the pursuit of having it all, because the circumstances we live in – economic, political, social – are simply not conducive to the effortless enmeshment of career and caregiving.

The very concept of having it all challenges the basic laws of economics. As Sharon Poczter, professor of economics at Cornell, explains,

“The antiquated rhetoric of ‘having it all’ disregards the basis of every economic relationship: the idea of trade-offs. All of us are dealing with the constrained optimization that is life, attempting to maximize our utility based on parameters like career, kids, relationships, etc., doing our best to allocate the resource of time. Due to the scarcity of this resource, therefore, none of us can ‘have it all,’ and those who claim to are most likely lying.”³⁷¹

Being a parent, employee, and spouse requires making adjustments, compromises, and sacrifices every day. For most people, sacrifices and hardships are a fact of life, not a choice.

Economic necessity drives most women to work. In the United States, roughly 65 percent of married-couple families with children have two parents in the workforce, and

³⁶⁹ Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz, *The Superwoman Syndrome* (New York: Warner Books, 1984), 19.

³⁷⁰ Shaevitz, *The Superwoman Syndrome*, 2.

³⁷¹ Sharon Poczter, “For Women in the Workplace, It’s Time to Abandon ‘Have it All’ Rhetoric,” *Forbes*, June 25, 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2012/06/25/for-women-in-the-workplace-its-time-to-abandon-have-it-all-rhetoric/>.

most rely on both incomes to support their household.³⁷² Single working parents face even more difficulties. Approximately 30 percent of families with children have a single parent at the helm, and single mothers lead 85 percent of those households.³⁷³ Instead of asking the question “Can we have it all?” we should instead ask, “Can we do it all?” Again, the answer is no. Doing it all requires endless amounts of time, money, and energy. Those with vast resources have more options and fewer limits; women like Ivanka Trump can edge closer to the Superwoman ideal. In reality, however, the majority of women face real constraints on their time, energy, and income.

Having a successful career is one half of the concept of “having it all.” Well-educated women are often told they can do anything – as long as they work hard enough. In a 2010 TED Talk, Sheryl Sandberg coined the term “lean in” to encourage women to chase their workplace ambitions; it swiftly became the rallying cry of motivated millennial women. But her 2013 bestselling book *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*, garnered criticism for its focus on highly educated, skilled professionals. Sandberg urged professional women to “sit at the table” alongside men, to make themselves visible and heard in the corridors of power.³⁷⁴ However, her discourse excluded many lower

³⁷² U.S. Census Bureau, “Table FG1 Married Couple Family Groups, by Labor Force Status of Both Spouses, and Race and Hispanic Origin of the Reference Person,” America’s Families and Living Arrangements, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2011, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/cps2011.html>.

³⁷³ This percentage was calculated by focusing on family groups with children under eighteen. U.S. Census Bureau, “Table FG10 Family Groups,” America’s Families and Living Arrangements, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (2011), <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/cps2011.html>.

³⁷⁴ Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2013), Kindle Location 575.

income women, women of color, and single mothers. Financial issues, which lie at the core of many women's concerns, were glossed over lightly. In a book meant to empower individuals and revolutionize women's role in the workplace, any reference to the "pay gap" is relegated to the footnotes, like an afterthought.

The Pay Gap

Despite women's recent progress in education, the gender pay gap is closing at a decelerated rate. In the United States, where the earnings ratio is 80 percent, women had median annual earnings of \$40,742, whereas men had median annual earnings of \$51,212.³⁷⁵ The wage gap has narrowed since the 1970s, due in part to women's higher academic achievement and workforce participation and in part to men's wages, which have increased at a slower rate. It was originally predicted that women would reach pay equity with men in 2059.³⁷⁶ However, in recent years, the rate has slowed. If change continues at the slower rate seen since 2001, women will not reach pay equity until 2152.³⁷⁷

The pay gap affects women from all backgrounds, at all ages, and of all levels of educational achievement. In *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap*, the American

³⁷⁵ American Association of University Women, "The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap," Fall 2016, <http://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>.

³⁷⁶ Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Women's Median Earnings as a Percent of Men's Median Earnings, 1960-2015 (Full-time, Year-round Workers) with Projection for Pay Equity in 2059," September 13, 2016, <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/Q056.pdf>.

³⁷⁷ American Association of University Women, "The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap," Spring 2017, <http://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>.

Association of University Women (AAUW) analyzed how the gap varies depending on a woman's individual situation. According to the 2017 report, the pay gap is stratified by race. Among full-time workers today, Hispanic and Latina, African American, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian women had lower median annual earnings compared to non-Hispanic white and Asian American women.³⁷⁸ Education is identified as a useful tool for increasing earnings, but it is not effective against the gender pay gap. No matter the level of academic achievement, women have lower median earnings than men. Also, women with a college degree are less able to pay off their student loans promptly, which leads them to pay more and for a longer time than men. The AAUW found that the pay gap is worse for mothers, and continues to worsen as mothers age. The pay gap impacts women of every age and race, in every occupation, at every level of academic achievement. Women make up almost half of the workforce and yet, in nearly every single occupation, women continue to earn less than men.

Although women are paid less, their earnings are increasingly important to the economic stability of families. Half of all households with children under 18 have a wage-earning mother, who is either a single mother who is the sole breadwinner, or a married mother who contributes at least 40 percent of the household's total earnings.³⁷⁹ Many women without children, both single and married, work to support family members in addition to themselves. When a woman earns 80 cents – or less – for every dollar she

³⁷⁸ AAUW, "The Simple Truth."

³⁷⁹ Julie Anderson, "Breadwinner Mothers by Race/Ethnicity and State," Quick Figures, IWPR #Q054, Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016, <http://iwpr.org/publications/pubs/breadwinner-mothers-by-race-ethnicity-and-state>.

is due, families suffer. Persistent disparity in working women's wages translates into lower pay, less family income, and more children and families in poverty.

The Power Gap

Countless studies prove that women are profoundly underrepresented at the top of the professional pyramid.³⁸⁰ In 2017 women make up 104 members of the House and Senate, about 19 percent.³⁸¹ With an American population that is 50 percent female this is hardly parity, but it is still better than the 79 women who occupied Congress in 2007 and the 57 congresswomen who served in 1997.³⁸² In 2013 women held 15.2 percent of Fortune 500 board seats, constituted 16 percent of partners at the largest law firms, and made up 19 percent of surgeons.³⁸³ Twenty-four Fortune 500 companies still had no women on their boards as of 2015.³⁸⁴ Dubbed “the 16 percent power cranny” by Debra Spar, the number of women in positions of power remains lodged between 15 and 20

³⁸⁰ There are too many studies to count, but the best known works include the following. Joan Williams, *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do about It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Heather Boushey and Ann O’Leary, eds., *The Shriver Report: A Woman’s Nation Changes Everything* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2009); and Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Ripa Rashid, *Winning the War for Talent: Why Women Are the Solution* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2011).

³⁸¹ Cristina Marcos, “115th Congress Will Be Most Racially Diverse in History,” *The Hill*, November 17, 2016, <<http://thehill.com/homenews/house/306480-115th-congress-will-be-most-racially-diverse-in-history>>.

³⁸² Drew Desilver, “Women Have Long History in Congress, but Until Recently There Haven’t Been Many,” Pew Research Center, January 14, 2015, <<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/01/14/women-have-long-history-in-congress-but-until-recently-there-havent-been-many/>>.

³⁸³ Debora L. Spar, *Wonder Women: Sex, Power, and the Quest for Perfection* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 174.

³⁸⁴ This data is from a March 11, 2015 study by S&P Global Market Intelligence. Jared Lindzon, “There Are Now More Fortune 500 Companies with All-Male Boards Than in 2015,” *Fortune*, March 28, 2016, <<http://fortune.com/2016/03/28/fortune-500-all-male-board-2016/>>.

percent.³⁸⁵ This odd demographic cutoff seems to corral women long before their numbers grow too powerful. These statistics point to one conclusion: women are stuck. At work, women are stuck with a 20 percent wage gap, stuck with a paltry 19 percent of seats in Congress, stuck with a mere 21 percent of Fortune 500 board seats. Four years after Sheryl Sandberg urged women to “to sit at the table and own their success” women in the United States are not better off.³⁸⁶

The Labor Gap

After a full workday many women return home to a “second shift” of childcare and housework.³⁸⁷ Nearly thirty years after Arlie Hochschild coined the term in 1989, American attitudes toward chore division remain largely unchanged. “Even if women have higher earnings than their husbands, they are expected to come home and perform a second shift of chores and childcare,” Natasha Quadlin explained.³⁸⁸ In her 2016 study of American attitudes towards household tasks, Quadlin found that three quarters of study respondents thought the female partner in heterosexual couples is responsible for

³⁸⁵ Spar, *Wonder Women*, 175.

³⁸⁶ Sandberg, *Lean In*, Kindle Location 652; Jessica Guynn, “Sheryl Sandberg: Four Years after ‘Lean In’ Women Are Not Better Off,” *USA Today*, March 29, 2017, <<https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2017/03/29/sheryl-sandberg-interview-lean-in-four-years-later/99749464/>>.

³⁸⁷ Arlie Hochschild coined the term “second shift” in 1989. Arlie Hochschild, *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home* (New York: Avon Books, 1989).

³⁸⁸ Natasha Quadlin and Long Doan, “Sex and Gender More Important Than Income in Determining Views on Division of Chores,” paper presented at the American Sociological Association 111th Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, August 21, 2016, https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2016-08/asa-sag081616.php.

cooking, doing laundry, cleaning the house, and buying groceries.³⁸⁹ In 2015, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that women engaged in household activities for an average of 2.3 hours per day. In contrast, men dedicated half as much time to household chores and caring for household members.³⁹⁰ Working mothers with children younger than 18 spent an average of 10.7 hours per week actively engaged in childcare; fathers spent half as much time.³⁹¹ Mothers today work more than ever before and spend significantly more time than fathers on housework, childcare, and eldercare.

Since 1965 mothers have nearly tripled the amount of paid work they do weekly.³⁹² As more women entered paid work, the division of unpaid work shifted slightly. Mothers decreased the number of hours they spent weekly on housework, from 31.9 hours in 1965 to 17.8 hours in 2011. Fathers increased the time they spent weekly on housework from 4.4 hours in 1965 to 9.8 hours in 2011. Over the years, American men

³⁸⁹ Quadlin studied how characteristics such as relative income, masculine or feminine traits, and gender influenced how married couples divide household labor. Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Women spent .6 hours caring for and helping household members compared to men's .3 hours. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "American Time Use Survey – 2015 Results," Friday, June 24, 2016, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/atus.pdf>.

³⁹¹ Kim Parker, "Women More Than Men Adjust Their Careers For Family Life," Pew Research Center, October 1, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/10/01/women-more-than-men-adjust-their-careers-for-family-life/>.

³⁹² Kim Parker and Wendy Wang, "Modern Parenthood: Roles of Moms and Dads Converge as They Balance Work and Family," Pew Research Center, March 14, 2013, <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/03/14/modern-parenthood-roles-of-moms-and-dads-converge-as-they-balance-work-and-family/>>. Data pertaining to 2003-2011 came from the American Time Use Survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Pew Research Center collected their data for 1965-2000 from early time use surveys found in two works by Bianchi. See Suzanne M. Bianchi et al., *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006); Suzanne M. Bianchi, "Family Change and Time Allocation in American Families," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 638 (2011): 21-44.

also contributed more time to childcare.³⁹³ However, in the grand scheme of labor division, this small change was marginal. Women continue to have far more responsibilities and far less leisure time than men.³⁹⁴

Women who prioritize caregiving responsibilities pay a huge price. The total cost impact of caregiving on the individual female caregiver during her lifetime, in terms of lost wages and Social Security benefits, equals \$324,044.³⁹⁵ Of the 40.4 million eldercare providers in the United States the majority are women.³⁹⁶ On the days that caregivers provided eldercare, women spent far more time providing care than did men.³⁹⁷ The current population of 35 million elders is set to double by 2030 and, if history is any indication, women will bear the burden of burgeoning eldercare demands.³⁹⁸ Most women will never be paid for this work. Melinda Gates observed this disparity during her

³⁹³ Parker et al., “Modern Parenthood.”

³⁹⁴ Wendy Wang, “The ‘Leisure Gap’ between Mothers and Fathers,” Pew Research Center, October 17, 2013, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/17/the-leisure-gap-between-mothers-and-fathers/>.

³⁹⁵ “The MetLife Study of Caregiving Costs to Working Caregivers: Double Jeopardy for Baby Boomers Caring for Their Parents,” (New York: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, June 2011).

³⁹⁶ That means 57 percent of eldercare providers in the United States who are age 15 and over and in the civilian noninstitutional population are women. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Unpaid Eldercare in the United States—2013-14 Summary,” American Time Use Survey, September 23, 2015, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/elcare.nr0.htm>.

³⁹⁷ Female caregivers spent 3.5 hours compared to male caregivers who spent 2.7 hours. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Unpaid Eldercare in the United States—2013-14 Summary,” American Time Use Survey, September 23, 2015, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/elcare.nr0.htm>.

³⁹⁸ John Schall, “Caregiving Is Forcing Women 50+ To Leave The Workforce,” *Forbes*, October 10, 2016, <<http://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2016/10/10/caregiving-is-forcing-women-50-to-leave-the-workforce/#6d4e38b9364d>>.

travels. Last year, in her family’s annual letter recapping their philanthropic priorities, Gates discussed the burdens of unpaid work on women. “Unless things change, girls today will spend hundreds of thousands more hours than boys doing unpaid work simply because society assumes it’s their responsibility.”³⁹⁹ “It ends up robbing women of their potential,” Gates later said in an interview. “This is a societal issue that in 2016 shouldn’t exist anymore.”

In the twentieth century, women were told they could have it all – have a career and a family. Today, women do have it all; they have all of the responsibilities of paid work, housework, childcare, and eldercare. What was once a slogan filled with hope is now a derogatory phrase. “It’s impossible for women to have it all, if they have to do it all. It is ridiculous!” Gloria Steinem exclaimed at a 2013 talk. “We tried to kill [that saying] off for years. It blames the person instead of the structure.”⁴⁰⁰ The structures of the typical home and workplace are not conducive to women who strive to balance family and career. Traditional gender norms prevail in many households and women have yet to reach parity in most organizations and professions.

“Having it all” is best regarded as a myth. And like many myths, it can provide a valuable cautionary message. Consider Icarus, who soared to great heights but crashed back to earth when he failed to heed his limits. Or take Sisyphus, who was doomed to bear an immense stone up a hill day after day. The fate of the modern American woman is no less absurd. Her days are consumed by the same monotonous labor, as she shoulders

³⁹⁹ Bill Gates and Melinda Gates, “Our 2016 Annual Letter,” The Gates Notes LLC, February 22, 2016, <<https://www.gatesnotes.com/2016-Annual-Letter>>.

⁴⁰⁰ Meredith Lepore, “10 Famous Women on ‘Having it All,’” *Levo League*, May 24, 2013, <<https://www.levo.com/posts/famous-women-having-it-all>>.

the dual burden of full-time work and full-time caregiving, day in, day out. The myth of “having it all” closely resembles the story of Atlas, the Greek god who bore the sky upon his back. Like Atlas, women carry the weight of the world on their shoulders. An ancient Chinese proverb claims that women hold up half the sky. But American women of the twenty-first century hold up more than half the sky, for they bear the burden of both paid and unpaid labor. Mortal women are doomed to fail when they attempt to stretch themselves too thin; they simply do not have the support necessary to stay afloat. These crushing burdens – from the dual obligations of work and care, exacerbated by deep disparities in pay, power, and labor – rob women of their hard-earned wages and hinder their future pursuits.

Forward March

The myth of having it all holds women responsible for the inevitable complications that arise at work and at home. The phrase isolates women and absolves spouses, employers, and the American government from taking action to alleviate these burdens. Women do not need a hollow pep talk or another promise. They have limited use for glossy advice books from wealthy businesswomen who claim to struggle at work and at home, when in truth they have nannies, maids, drivers, and cooks to make their lives run smoothly. To buy into advice from those who more closely resemble the unattainable Superwoman than the Everywoman, is to believe that the only thing working women were missing from their lives was a simple directive like “lean in” or an inspirational quote as a mission statement. It is time for society to jettison the idea that women should perform multiple roles perfectly. It is time for employers, the government,

and spouses, to step up and alleviate the tremendous weight of women's myriad responsibilities. If the nation continues to leave the status quo unchallenged, women will continue to endure the majority of unpaid and paid labor.

Persistent pay inequality has widespread economic consequences. In order to close the 20 percent pay gap between men and women, employers need to provide female employees equal pay for equal work. This measure would benefit individual women, their families, and the economy. Equal pay could cut poverty among working women and their families by more than half, and it would add \$513 billion to the American economy.⁴⁰¹ Employers must also offer paid maternity leave, and women cannot be faulted for taking advantage of that benefit. Paid paternity leave must be accessible to fathers, so that men can identify caregiving as their responsibility too, from the very beginning of a child's life. In order to close the labor gap in the private sphere, women in dual-career households cannot continue to return home to a second shift of childcare, eldercare, and housework, and a spouse who shares none of the responsibility. At home, men typically assume half the amount of work that women complete. In order to close the unpaid labor gap, men must shoulder *half of all* time spent on housework and caregiving. Nearly a century after women gained the right to vote, women have a conspicuously unequal representation in public office. Since the 1990s, the number of women in Congress and in state legislatures has stalled; at the current rate, Congress will not reach gender parity until the next century. We must improve recruitment processes and embrace legislative practices so that more women can run, serve, and lead. And, as always, women must

⁴⁰¹ Institute of Women's Policy Research, "The Economic Impact of Equal Pay by State," *The Status of Women in the States: 2015*, <https://statusofwomendata.org/featured/the-economic-impact-of-equal-pay-by-state/>.

march. The 2017 Women’s March proved there is a nationwide community willing to vocalize support for women’s rights. The changes in question seek to redefine and uproot deeply ingrained beliefs that are tightly bound in long lasting institutions. Change will not come easily but, as Angela Davis declared, “you have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.”⁴⁰² But if women do not attempt to change current circumstances, they stand to face stagnation or worse, regression. Our current political climate necessitates women’s political participation. Women require something more realistic than a myth; they require a support system – of families, the workplace, political leaders, and their communities to fend off the immense weight of burdensome obligations. Women still have a long road ahead to parity, and the divide can only be conquered collectively.

⁴⁰² James Anderson, “Angela Davis talk at SIUC on Feb. 13, 2014,” filmed February 13, 2014, YouTube video, 56:45, posted on February 16, 2014, <http://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/chicago-turabian/youtube-video/>.

Appendix A:

Methodology: Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is the best methodology for a thesis that integrates historical, social, political, media, and gender studies. Sixty years after its advent in the late 1950s and its institutionalization in 1964 at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), this unique approach remains difficult to define. The proper province of cultural studies is not sharply outlined, for it is “a veritable rag-bag of ideas, methods and concerns from literary criticism, sociology, history, media studies, etc., lumped together under the convenient label of cultural studies.”⁴⁰³ Cultural studies is a fluid, flexible, and innovative field of research.

The “culture” explored in cultural studies “is neither aesthetic nor humanist in emphasis, but political.”⁴⁰⁴ Put differently, the object of study in cultural studies is not culture defined in a narrow sense (as in the objects of high art) nor is it defined as a process of aesthetic development. Instead, culture is understood in a more anthropological sense as “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group.”⁴⁰⁵ This broad definition of culture can of course include high art and artistic processes, but it can also encompass the study of popular culture. The emphasis on

⁴⁰³ Colin Sparks, “The Evolution of Cultural Studies,” in *What Is Cultural Studies?*, ed. John Storey (London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996), 14.

⁴⁰⁴ John Fiske, “British Cultural Studies and Television,” in *What Is Cultural Studies?*, ed. John Storey (London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996), 115.

⁴⁰⁵ Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (London: Fontana, 1976), 90.

popular culture makes this interdisciplinary field useful for my thesis, which utilizes popular culture to understand American ideals.

Theorists believe culture – especially popular culture – is political. Stuart Hall describes popular culture as

“an arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured. It is not a sphere where socialism, a socialist culture – already fully formed – might be simply ‘expressed.’ But it is one of the places where socialism might be constituted. That is why ‘popular culture matters.’”⁴⁰⁶

Richard Johnson summarizes the political nature of culture in three main points:

“The first is that cultural processes are intimately connected with social relations, especially with class relations and class formations, with sexual divisions, with the racial structuring of social relations and with age oppressions as a form of dependency. The second is that culture involves power and helps to produce asymmetries in the abilities of individuals and social groups to define and realise their needs. And third, which follows the other two, is that culture is neither an autonomous nor an externally determined field, but a site of social differences and struggles.”⁴⁰⁷

John Frow and Meaghan Morris also conceive of culture “not as organic expression of a community, nor as an autonomous sphere of aesthetic forms, but as a contested and conflictual set of practices of representation bound up with the processes of formation and re-formation of social groups.”⁴⁰⁸ Tony Bennett added another layer by arguing that

⁴⁰⁶ Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing ‘The Popular,’” in *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981), 239.

⁴⁰⁷ Richard Johnson, “What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?” in *What Is Cultural Studies?*, ed. John Storey (London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996), 76.

⁴⁰⁸ John Frow and Meaghan Morris, “Australian Cultural Studies,” in *What Is Cultural Studies?*, ed. John Storey (London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996), 356.

“policy” should be included in the definition of cultural studies, to reflect how culture is often a governmental practice for transforming both mental and physical behavior.⁴⁰⁹

When cultural studies was conceived in England during the 1950s, race went largely unaddressed. By the seventies, black students began to question the invisibility of race in much cultural studies analysis. In 1982 the Birmingham-based Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies explained the impetus behind their new book, *The Empire Strikes Back*:

“There are many reasons why the issues raised by the study of ‘races’ and racisms should be central to the concerns of cultural studies. Yet racist ideologies and racial conflicts have been ignored, both in historical writing and in accounts of the present. If nothing else, this book should be taken as a signal that this marginalization cannot continue.”⁴¹⁰

Several years later Paul Gilroy made a similar statement in *There Ain't No Black In The Union Jack*; Gilroy explained that the book, which “related to its origins in cultural studies... seeks to provide... a corrective to the more ethnocentric dimensions of that discipline.”⁴¹¹ The field’s eventual inclusion of race shows that cultural studies has evolved alongside changing historical and political conditions. Cultural studies is marked by debate, disagreement, and intervention which, rather than damage the practice, have made this area of study stronger and more sophisticated with time.

History, like politics, is tightly entwined with culture. Culture’s importance stems from the fact that it helps constitute the structure and shape of history. As Hall explains,

⁴⁰⁹ Tony Bennett, “Putting Policy into Cultural Studies,” in *What Is Cultural Studies?*, ed. John Storey (London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996), 307.

⁴¹⁰ Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson 1982), 7.

⁴¹¹ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 12.

“[W]hat cultural studies has helped me to understand is that the media [for example] play a part in the formation, in the constitution, of the things that they reflect. It is not that there is a world outside, ‘out there,’ which exists free of the discourses of representation. What is ‘out there’ is, in part, constituted by how it is represented.”⁴¹²

This thesis explores how the media and the ideals media reflects shift within American society. Cultural studies views capitalist industrial societies (like the United States) as divided unequally along ethnic, gender, generational and class lines. Culture is one of the main sites where these divisions are established and contested. In essence, culture plays host to a continual struggle over meaning.

Cultural texts, and their context, are integral to ideological struggles. In order to understand the major ideological struggles of the past sixty years, this thesis situates the texts of popular culture – such as movies, magazines, and sitcoms – within their context.

As John Frow and Meaghan Morris explain,

“There is a precise sense in which cultural studies uses the concept of text as its fundamental model.... Rather than designating a place where meanings are constructed in a single level of inscription (writing, speech, film, dress...), it works as an interleaving of ‘levels.’ If a shopping mall [for example] is conceived on the model of textuality, then this ‘text’ involves practices, institutional structures and the complex forms of agency they entail, legal, political, and financial conditions of existence, and particular flows of power and knowledge, as well as a particular multilayered semantic organisation; it is an ontologically mixed entity, and one for which there can be no privileged or ‘correct’ reading. It is this, more than anything else, that forces cultural studies’ attention to the diversity of audiences for or users of the structures of textuality it analyses – that is, to the open-ended social life of texts – and that forces it, thereby, to question the authority or finality of its own readings.”⁴¹³

⁴¹² Stuart Hall, “Race, Culture, and Communications: Looking Backward and Forward at Cultural Studies,” in *What Is Cultural Studies?*, ed. John Storey (London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996), 340.

⁴¹³ Frow et al., “Australian Cultural Studies,” 355.

In other words, texts exist only within networks of intertextual relations. To truly study a text, one must situate it within a range of competing moments of inscription, representation and struggle. Cultural studies attempts to consider all moments of production – material, symbolic, and textual production, as well as the “production in use” of consumption.⁴¹⁴ By maintaining an open-mindedness that is not limited to only one moment of production, cultural studies is better able to assess the whole picture, rather than just one piece of the puzzle.

The boundaries of this field have shifted with time, but a central tenet remains: that we make culture and we are made by culture. As Jean-Paul Sartre explained,

“Men and women are, thus, formed and form themselves through society, culture and history. So the existing cultural patterns form a sort of historical reservoir – a pre-constituted ‘field of possibilities’ – which groups take up, transform, develop. Each group makes something of its starting conditions – and through this ‘making,’ through this practice, culture is reproduced and transmitted.”⁴¹⁵

Sartre seems to say that a person’s role in culture is two-fold; he is both the former and the formed. If this is true, then consumption should also be understood to be more than just the act of consuming. In the 1980s Mica Nava described consumerism “as far more than just economic activity: it is also about dream and consolation, communication and confrontation, image and identity.... Consumerism is a discourse through which disciplinary power is both exercised and contested.”⁴¹⁶ In the 1990s Angela McRobbie stated that “we need a mode of analysis which is connective and integrative and which

⁴¹⁴ John Storey, ed., *What Is Cultural Studies?* (London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996).

⁴¹⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Random House, 1963).

⁴¹⁶ Mica Nava, “Consumerism and Its Contradictions,” *Cultural Studies* 1 (May 1987): 209-210.

tracks the social and ideological relations which prevail at every level between cultural production and consumption... from where it is socially constructed to where it is socially deconstructed and contested, in the institutions, practices and relationships of everyday life.”⁴¹⁷ According to Sartre, Nava, and McRobbie, there is agency and there is structure. Structure informs people, who then exercise their agency to change the structure; it is a continuous cycle. The films, sitcoms, and magazines analyzed within this thesis were conceived by creators and consumed by viewers who were both influenced by the existing structure and capable of forming the structure to come. Cultural studies draws on the best tools of the trade – history, sociology, psychology, literature – to construct a nuanced picture of the ideals of womanhood in America.

Culture is a major site of ideological struggle. It is a landscape upon which subordinate groups attempt to resist the meanings (and interests and authority) imposed by dominant groups. This thesis explores how conservatives and feminists alike utilized texts from popular culture in an attempt to solidify – and challenge – traditional ideals. The struggle over if, when, and how much women should work played out upon the pages of popular magazines from *Ladies' Home Journal* to *Ms. Magazine*. Whether fictional women should or could break the mold of domesticity and escape to show business (like Lucy Ricardo), the newsroom (like Murphy and Mary), or California (like Joanna Kramer), informed the kind of situations real-life women sought or fought. Culture, and the texts that comprise culture, are a terrain of “incorporation” and

⁴¹⁷ Angela McRobbie, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 41.

“resistance.”⁴¹⁸ Popular culture is often snubbed as overly pedestrian, but its importance should not be ignored or derided; popular culture matters because it is one of the main sites where hegemony is to be won or lost.

⁴¹⁸ Russian theorist Valentin Volosinov argued that meaning is always determined by context of articulation. He viewed cultural texts and practices as “multiaccentual.” In other words, a text does not necessarily possess just one meaning. Instead, Volosinov believed that different people in different contexts for different politics could impart different “accents” onto the same text. Valentin N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (New York: Seminar Press, 1973).

Appendix B:

The Literature Review

The literature reviewed herein laid the foundation for my own research; my analysis is divided into six sections. First, I explore the history of maternal employment in the United States. These sources offer insight into the huge number of American women who entered the workforce over the course of the twentieth century. Second, I examine the cultural ideals women draw upon when constructing their identities, interacting with others, and making everyday decisions. In the third section I delve deeper into the specific ideals of motherhood that informed how American women approach childrearing. Of particular interest to me is the idea of the Supermother and, later, Superwoman. In the fourth section I examine how this American heroine garnered celebration (and condemnation) from mass circulating women's magazines. This brings me to my last puzzle piece: media. The fifth section addresses how the heroines of mainstream media illuminate shifts in dominant cultural values. Last, I examine how media, and mass circulating women's magazines in particular, have encouraged, criticized, and molded women's idea of who they could and should be. The rise and fall of support for feminist models, and the backlash against progressive ideals, can be observed on the pages of mass circulating women's magazines. By reviewing scholarly assessments of the economic conditions, cultural ideals, and media publications that shaped women's multiple roles from the latter half of the twentieth century to the present,

I will begin to explore what having it all – having a career and a family – meant for millions of American women.

Maternal Employment

For women who work “the personal is political.”⁴¹⁹ Whether they knew it or not, women who worked outside the home participated in one of the most momentous social movements of the twentieth century. For many women, working outside the home was a personal choice, a family-oriented choice and, at times, a crassly economic choice. For every woman, the decision to work outside the home was an exercise in independence and power. Women fought for the right to work outside of the home and to be treated fairly by employers, coworkers, and subordinates. Many Americans held fast to the idea women should not work outside the home. For each woman who campaigned for equal workplace rights there was another who proclaimed women’s rightful role was at home, as a mother and wife. The study of arguments concerning whether mothers should work explores competing visions of an ideal American society and of women’s place within it. It explores how different voices, with motivations that ranged from encouraging consumerism, to supporting capitalism, to changing how children were raised, to pushing corporations to hire more women, challenged the perceived contradiction between women’s roles as mothers and as workers.

⁴¹⁹ “The personal is political” was a common rallying cry of the feminist movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. The phrase is often credited to feminist writer Carol Hanisch, because her essay “The Personal is Political” appeared in a book on the major writings of radical feminists. However, the exact origins of the phrase are uncertain. Carol Hanisch, “The Personal is Political,” in *Notes From the Second Year: Women’s Liberation*, ed. Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt (New York: Radical Feminism, 1970).

Shifts in women's behavior within families and women's increased employment rates in the 1950s laid the groundwork for feminism to emerge into public consciousness in the 1960s and 1970s. A noteworthy number of mothers in the 1950s defied the obligatory domesticity Betty Friedan lamented.⁴²⁰ Joanne Meyerowitz argues Freidan's book was popular because she both called on and countered mass culture. While Freidan convicted all major magazines of sexism, Meyerowitz came to the more moderate conclusion that postwar mass culture was not a pure glorification of domesticity or a simple dictate of women's confinement to the home.⁴²¹ After studying a broader sample of popular magazines than Freidan scrutinized, Meyerowitz found "all of the magazines sampled advocated both the domestic and the non-domestic, sometimes in the same sentence."⁴²² Rather than a one-dimensional dictate of the traditional middle-class, suburban, full-time housewife ideal, postwar mass culture was full of tension between domestic ideals and individual achievement. Nonfiction magazine articles about individual women and gender issues applauded housewives *and* reinforced women's

⁴²⁰ Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 229-262.

⁴²¹ Meyerowitz systematically studied a sample of 489 nonfiction articles on women in mass circulated monthly magazines of the postwar era (1946-1958). The publications she examined included "middlebrow" magazines (*Readers' Digest* and *Coronet*), "highbrow" magazines (*Harper's* and *Atlantic Monthly*), magazines aimed at African Americans (*Ebony* and *Negro Digest*), and magazines aimed at women (*Ladies' Home Journal* and *Women's Home Companion*). Meyerowitz noted that these magazines had a combined circulation of over 22 million in 1955. Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," *Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (1993): 1456-1457.

⁴²² Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," *Journal of American History*, 1458.

wage work. Dorothy Sue Cobble finds labor feminism helped inspire the birth of a new movement in the 1960s.⁴²³ Cobble traces the impact of the socially and ethnically diverse movement of women who pursued perennially pressing problems such as how to balance work and family and how to address expanding economic inequality. After outlining the broader political, economic and social context of the time, Cobble unpacks labor feminists' calls for "changes in government and employee policy to accommodate childbearing and childrearing, including work-time policies that would meet the needs of caregivers as well as breadwinners."⁴²⁴

Jessica Weiss digs beyond the mythic image of nuclear families with coiffed housewives, perfect children, and breadwinning husbands.⁴²⁵ Drawing on movies, magazines, and television from the 1950s to the 1980s, Weiss creates a vibrant sketch of family and social change in postwar America. Using data from the longitudinal studies of the Institute of Human Development (IHD) at the University of California at Berkeley, Weiss tracks a sample of 100 couples from the first years of their marriages in the 1950s through the early 1980s. Rather than a snapshot of a conventional family, her data reveals "the idealized middle-class family pattern of the 1950s was both transitory and transitional," not traditional.⁴²⁶ Weiss convincingly argues that "the differences of opinion between men and women—over parenting, homemaking, career commitment,

⁴²³ Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴²⁵ Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

sexuality—that come through so strongly in the IHD interviews ... were the tools of change.”⁴²⁷ The baby boom “is more remarkable for its novel innovations in American family patterns than any stuffy traditions we commonly associate with it.”⁴²⁸ Weiss shows how young couples in the 1950s tried to marry egalitarian hopes and traditional gender roles, wives encouraged husbands to become more involved fathers, and couples strove for fulfilling marriages as divorce rates surged during the 1960s and 1970s. New demographic patterns set the stage for unfrequented numbers of women to enter the workforce.⁴²⁹ Following WWII, women had early, closely spaced births that made them available to work during their mid-thirties. “Midlife” wives and mothers returned to work in the 1960s and reshaped the labor force and the home. According to Weiss, Americans of the 1980s were more welcoming of the women’s movement, and more open to women working outside the home, than previously assumed. Rather than passively flowing with the times, parents of the baby boom were the tools of change that altered family dynamics and labor statistics.

Access to childcare is essential in women’s struggle for equality yet historical barriers to group care in the United States remain. Sonya Michel organizes her work around one central question: “Why... does universal child care, organized and supported

⁴²⁷ Weiss, *To Have and to Hold*, 227.

⁴²⁸ Weiss identifies the “baby boom” as the years 1947 to 1964. Weiss finds that, “far from being traditional, the idealized middle-class family pattern of the 1950s was both transitory and transitional: transitory because the baby boom family pattern was of brief duration and because it represents but one stage of the family cycle and transitional because of innovative attempts to modify the family division of labor.” *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-8.

by the government, remain an elusive social good in the United States?”⁴³⁰ Michel found the answer lay in several trends that dominated the development of national daycare policy from 1790 to 1999. One pattern that repeatedly emerged was the view held by child welfare experts and daycare advocates that maternal employment was a “‘social problem’; thus children’s interests [were] implicitly positioned in opposition to women’s rights.”⁴³¹ Although many experts framed maternal employment as a social concern, Michel found that certain groups of sociologists and psychologists challenged the assumption that maternal employment undermined children’s wellbeing. Their conclusions appeared in popular periodicals and provided a stepping-stone for future researchers to support working mothers. The growing number of mothers who worked outside the home increased grassroots support for daycare programs. Unfortunately their efforts proved insufficient as classist and maternalistic views dominated and divided the childcare discussion. Like many conservative experts, numerous administrators, politicians, and activists of the time had a limited attitude towards childcare. They emphasized women’s mothering role and underlined the “custodial” function of nurseries yet disregarded the positive ways daycares could grant women more freedom. As a result, the age-old decree that women should be stay-at-home mothers hampered support for the idea of universal state-supported childcare for decades. Michel’s detailed history of daycare clarifies why Americans continue to oppose public intervention into “private” matters such as child rearing. If Americans hope to outpace past obstacles, then they must examine historical hindrances to affordable childcare.

⁴³⁰ Sonya Michel, *Children’s Interests/Mothers’ Rights: The Shaping of America’s Child Care Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 1.

⁴³¹ Michel, *Children’s Interests/Mothers’ Rights*, 3.

The primary accounts of motherhood in the postwar period portrayed the social sciences as hostile to mothers who worked outside the home. Elizabeth Rose makes a marginally more positive portrayal of Americans' attitude towards public care with her account of daycare in Philadelphia from 1890 to 1960. Her local history sheds light on nationwide trends, like the "gradual transformation of day care from a charity for poor single mothers to a socially legitimate need of 'normal' families, and even a potential responsibility of the state."⁴³² Following WWII working mothers fought to keep public funding for government-sponsored daycare centers. Contrary to middle-class maternalistic conventions that situated "good" mothers squarely at home, Rose found many working mothers who defined themselves as "good mothers" because of (not in spite of) their efforts to provide for their children. As the number of working mothers grew postwar, more Americans adopted a more inclusive view of "good mothers" and "women began to speak of daycare as a right rather than a charity."⁴³³ However, despite more inclusive definitions of motherhood, more daycare advocates, and more mothers who worked for wages, the number and quality of daycare facilities remained low.

Although the lack of affordable childcare hindered working women, factors such as rising demand for clerical workers, growing education, and greater control of fertility moved more women – particularly married women – into the work force. The most comprehensive assessment of changes in American women's labor market participation

⁴³² Elizabeth Rose, *A Mother's Job: The History of Day Care, 1890-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

⁴³³ Rose, *A Mother's Job*, 81.

hails from Claudia Goldin (1990).⁴³⁴ Spanning a century, her work begins by focusing on the significant increase of women in the labor market from 1890 to 1980. In 1900 “fewer than one in five workers were women;” by 1990 almost half were female.⁴³⁵ Goldin argues, “much of the growth in the female labor force over the last two centuries has been the result of long-run changes in the economy—the Industrial Revolution, the rise of white-collar work, advances in education, the decline in fertility, and the decreased workday, among others.”⁴³⁶ Goldin bolsters quantitative study with historical fact to explain how issues such as “wage discrimination” increased while the earnings gap between men and women narrowed:

“Increased schooling and the growth of the clerical sector enhanced the earnings of female workers relative to male workers. But the replacement of brawn by brainpower also meant that women could enter most entry-level jobs, and firms responded by barring women from jobs with long promotional ladders.”⁴³⁷

Goldin proved that the gender gap in earnings and wage discrimination were not historical constants, as many scholars believed at the time; rather, social and economic forces shaped the wage gap across industries and over time.

Goldin built upon her initial labor market research with an examination of how twentieth-century women negotiated their identity. Goldin (2006) explores how three evolutions culminated in one “Quiet Revolution.” She proves how shifts in three features (women’s “horizons,” “identity,” and “secondary worker” status) across four time periods

⁴³⁴ Claudia Goldin, *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

(from the late nineteenth century to 2006) culminated in the revolution.⁴³⁸ Put simply, Goldin tracks three factors across four time periods. First, she identified shifts in women's self-projected "horizons." Did a woman predict her future labor force involvement would be temporary (i.e. end at marriage) or last a lifetime (i.e. continue during marriage)? A woman's imagined possibilities were crucial, because they provided the base for her real-life choices concerning college major, career path, and job. Second, Goldin explored women's "identity," which referred to whether a woman found individuality in her job, occupation, profession, or career. Third, Goldin dug into "decision making." She distinguished between whether a woman's labor force decisions were made jointly with a spouse or long-term partner or, alternately, whether a woman was a "secondary worker" who based her decisions around a husband's labor market decisions. Goldin grounds her claims in data concerning women's median age at first marriage, employment expectations, occupations, personal satisfaction factors, and women's earnings as a percentage of men's earnings. Goldin concludes that young women in the 1960s and 1970s were markedly different from their predecessors. They "increased their investments in formal schooling, majored in career-oriented subjects, and continued on to professional and graduate schools in far greater numbers. They had longer horizons than did previous generations and an altered identity that placed career ahead, or on equal footing, with marriage."⁴³⁹ And, as women's earnings rose, they were

⁴³⁸ Goldin organizes her work according to four time periods that range from the late-nineteenth century to the 1920s, from the 1930s to 1950, from the 1950s to 1970s, and from the "The Quiet Revolution" of the late 1970s to 2006. Claudia Goldin, "The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family," *American Economic Review* 96, no. 2 (2006): 1-21.

⁴³⁹ Goldin, "The Quiet Revolution," 18-19.

less often secondary workers to men.⁴⁴⁰ Goldin ultimately concludes that not all revolutions are noisy affairs; many women were unwitting (and quiet) participants in altering American employment, education, and family patterns.

Goldin followed her “Quiet Revolution” study with an analysis of high-end professionals in finance, medicine, and pharmacy. Goldin and Katz (2010) reviewed the financial penalties that arise from family-related workplace features (such as part-time work, daytime flexibility, short hours, and job interruptions), how women have responded to these penalties, and how the penalties have changed over time.⁴⁴¹ In many professions, the fiscal penalties linked with behaviors beneficial for families have decreased with time. Many high-income professions have experienced an increase in workplace flexibility thanks to outside factors (such as more corporate ownership compared to self-employment) and internal factors (like increased numbers of women in these professions). In contrast, workplace flexibility in the business and financial sectors has lagged. In a 2015 podcast for the Women and Public Policy Program Seminar Series hosted at the Harvard Kennedy School, Goldin and Mary Brinton discussed major policy challenges regarding how family fits within work structures. They revealed new information (like the discovery that pharmacy jobs offer high flexibility and high

⁴⁴⁰ Goldin, “The Quiet Revolution,” 19.

⁴⁴¹ Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence F. Katz, “The Cost of Workplace Flexibility for High-Powered Professionals,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 638, no. 1 (2011): 45-67.

compensation) and old grievances; career women still encounter a “second shift” of household and childcare tasks in addition to outside work.⁴⁴²

A group of Harvard economists and business school professors have addressed gender stereotypes head on. They have dissected the gender wage gap, proved mothers’ careers are constructive (not destructive) for children, and debunked the idea that women are “riskier” hires than their male peers. Goldin, Bertrand, and Katz (2010) evaluated the careers of top business school graduates to understand how career dynamics differ by gender. They found that upon graduation male and female MBAs earn nearly identical paychecks; however, after a decade, men earn far more. They attribute the gap in earnings to three factors – differences in prior training, career interruptions, and weekly hours – and find that career discontinuity and shorter work hours are higher for female MBAs with children.⁴⁴³

After twenty years studying professional women, Ely, Stone, and Ammerman looked to their own backyard to explore current debates regarding work and family. As the 50th anniversary of women’s admittance to Harvard Business School approached, the authors reflected upon how “Harvard MBAs value fulfilling professional and personal lives—yet their ability to realize them has played out very differently according to

⁴⁴² Harvard Kennedy School, “Gender Inequality: A Comparative View of the Challenges Ahead with Mary Brinton and Claudia Goldin,” *Women and Public Policy Program Seminar Series*, podcast audio, November 20, 2015, <<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/women-public-policy-program/id912437208?mt=2>>.

⁴⁴³ Marianne Bertrand, Claudia Goldin, and Lawrence F. Katz, “Dynamics of the Gender Gap for Young Professionals in the Financial and Corporate Sectors,” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 2, no. 3 (2010): 228-255.

gender.”⁴⁴⁴ They surveyed Harvard Business School graduates to learn how their experiences, attitudes, and decisions might shed light on modern disputes, and found a gap between conventional wisdom and the reality of women’s careers. Several findings rose to the forefront. First, men and women begin with similar goals but men are likelier to achieve them. Second, few women “opt out” of the workforce; instead, men and women both believe women advance more slowly because they prioritize family over career. Third, most men believe (correctly) that their career will take precedence over their partner’s career. Fourth, women are often less satisfied with their career than men.⁴⁴⁵ Conventional wisdom emphasizes women’s willingness to scale down, hold back, and relinquish prospects, projects, and positions. This study debunks the myth that a woman’s primary career obstacle is herself. The authors argue framing the conversation about women and work as an “opt out” exodus “doesn’t reflect reality—at least not for HBS women, and not, we’d venture, for many other highly educated, career-oriented women.”⁴⁴⁶ Most importantly, this academic study has real-world applications. Companies can use the findings to make more informed and enlightened decisions about considering the caregiving duties of both male and female employees. Individual male and female readers can take action by initiating candid conversations “at home, at work, and on campus about how and why their paths unfold so differently.” If taken seriously, this study has the potential to inspire public and private change.

⁴⁴⁴ Robin Ely, Pamela Stone, and Colleen Ammerman, “Rethink What You ‘Know’ about High-Achieving Women,” *Harvard Business Review* 92, no. 12 (2014), 102.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 101-109.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.

The employment of mothers with young children elicits heated debate and tense policy discourse. The long-term impact of maternal employment on children's outcomes as adults is the latest focus of Kathleen McGinn, a Harvard Business School professor who studies the role of gender at work, at home, and in negotiations. McGinn, Castro, and Lingo examine the work and home life of adults using data from 24 countries from the 2002 to 2012 "Family and Changing Gender Roles" module of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). A mother's employment status noticeably impacted her offspring's job status, leadership position, annual earnings, household burdens, and childcare obligations. Adult daughters of employed mothers were "more likely to be employed, more likely to hold supervisory responsibility if employed, work more hours, and earn marginally higher wages than women whose mothers stayed home fulltime."⁴⁴⁷ At home, adult daughters raised by an employed mother spend "approximately 35 fewer minutes on housework weekly" than daughters of stay-at-home mothers."⁴⁴⁸ For sons, the pattern is different. Compared to sons of stay-at-home mothers, sons of employed mothers report spending "an extra hour weekly" caring for family members.⁴⁴⁹ While the status quo chastises working mothers for inattentiveness, McGinn, Castro, and Lingo highlight the many positive manifestations of maternal employment.

Growing up with a non-traditional role model – an employed mother – shapes adult outcomes in positive ways. Adult children of employed mothers possess more

⁴⁴⁷ Kathleen L. McGinn, Mayra Ruiz Castro, and Elizabeth Long Lingo, "Mums the Word! Cross-national Effects of Maternal Employment on Gender Inequalities at Work and at Home," Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 15-094, June 2015, 1.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

egalitarian gender attitudes compared to adult children of fulltime homemakers who cling to traditional ideas of “right” and “normal” behavior. McGinn’s research reinforces calls for national and local policies that support working parents, especially working mothers. By proving that employed mothers and the non-traditional gender roles they embody benefit children, families, and societies, this study offers an important counterpoint to deeply ingrained beliefs and ongoing rhetoric that employed mothers are “abandoning their children,” negatively affecting their families, and impairing their society by working outside the home rather than within it.

Cultural Ideals of Womanhood

Cultural norms and standards are a resource that individuals draw on when constructing their identities, composing stories of their everyday lives, and interacting with others. Ideals shift over time as the norms and social practices associated with culture undergo complex changes as well. Yalom traced the various meanings of the term “wife” from its roots as a means of economic support and social legitimization for women, to its more modern perception as a spouse or partner, who is expected to deliver “not only sex, love, children, and housekeeping services, but also wages and participation in community life.”⁴⁵⁰ Rosenthal sketched the “spinster,” beginning with the symbol’s late nineteenth-century definition as a single, never-married, chaste, and skilled woman above criticism, to its more recent definition as an undesirable “old maid” who remains

⁴⁵⁰ Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Wife* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), xvii.

childless and unmarried.⁴⁵¹ Coontz explores the evolution of marriage from Paleolithic times to the dawn of the twenty-first century.⁴⁵² Marriage, which was once a way of forging trading connections and making peace, eventually hinged upon a familiar concept: love. By the 1970s, marriage became a more satisfying personal relationship but a weaker social institution as certain obstacles such as inequality between men's and women's roles, unreliable birth control, and social mobility constraints lessened. In this section I will review research regarding the cultural ideals of womanhood that have relevance for American women past and present.

The feminist movement of the late twentieth century provoked changes in what women anticipated they should be able to accomplish in adulthood.⁴⁵³ Many women aspired to upward occupational mobility and devalued being "just a housewife." As one young woman declared: "I think a housewife is like a slave."⁴⁵⁴ Still, traditional cultural values continued to dominate through the end of the twentieth century.⁴⁵⁵ At the beginning of the twenty-first century, one hundred percent of a sample of female college

⁴⁵¹ Naomi Braun Rosenthal, *Spinster Tales and Womanly Possibilities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002).

⁴⁵² Coontz's best-known works were published in the 1990s including "The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap" and "The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families." Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, A History* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

⁴⁵³ Alayne Yates, "Issues of Autonomy in Adolescence: the 'Superwoman,'" in *Female Adolescent Development*, 2nd ed., ed. Max Sugar, 157-168 (New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1993).

⁴⁵⁴ Tehmina N. Basit, "'I'd Hate to Be Just a Housewife:' Career Aspirations of British Muslim Girls," *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 24 (1996): 231.

⁴⁵⁵ Tricia McClam and Lynn M. Blinn, "Interpersonal Lives in the Future: Projections of Undergraduate Women," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 66 (1988): 71-78.

students predicted they would marry and 96% anticipated having children.⁴⁵⁶ Restrictive ideas about what constituted “appropriate” gender and occupational roles persisted throughout high school and college.⁴⁵⁷ Women placed fewer restrictions on themselves concerning the type of job they could have, although both women and men gravitated towards traditional gender-specific occupations.⁴⁵⁸ Women typically had more discontinuous career patterns in order to better accommodate the needs of their spouses and children.⁴⁵⁹ The rise in divorce, coupled with the proliferation of the birth control pill, meant women spent a smaller fraction of their life married. As a result, women of the 1960s and 1970s increased their investments in higher education, majored in more lucrative subjects, and entered professions in greater numbers. Compared to previous generations, these women had “longer horizons” and a changed identity that situated career equal to (if not ahead of) marriage.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁶ Harry G. Segal et al., “Assessing Future Possible Selves by Gender and Socioeconomic Status Using the Anticipated Life History Measure,” *Journal of Personality*, 69 (2001): 57-87.

⁴⁵⁷ Susan D. Phillips and Anne R. Imhoff, “Women and Career Development: A Decade of Research,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 48 (1997): 31-59.

⁴⁵⁸ Ellen Piel Cook, “The Gendered Context of Life: Implications for Women’s and Men’s Career-Life Plans,” *Career Development Quarterly* 41 (1993): 227-237; Becky Francis, “Is the Future Really Female? The Impact and Implications of Gender For 14-16 Year Olds’ Career Choices,” *Journal of Education and Work* 15 (2002): 75-88.

⁴⁵⁹ Phillips et al., “Women and Career Development,” 31-59.

⁴⁶⁰ Goldin, “The Quiet Revolution,” 1-21.

Motherhood Ideals

Cultural ideals of womanhood are inextricably intertwined with ideals of motherhood. A widespread and dominant ideal of womanhood is that of the “intensive mother”⁴⁶¹ or the “good mother.”⁴⁶² Naturally, the motherhood debate has centered upon her.⁴⁶³ The normative ideology of the ideal mother was that of the full-time mother who dedicates a colossal amount of time, energy, and money to nurturing her children.⁴⁶⁴ The conversation about mothering in America, which referenced educational institutions and child-rearing manuals, put the child’s needs first and held mothers accountable for their children’s successes and failures.⁴⁶⁵ American culture pressured women to dedicate a tremendous amount of their energy to child rearing. At the same time, American culture also encouraged personal success by way of career advancement. These opposing pressures pose a “contradiction” for women. Hays argued the ideology behind intensive

⁴⁶¹ Sharon Hays, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

⁴⁶² Sue Lanci Villani and Jane E. Ryan, *Motherhood at the Crossroads: Meeting the Challenge of a Changing Role* (New York: Insight Books, 1997).

⁴⁶³ Shari L. Thurer, *The Myths of Motherhood: How Culture Reinvents the Good Mother* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 142. For more information see: Diane E. Eyer, *Motherguilt: How Our Culture Blames Mothers For What’s Wrong with Society* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 1996); Hays, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*, 1996; Miriam Peskowitz, *The Truth Behind the Mommy Wars: Who Decides What Makes a Good Mother?* (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2005).

⁴⁶⁴ Terry Arendell, “Conceiving and Investigating Motherhood: A Decade’s Research,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62 (2000): 1192-1207.

⁴⁶⁵ Dorothy E. Smith, “The Standard North American Family: SNAF as Ideological Code,” *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (1993): 50-65.

mothering appeals to social and moral concerns while reproducing gender inequality.⁴⁶⁶ The dual exaltation and devaluation of motherhood contribute to what Villani and Ryan termed the “Mother Crisis.”⁴⁶⁷ Mothers experience feelings of failure and guilt for not fulfilling the myths of motherhood such as that of the Perfect Mother, All-Powerful Mother, Natural Mother, and Martyr Mom.⁴⁶⁸ Thurer constructs a comprehensive map of how “culture reinvents the good mother,” from the stereotype’s Stone Age origins through its evolution during Ancient Egypt, Medieval Times, and the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.⁴⁶⁹ Eyer analyzed how Americans defined and idealized the “Good Mother” who shifted from a “hearth angel” after the Industrial Revolution, to a professionalized “housewife” during the 1950s, to a “Super Mom” of the 1980s.⁴⁷⁰ Myths of motherhood were socially constructed ideologies shaped by cultural, political, and economic influences.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁶ Hays, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*.

⁴⁶⁷ Villani, *Motherhood*.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Thurer, *The Myths of Motherhood*, 142.

⁴⁷⁰ Eyer, *Motherguilt*, 39-66.

⁴⁷¹ See Mimi Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* (Boston: South End Press, 1999); Susan Chira, *A Mother’s Place: Taking the Debate about Working Mothers Beyond Guilt and Blame* (New York: Harper, 1998); Karen Christopher, “Extensive Mothering: Employed Mothers’ Constructions of the Good Mother,” *Gender & Society* 26 (2012): 73-96; Patricia Hill Collins, “Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood,” in *Representations of Motherhood*, eds. Donna Bassin and Margaret Honey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Rachel T. Hare-Mustin and Patricia C. Broderick, “The Myth of Motherhood: A Study of Attitudes toward Motherhood,” *A Psychology of Women Q.* 4 (Winter 1979): 114-128.

Motherhood ideals were so pervasive that a woman who strayed from the standard model of a nuclear family was viewed as “defective” or “deviant.”⁴⁷² Single, minority, immigrant, and lesbian mothers were all aberrations from the motherhood ideal.⁴⁷³ Four clichéd portrayals of mothers in popular media represent which qualities made a mother “good” or “bad.”⁴⁷⁴ The career-oriented “Super Mom” combined work and family. The “Soccer Mom” was shorthand for a white, married, suburban, stay-at-home mother who identified as politically moderate or conservative. The “Waitress Mom” was a low-income working-class woman who worked to financially support her family. The “Welfare Queen” was typically portrayed as a young, single, and unwed African-American mother. Although differing social, political, and cultural values pitted the career-oriented “Super Mom” against the stay-at-home “Soccer Mom,” both were acceptable ideals of motherhood. On the other hand, the mythical “Welfare Queen” and the working class “Waitress Mom” were excluded from the ideal construction of motherhood. Class was clearly the distinguishing characteristic between the “good” and “bad” stereotypes. The “Soccer Mom” who considered herself “lucky” to be a “mother first” most closely resembled ideal motherhood. The least valued of all four stereotypes

⁴⁷² A woman fits the standard model of a nuclear family if she is legally married and if she is one-half of a heterosexual couple that shares a household in which the man earns the primary source of income. See Dorothy E. Smith, “The Standard North American Family: SNAF as Ideological Code,” *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (1993): 50-65. Also see Terry Arendell, “Conceiving and Investigating Motherhood: A Decade’s Research,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62 (2000): 1192-1207.

⁴⁷³ Arendell, “Conceiving and Investigating Motherhood,” 1192-1207.

⁴⁷⁴ Laurel Parker West, “Soccer Moms, Welfare Queens, Waitress Moms, and Super Moms: Myths of Motherhood in State Media Coverage of Child Care During the ‘Welfare Reforms’ of the 1990s,” *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal* 25 (2002): 313-345.

was the “Welfare Queen” whose racialized image was used as a tool to cut state funding for childcare.⁴⁷⁵ Years later, the ideal of the “good mother” persists.

This brief review clarifies the main moral conceptualizations of motherhood in American culture. Cultural imperatives constitute what it means to be a “good” mother and, alternately, what it means to be a “bad” one. Now I turn to another ideal of womanhood, the Superwoman. The Superwoman stretches beyond the definition of a woman who is considered a merely “good” mother. She is the woman who can “do it all,” the woman who successfully and effortlessly juggles career and family.

Superwoman Ideal

In 1977 the term “Superwoman” was used interchangeably with the term “Supermom” in a newspaper column. By the mid 1980’s “Superwoman” had become a focus of study.⁴⁷⁶ The Superwoman myth decreed women should be able to “do it all... glamorously, effortlessly, happily, and perfectly.”⁴⁷⁷ Women were expected to “perform perfectly such multiple and conflicting roles as worker or career volunteer, wife, mother, and homemaker.”⁴⁷⁸ As a result, it has often been argued women feel overwhelmed when confronted with the demands of multiple roles. Several studies associated the

⁴⁷⁵ Riché Jeneen Daniel Barnes, “Black Women Have Always Worked: Is There a Work-Family Conflict among the Black Middle Class?” in *The Changing Landscape of Work and Family in the American Middle Class: Reports From the Field*, eds. Elizabeth Rudd and Lara Descartes, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

⁴⁷⁶ Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz, *The Superwoman Syndrome* (New York: Warner Books, 1984).

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

“Superwoman” ideal and its many demands with negative consequences.⁴⁷⁹ In 1984 Shaevitz named this “problem” the “Superwoman syndrome” and associated it with a variety of physical, psychological, and interpersonal stress symptoms. In 2007 Courtney Martin explained how the superwoman syndrome had manifested in “the children of the now-faster eighties and the anything-is-possible nineties, the daughters of visionary superwomen.”⁴⁸⁰ Martin described her generation as “the unintended side effects of feminism... the inheritors of an unspoken legacy of body hatred, and the manifest undiagnosed anxiety, depression, and eating disorders of our mothers.”⁴⁸¹ In a 2015 radio show titled “How to Avoid the Superwoman Complex” a physician at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill blamed the Superwoman syndrome as the cause of numerous health issues for modern women.⁴⁸² The Superwoman syndrome is also known as the “Hurried Woman Syndrome”⁴⁸³ and the “Wonder Women” “quest for perfection.”⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁹ Michael R. Frone et al., “Work-Family Conflict, Gender and Health-Related Outcomes: A Study of Employed Parents in Two Community Samples,” *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 1, no. 1 (1996): 57-69.

⁴⁸⁰ Courtney E. Martin, *Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: The Frightening New Normalcy of Hating Your Body* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 34-35.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² The theme of the conversation was “The Superwoman Complex and Your Health.” Nicole Swiner, “How to Avoid the Superwoman Complex with Nicole Swiner, M.D.,” *Your Health*, Chapel Hill, WCHL 97.9FM, August 8, 2015.

⁴⁸³ Brent Bost, *The Hurried Woman Syndrome: A Seven-Step Program to Conquer Fatigue, Control Weight, and Restore Passion to Your Relationship* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005).

⁴⁸⁴ Debora L. Spar, *Wonder Women: Sex, Power, and the Quest for Perfection* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

Whether wondrous, super, or harried, the woman who struggles to juggle it all continues to populate modern media.

Media stories that preserved and propagated the idea of an unavoidable conflict between motherhood and employment almost always ended with the privileging of motherhood. The 1980's gave rise to confessional accounts in which "recovering Superwomen" denounced their ambitious ways. After scrutinizing 1980's media, Faludi identified three trends that situated women in contradictory ways: "Superwoman burnout" versus "new traditionalist cocooning"; "spinster boom" versus "return of marriage"; and "infertility epidemic" versus "baby boomlet."⁴⁸⁵ Faludi found that many journalists who covered these alleged trends neglected to base their arguments on systematic research. Instead, these so-called trends of the 1980's hinged on thin testimony culled from the stories of a handful of recovering Superwomen. The dawn of the twenty-first century saw a similar emphasis on "baby panic"⁴⁸⁶ and the "Mommy Wars."⁴⁸⁷ A number of self-help books debuted around the same time to help women

⁴⁸⁵ Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1991), 80.

⁴⁸⁶ Vanessa Grigoriadis, "Baby Panic," *New York Magazine*, May 13, 2002, <<http://nymag.com/nymetro/urban/family/features/6030/>>; Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, "Oops, I Forgot to Have Kids," *Bust*, Summer 2002, 44-49; Joan Walsh, "The Baby Panic," *Salon*, April 23, 2002, <http://www.salon.com/2002/04/23/hewlett_book/>.

⁴⁸⁷ Helaine Olen, "A Truce in the 'Mommy Wars,'" *Salon*, March 15, 2006, <http://www.salon.com/2006/03/15/mommy_wars/>; Leslie Morgan Steiner, ed., *Mommy Wars: Stay-At-Home and Career Moms Face Off on Their Choices, Their Lives, Their Families* (New York: Random House, 2007).

traverse the complex terrain of motherhood and work.⁴⁸⁸ Today, there continues to be a steady stream of books to help mothers manage their stress, time, and relationships.⁴⁸⁹ By offering tips to simplify mothers' hectic lives, many books promote the idea women can juggle multiple obligations if they only try hard enough. Other books are confessional accounts in which recovering overachievers denounce their perfectionist ways and encourage others to do the same. Either way, these stories reinforce the assumption that motherhood and employment inevitably conflict.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, women were more likely to not be employed two years after childbirth compared to women in earlier decades.⁴⁹⁰ In support of this finding, American women with preschool-aged children (under six-years-old) are still less likely than those with school-aged children (between six and seventeen-years-

⁴⁸⁸ Sylvia Ann Hewlett, *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children* (New York: Hyperion, 2002); Lia Macko and Kerry Rubin, *Midlife Crisis At 30: How the Stakes Have Changed for a New Generation—and What to Do about It* (New York: Penguin, 2004); Pamela Stone, *Opting Out?: Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁴⁸⁹ Brigid Schulte, *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2014); Rebecca Gillespie and Hollee Temple, *Good Enough Is the New Perfect: Finding Happiness and Success in Modern Motherhood* (Ontario, Canada: Harlequin Nonfiction, 2011); Katrina Alcorn, *Maxed Out: American Moms on the Brink* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2013); Anonymous, *The Modern Mother's Handbook: How to Raise a Happy, Healthy, Smart, Disciplined and Interesting Child, Starting from Birth* (New York: Bleecker Street Publishing, 2015); Jennifer Senior, *All Joy and No Fun: The Paradox of Modern Parenthood* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2014); Marci Fair, *TILT - 7 Solutions To Be A Guilt-Free Working Mom* (Lawrenceville, GA: Pacochel Press, 2014).

⁴⁹⁰ This conclusion was drawn from archival data of professional women from 1968-1992. Leslie Whittington et al., "Choosing Children Over Career? Changes in the Postpartum Labor Force Behavior of Professional Women," *Population Research and Policy Review* 19 (2000): 339-355.

old) to be employed (63.9% versus 74.7%, respectively, Bureau of Labor Statistics).⁴⁹¹ Women who work often felt they were not “good enough” mothers due to the disruptions that came with employment.⁴⁹² While studying families of the late 1990s, Willming and Gibson found several employed women who resisted the Superwoman ideal.⁴⁹³ As one subject stated, “The ideal woman just doesn’t exist... You can’t have it all, even though those books say that you can have it all.”⁴⁹⁴

While some women of the 1990s condemned the Superwoman ideal, others embraced it. The idea that mothers should achieve a secure career prior to having children taught women that Superwoman was achievable – if they only sequenced things right.⁴⁹⁵ For many women, motherhood and employment were not necessarily contradictory sources of identity because the line between work and home often blurred.⁴⁹⁶ For example, employed women in Bailey’s study associated work with traditional interpretations of home, such as fulfillment and care, while home was described in employment terms as “productive” work or the “hardest job.” Of the

⁴⁹¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Labor Force Participation Rate of Mothers By Age of Youngest Child, 2013 Annual Averages,” Current Population Survey (CPS), <https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/laborf_participate_rate_mothers_ychild_2013_txt.htm>.

⁴⁹² Cook, “The Gendered Context of Life,” 227-237.

⁴⁹³ Cynthia Willming and Heather J. Gibson, “A View of Leisure and Patterns of Family Life in the Late 1990s,” *Society and Leisure* 23 (2000): 121-144.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁴⁹⁵ Sherry E. Sullivan, “Is There a Time for Everything? Attitudes Related To Women’s Sequencing of Career and Family,” *Career Development Quarterly* 40 (1992): 234-243.

⁴⁹⁶ Lucy Bailey, “Bridging Home and Work in the Transition to Motherhood: A Discursive Study,” *The European Journal of Women’s Studies* 7 (2000): 53-70.

American women aged 35 to 44 years old 74.3 percent were employed in 2015.⁴⁹⁷ Furthermore, 74.6 percent of mothers whose youngest child was between 6 and 17 years old participated in the labor force in 2015.⁴⁹⁸ Many women are driven to be both mother and employee by the need to survive economically, by the obligation to support ill or unemployed family, or by the desire for a comfortable lifestyle. In truth, “doing it all” may be more of a requirement and less of a choice for women of the twenty-first century.

During the twentieth century the number of hours employees worked grew steadily.⁴⁹⁹ An increase in work hours left mothers with less time than ever before for leisure activities, parenting, and domestic work.⁵⁰⁰ Many reports have noted a growing leisure gap between men and women.⁵⁰¹ Although some women resist the ideal of a pristinely clean house in favor of work or other pursuits, the majority of women at the

⁴⁹⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Labor Force Participation Rate of Mothers by Age of Youngest Child, March 1975-2015,” Current Population Survey, last updated July 2016, <https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/facts_over_time.htm#labor>.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Willming et al., “A View of Leisure,” 121-144.

⁵⁰⁰ Darby E. Saxbe et al., “Time Spent in Housework and Leisure: Links with Parents’ Physiological Recovery From Work,” *Journal of Family Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2011): 271-281. For more information on how families balance work and home life see Barbara Schneider and Linda J. Waite, eds., *Being Together, Working Apart: Dual-Career Families and the Work-Life Balance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Melissa A. Milkie et al., “Time with Children, Children’s Well-Being, and Work-Family Balance among Employed Parents,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72, no. 5 (2010): 1329-1343; Lori K. Long, *The Parent’s Guide to Family-Friendly Work: Finding the Balance between Employment and Enjoyment* (Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 2007).

⁵⁰¹ Milkie et al., “Time with Children,” 1329-1343.

end of the twentieth century did not reduce their time spent cleaning.⁵⁰² In fact, the importance placed on having a neat house *increased*. Women continued to perform the majority of unpaid domestic labor even as they increased their labor force participation; men tended to occasionally “help” around the house.⁵⁰³ Some husbands even expected their wives should do *more* housework despite the fact that these women were already completing most tasks.⁵⁰⁴ Today, women continue to perform the vast majority of household labor.⁵⁰⁵ For many women, “doing it all” appears to be a necessity, not a choice.

The picture of a Superwoman who “does it all” may not apply to all women. For example, Lim stated Korean immigrant women who worked felt it permissible to “neglect” household tasks and to expect their husband’s help.⁵⁰⁶ Financial necessity drove these women to work outside of the home and, in return, they expected support within the home. By asking for husbands’ help with family work, Korean women rejected the Superwoman ideal. Mexican-American women in two-income families went “beyond the Superwoman syndrome” by encouraging their husbands to assume a share of the

⁵⁰² John P. Robinson and Melissa A. Milkie, “Back to Basics: Trends in and Role Determinants of Women’s Attitudes toward Housework,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60 (1998): 205-218.

⁵⁰³ Cook, “The Gendered Context of Life,” 227-237.

⁵⁰⁴ Kenneth C. Dempsey, “Increasing the Workload of the Overloaded Housewife,” *Journal of Family Studies* 4 (1998): 3-20.

⁵⁰⁵ Mylène Lachance-Grzela and Geneviève Bouchard, “Why Do Women Do the Lion’s Share of Housework? A Decade of Research,” *Sex Roles* 63, no. 11 (2010): 767-780.

⁵⁰⁶ In-Sook Lim, “Korean Immigrant Women’s Challenge to Gender Inequality at Home: The Interplay of Economic Resources, Gender, and Family,” *Gender and Society* 11, no. 1 (1997): 31.

housework and childcare responsibilities.⁵⁰⁷ Barnes argued that historically, “Black women have had to do it all.”⁵⁰⁸ The Superwoman ideal applies less often or not at all to women who work due to necessity (not choice) and who deviate from the racial, cultural, and class profile of white middle-class women.

How the issue of multiple roles and the Superwoman ideal relates to young unmarried women remains understudied. At the beginning of the twenty-first century a few reports focused on young women. Whitty examined the dreams of two groups in transition periods: older adolescents and young adults.⁵⁰⁹ Both men and women in the younger group had grand dreams for their future; younger women in particular aspired to a “Superwoman” ideal of acquiring the perfect partner, having children, and achieving career success. More often than young men, young women described a “split dream;” they forecast their need to juggle multiple goals of children, career, and relationship.⁵¹⁰ Young women also expressed anxiety concerning the biological, social, and time constraints of having children. Women unquestioningly accepted they would fulfill the traditional role of caregiver in addition to having a career. Although many young women declared a desire to have both a career and family, far fewer understood how they would

⁵⁰⁷ Ruth S. Herrera and Robert L. DelCampo, “Beyond the Superwoman Syndrome: Work Satisfaction and Family Functioning among Working-Class, Mexican-American Women,” *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 17 (1995): 49-60.

⁵⁰⁸ Barnes, “Black Women Have Always Worked,” 3.

⁵⁰⁹ In the study, “older adolescents” are defined as those transitioning to early adulthood, whereas “young adults” are experiencing the “age-thirty transition.” Monica T. Whitty, “The Myth of the Superwoman: Comparing Young Men’s and Women’s Stories of Their Future Lives,” *Journal of Family Studies* 7 (2001): 87-100.

⁵¹⁰ Priscilla Roberts and Peter M. Newton, “Levinsonian Studies of Women’s Adult Development,” *Psychology and Aging* 2, no. 2 (1987): 154-163.

plan, achieve, and sustain multiple roles.⁵¹¹ Young women were aware of multiple role conflict yet tended to ascribe difficulties to other women; they were unlikely to anticipate such conflict in their own lives. The connection between the Superwoman ideal and eating disorders of young women has also been studied.⁵¹² A decade ago researchers used a scale to measure young women's endorsement of such ideals as "doing it all" to shed light on how young women deal with perfectionism and the juggling of multiple roles.⁵¹³ Mensinger, Bonifazi, and LaRosa found "girls with perceptions of more intense behavioral prescriptions for excellence" and girls with "perceptions of conflicting gender role prescriptions at school influenced disordered eating through its association with endorsement of the superwoman ideal."⁵¹⁴

As the literature reviewed above demonstrates, women are exposed to multiple ideals of womanhood and motherhood, such as the Superwoman ideal. Separately, these ideals are inconsistent, contradictory, and fragmented. Collectively, these ideals make up

⁵¹¹ Lauren M. Weitzman, "Multiple Role Realism: A Theoretical Framework for the Process of Planning to Combine Career and Family Roles," *Applied & Preventive Psychology* 3, no. 1 (1994): 15-25.

⁵¹² Several researchers who studied the link between eating disorders and young women referred to this phenomenon as the "superwoman complex." See Katherine L. E. Craigen, "Eating Disorder Pathology in First Year Female College Students: The Role of Self-Objectification, Thin Ideal Internalization, and the Superwoman Ideal," (PhD diss., Fairleigh Dickinson University, 2013), ProQuest 3573873; Kathleen Hart and Maureen E. Kenny, "Adherence to the Super Woman Ideal and Eating Disorder Symptoms among College Women," *Sex Roles* 36 (1997): 461-478.

⁵¹³ Janell Mensinger et al., "Perceived Gender Role Prescriptions in Schools, the Superwoman Ideal, and Disordered Eating among Adolescent Girls," *Sex Roles* 57, no. 7 (2007): 557-568.

⁵¹⁴ Mensinger et al., "Perceived Gender Role Prescriptions," 557-568.

our shared cultural knowledge of womanhood, femininity, and motherhood, and shape women's identities, expectations, and choices. Despite the pervasiveness of these ideals, little is known about how American women today are grappling with the cultural expectations of "having it all."

Heroines in the Mass Media

Scholars argue heroic qualities shift with time, but dictionaries of the last two centuries have noticeably similar definitions of "hero." The 1898 *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defined "hero" as "a man of distinguished valor, or enterprise, or fortitude."⁵¹⁵ A "heroic" man is "bold, brave, illustrious." In 1951, *Webster's* took the definition a step further and claimed the hero is "regarded as a model." In 2004, the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* still defined "hero" and "heroic" in similar terms. A "hero" was "a man admired for his achievements and noble qualities" and "one that shows great courage."⁵¹⁶ A "heroic" man displayed "determined effort esp. in the face of difficulty."⁵¹⁷

At the end of the nineteenth century, a "heroine" was defined as "a woman of heroic spirit" and the "principal female personage in a poem or story."⁵¹⁸ Throughout the

⁵¹⁵ Noah Webster, *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam, 1898), 403.

⁵¹⁶ *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2004), 583.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ Webster, *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 403.

twentieth century, heroines continued to be women of heroic character.⁵¹⁹ Today, “heroine” is still defined as “a mythological or legendary woman having the qualities of a hero,” “a woman admired and emulated for her achievements and qualities,” “the principal female character in a literary or dramatic work,” and “the central female figure in an event or period.”⁵²⁰ Heroines are imbued with typically heroic qualities such as bravery, boldness, nobility, and courage.

In classical mythology and ancient Greek history a heroine is “a woman of superhuman qualities or abilities.”⁵²¹ The modern definition of “superwoman” is strikingly similar. A “superwoman” is “a woman with exceptional strength or ability, especially one who successfully manages a home, brings up children, and has a full-time job.”⁵²² An earlier definition of “superwoman” described her as “above or beyond the usual or expected capacity or power of women.”⁵²³ Superwoman is arguably one reincarnation of the classical heroine.

While dictionaries provide a solid foundation, the concept of American heroism is far more complex. During the nineteenth century Ralph Waldo Emerson thoughtfully explained how heroes mirror community morals. Heroes, Emerson said, symbolize the

⁵¹⁹ William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 617-18.

⁵²⁰ *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 583.

⁵²¹ “Heroine,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁵²² “Superwoman,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

highest ideals and aspirations of mankind and serve as “mouthpieces of their age.”⁵²⁴ Twentieth-century scholars agreed a hero was more than a “great man;” he was a symbol of his culture. Daniel Boorstin argued, “We revere them not because they possess charisma, divine favor, a grace or talent granted them by God, but because they embody popular virtues. We admire them... because they reveal and elevate ourselves.”⁵²⁵ In the 1940s Dixon Wecter argued, “the hero is he whom every American should wish to be. His legend is the mirror of the folk soul.”⁵²⁶ The American hero is neither royalty nor deity. In this egalitarian society an average person who pushes through adversity to reach society’s highest potential may call himself a hero.

The hero as “great man” has been extensively studied. But what about heroines as great women who serve as the mouthpieces of their age and symbolize the highest aims of womankind? Throughout history, mass media has offered audiences a portrait of the female role model, an arguably heroic everywoman primed for mass consumption. “What constitutes the heroic and who becomes the hero,” Drucker and Cathcart argue, “is a function of cultural priorities and values and, most significantly, is related to the communication medium utilized for presenting and pursuing information about heroes.”⁵²⁷ According to Boorstin and Emerson, the heroine should embody popular virtues and mirror the ideal morals of her community. To rephrase Wecter, the heroine is

⁵²⁴ Barry Schwartz, “Emerson, Cooley and the American Heroic Vision,” *Symbolic Interaction* 8 (Spring 1985): 106-107.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁵²⁶ Dixon Wecter, *The Hero in America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1941), 487-488.

⁵²⁷ Susan J. Drucker and Robert S. Cathcart, eds., *American Heroes in a Media Age* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 1994), 2.

she whom every American should wish to be. And to borrow from Lee R. Edwards, “heroism is a public drama.”⁵²⁸ To understand the conduct, characteristics, and choices Americans value most, we must examine the women who populate the pages, screens, and airwaves of the mass media.

Sex Roles in the Mass Media

In 1963 Betty Freidan poured her frustrations onto the pages of *The Feminine Mystique* and reawakened women to the pervasive societal pressures that dictated their traditional role within American society. Friedan pinpointed magazines and other media as culprits for constantly casting women in traditional sex roles such as that of homemaker. The “image by which modern American women live,” Freidan explained, is the “suburban housewife with an up-and-coming husband and a station wagon full of children.”⁵²⁹ The image “created by the women’s magazines, by advertisements, television, movies, novels, columns and books by experts on marriage and the family, child psychology, sexual adjustment and by the popularizers of sociology and psychoanalysis—shapes women’s lives today and mirrors their dreams.”⁵³⁰ The media portrayal of certain women as models of attractiveness nurtured a narrow and servile image of women, Freidan insisted. In the years following Friedan’s loud critique of magazines, scholars have carefully scrutinized the portrayal of sex roles in mass media.

⁵²⁸ Lee R. Edwards, *Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and Fictional Form* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 3.

⁵²⁹ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 24.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

Studies of magazines, movies, television, and books support Friedan's thesis that the traditional depiction of women in magazines is restrictive. Scholars routinely prove mass media portrays women as passive, compliant, self-sacrificing, and less capable than men.⁵³¹ For example, Seggar proved that television dramas of the mid-seventies usually portrayed women in roles that emphasized their physical attractiveness and dependence on men; plots typically placed women in the home.⁵³² Dominick analyzed twenty-five years of television programming from 1953 to 1978 and concluded women were almost exclusively shown in traditional roles.⁵³³ Harris and Voorhees agreed that television propagates traditional sex role stereotypes.⁵³⁴ Ruggiero and Weston studied portrayals of women's work options in ten major magazines from 1971 through 1980. They found magazines profiled women in "traditional" occupations and showed employed women as

⁵³¹ The following sources are just a few of the numerous studies that demonstrate how mass media portrays women in narrow, servile, traditional ways. Helen H. Franzwa, "Female Roles in Women's Magazine Fiction, 1940-1970," in *Woman: Dependent or Independent Variable*, eds., Rhoda Kesler Unger and Florence L. Denmark (New York: Psychological Dimensions, 1975), 42-53; Gaye Tuchman et al., eds., *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 3-38, 202-234; Kathy Kaiser, "The New Women's Magazines: It's the Same Old Story," *Frontiers* 4 (1979): 14-17; Cory L. Armstrong, ed., *Media Disparity: A Gender Battleground* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013).

⁵³² John F. Seggar, "Imagery of Women in Television Drama: 1974," *Journal of Broadcasting* 19 (1975): 273-282.

⁵³³ Joseph R. Dominick, "The Portrayal of Women in Prime Time: 1953-1977," *Sex Roles* 5 (1979): 405-411.

⁵³⁴ Mary B. Harris and Sara D. Voorhees, "Sex Role Stereotypes and Televised Models of Emotion," *Psychological Reports* 48 (1981): 826.

unlikely to see themselves in positions of responsibility, power, or influence at work.⁵³⁵ A content analysis of the roles, attributes, and occupations of main characters in fictional stories in seven national women's magazines found female protagonists experienced primarily romantic (not career) related problems.⁵³⁶ In a 2015 report on the status of women in media, Dustin Harp, a gender and communications professor, told the Women's Media Center, "Have things changed much? Unfortunately, no ... There's not this steady incline of women making strides."⁵³⁷

For much of the twentieth century, books, television, and movies defined women primarily by their economic and marital status.⁵³⁸ Filmmakers frequently cast female characters as sweet, passive, submissive homemakers who abandon adventurous exploits in favor of men. Historically, women are portrayed as strong and independent only during

⁵³⁵ Josephine Ruggiero and Louise Weston, "Work Options for Women in Women's Magazines: The Medium and the Message," *Sex Roles* 12, no. 5 (1985): 535-547.

⁵³⁶ Kate Peirce, "Women's Magazine Fiction: A Content Analysis of the Roles, Attributes, and Occupations of Main Characters," *Sex Roles* 37 (1997): 581-593.

⁵³⁷ The Women's Media Center commissioned Novetta to analyze 27,758 pieces of content from October 1 to December 31, 2014. The analyzed media included the top ten national newspapers by circulation, evening news broadcasts on major networks, and four major Internet news sites. For example, a random selection of content was selected from CNN.com, *Daily Beast*, FOXNews.com, and the *Huffington Post*. "The Status of Women in the U.S. Media," (New York: Women's Media Center, 2015), <https://wmc.3cdn.net/83bf6082a319460eb1_hsr680x2.pdf>. For more on Harp's research see Dustin Harp et al., "Where are the Women? The Presence of Female Columnists in U.S. Opinion Pages," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 91, no. 2 (2014): 289-307.

⁵³⁸ These authors focus on the image of nurses portrayed in novels and movies. Philip A. Kalisch and Beatrice J. Kalisch, "The Image of the Nurse in Motion Pictures," *American Journal of Nursing* 82 (1982): 605-611; Philip A. Kalisch and Beatrice J. Kalisch, "Image of Nurses in Novels," *American Journal of Nursing* 82 (1982): 1220-1224.

times of economic peril such as World Wars I and II. Most of the time, after the crisis has passed, women were ushered back to their subordinate roles. For example, nurses often quit work upon marriage and assembly line workers left the hospital for the home.

Some scholars argue that newspapers and magazines published images that reflected women's changing roles.⁵³⁹ Cancian and Ross evaluated media coverage of women from 1900 to 1977 by noting the proportion of stories that appeared in the *New York Times* subject index and in the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature. By measuring the quantity of media coverage, Cancian and Ross found a clear increase in pro-feminist stories and career-related stories of women during two key times: the women's suffrage movement and the 1970s women's movement.⁵⁴⁰ Tuchman found magazines that marketed explicitly for women also responded to social change.⁵⁴¹

Helen Franzwa arrived at a different conclusion. After analyzing 122 stories from *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and *Good Housekeeping* published between 1940 and 1970, she found that fictional accounts reinforced traditional models and attitudes about women's appropriate role.⁵⁴² New women's magazines designed to satisfy women interested in the feminist movement still appeared more focused on physical appearance

⁵³⁹ Francesca M. Cancian and Bonnie L. Ross, "Mass Media and the Women's Movement: 1900-1977," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 17 (1981): 9-26; Gaye Tuchman, "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media," in *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*, eds., Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 3-38.

⁵⁴⁰ Cancian et al., "Mass Media," 9-26.

⁵⁴¹ Gaye Tuchman et al., *Hearth and Home*, 3-38.

⁵⁴² Franzwa, "Female Roles," 42-53.

than gender equality.⁵⁴³ Magazines such as *New Woman*, *Working Woman*, and *Self* were dedicated explicitly to women yet failed to provide meaningful replies to the reality of women's shifting roles, responsibilities, and restraints.

Susan Faludi portrays mass media as unsavory agents of social change that mirror and reinforce society's restrictive roles for American women. She proves that a history of small and seemingly unconnected criticisms of women – from movies, newspapers, magazines, and psychologists – added up to form a large and dangerous backlash movement against feminism. Faludi's major premise is that backlash arises whenever women voice independent opinions, no matter how softly. Faludi argues “the anti-feminist backlash has been set off not by women's achievement of full equality but by the increased possibility that they might win it. It is a pre-emptive strike that stops women long before they reach the finish line.”⁵⁴⁴ By tracking how media outlets, conservative groups, and male reporters “waged a war against women,” Faludi exposes the magnitude of fear felt by those who stood to lose power. *Backlash* is a lesson in the “countercurrents and treacherous undertows” that threaten to drag feminists down.⁵⁴⁵

In *Where the Girls Are* (1994) Susan Douglas offers a cultural history of second-wave feminism in the United States. Despite the use of quirky prose and clumsy jokes, the book is a historically astute treatise on the crucial interaction between women and the mass media. Douglas examines areas of American women's culture often dismissed as insubstantial, including *Charlie's Angels*, *Bewitched*, and the *Marvellettes*. She uses

⁵⁴³ Kaiser, “The New Women's Magazines,” 14-17.

⁵⁴⁴ Faludi, *Backlash*, 11.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

feminist film theory to frame how movies, television shows, advertising, and magazines from the 1950s to 1990s manipulated female audiences. Douglas deconstructs the many contradictions inherent in women's relationship with mass media. Female audiences were both manipulated masses and independent thinkers who absorbed contradictory messages that they should be both narcissistic and masochistic. As Douglas explains, "History, including this history, matters. It may help to explain why American women are both mad as hell and yet resigned, at times even happy, to leave things the way they are. This history also helps to explain why so many women are ambivalent about feminism, shunning the label but embracing so many of the precepts. And in the end it reveals why the mass media are both our best allies and our most lethal enemies."⁵⁴⁶

Kim Arkass frames the modern "mommy wars" media onslaught as a reincarnation of the backlash Faludi described. The typical conflict, which pitches stay-at-home mothers against working mothers in a "battle" between opposing mothering styles, is one manifestation of the backlash that arises whenever women are perceived as enjoying too much progress into "male domains."⁵⁴⁷ Arkass builds upon Faludi by arguing that modern media reports reanimate and consolidate preexisting misogynist beliefs about women's perceived "place" in the home. Similar to previous backlash efforts, the practice of pitting women against women in a fantastic battle of mothering choices distracts from the true and meaningful issues modern women face, like lack of

⁵⁴⁶ Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1994), 20.

⁵⁴⁷ Kim Arkass, "Motherhood and the Media under the Microscope: The Backlash against Feminism and the Mommy Wars," *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies* 4, no. 2 (2013): 47-69.

maternity leave, inadequate childcare options, wage inequality, workplace sexism, and employment rights.

Conclusion

The movement of mothers into the workforce was one of the most momentous shifts in American social organization in modern history. Today, it is typical for mothers to work outside the home and it is often taken for granted that they bear the brunt of housework, manage the needs of their children, and fulfill the demands of employers. Women's right to work was the outcome of decades of major economic and political changes that made dual-earner families the standard. Women's opportunity to find *fulfilling* work was the result of decades of activism by advocates of maternal employment. Still, for every champion of workplace equality was an adversary that counseled women back into the home. As Lee R. Edwards observed, "where values clash, heroic types conflict."⁵⁴⁸ Mass media chronicled and encouraged conflicts that pit the stay-at-home Supermom against the stay-at-work Superwoman. This thesis explores how mass media reinforced and denounced one of the greatest social transformations in American history.

⁵⁴⁸ Edwards, *Psyche as Hero*, 4.

Bibliography

- Abramovitz, Mimi. *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present*. Boston: South End Press, 1999.
- Adams, Dwight. "Reaction to Indiana's New Abortion Restrictions." *The Indianapolis Star*, March 24, 2016. <http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2016/03/24/reaction-indianas-new-abortion-restrictions/82230984/>.
- "Aghast at Writers." *USA Today*, May 20, 1992, 10A.
- "A 'Natural' Woman?" *USA Today*, May 20, 1992, page 10A.
- Anderson, James. "Angela Davis talk at SIUC on Feb. 13, 2014." Filmed February 13, 2014. YouTube video, 56:45. Posted on February 16, 2014. <http://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/chicago-turabian/youtube-video/>.
- Andrews, Bart. *The "I Love Lucy" Book*. New York: Doubleday, 1985.
- Alcorn, Katrina. *Maxed Out: American Moms on the Brink*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2013.
- Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. Directed by Martin Scorsese. 1975. Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1988. Videocassette.
- Alley, Robert S., and Irby B. Brown. *Love Is All Around: The Making of The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. New York: Delta, 1989.
- Alley, Robert S., and Irby B. Brown. *Murphy Brown: Anatomy of a Sitcom*. New York: Delta, 1990, 204.
- American Association of University Women. *How Schools Shortchange Girls*. Researched by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, 1992. <http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/how-schools-shortchange-girls-executive-summary.pdf>.
- American Association of University Women. *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*. Researched by Greenberg-Lake, 1991. <http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/shortchanging-girls-shortchanging-america-executive-summary.pdf>.

- American Association of University Women. "The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap." Spring 2017. <http://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>.
- Anderson, Julie. "Breadwinner Mothers by Race/Ethnicity and State." Quick Figures, IWPR #Q054. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016. <http://iwpr.org/publications/pubs/breadwinner-mothers-by-race-ethnicity-and-state>.
- Anonymous. *The Modern Mother's Handbook: How to Raise a Happy, Healthy, Smart, Disciplined and Interesting Child, Starting from Birth*. New York: Bleecker Street Publishing, 2015.
- An Unmarried Woman*. Directed by Paul Mazursky. 1977. Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2005. Videodisc.
- Arendell, Terry. "Conceiving and Investigating Motherhood: A Decade's Research." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62 (2000): 1192-1207.
- Arkass, Kim. "Motherhood and the Media under the Microscope: The Backlash against Feminism and the Mommy Wars." *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies* 4, no. 2 (2013): 47-69.
- Armstrong, Cory L., ed. *Media Disparity: A Gender Battleground*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013.
- Associated Press. "Indiana Governor OKs Fetal Defects Abortion Ban." March 24, 2016. <http://www.wndu.com/content/news/Indiana-governor-signs-bill-banning-abortion-sought-because-of-fetal-genetic-abnormalities-373416261.html>.
- Astrachan, Anthony. *How Men Feel: Their Response to Women's Demands for Equality and Power*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1986.
- Atkins, Patricia, and Pamela Blumenthal, Adrienne Edisis, Alec Friedhoff, Leah Curran, Lisa Lowry, Travis St. Clair, Howard Wial, and Harold Wolman. "Responding to Manufacturing Job Loss: What Can Economic Development Policy Do?" The Brookings Institution, June 2011. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/06_manufacturing_job_loss.pdf.
- Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1986.
- Baby Boom*. Directed by Charles Shyer. 1987. Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2001. Videodisc.
- Bagdikian, Ben H. "Who Is Sabotaging Day Care for Our Children?" *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1966, 86+.

- Bailey, Lucy. "Bridging Home and Work in the Transition to Motherhood: A Discursive Study." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 7 (2000): 53-70.
- Barnes, Riché Jeneen Daniel. "Black Women Have Always Worked: Is There a Work-Family Conflict among the Black Middle Class?" In *The Changing Landscape of Work and Family in the American Middle Class: Reports From the Field*, edited by Elizabeth Rudd and Lara Descartes. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008.
- Basit, Tehmina N. "'I'd Hate to Be Just a Housewife': Career Aspirations of British Muslim Girls." *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 24 (1996): 227-242.
- Bassett, Laura. "Donald Trump Taps Anti-Contraceptive Activist to Oversee Family Planning Program." *Huffington Post*, May 1, 2017.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/teresa-manning-contraception-hhs_us_5907582ae4b05c397680d921.
- Bathrick, Serafina. "*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*: Women at Home and at Work." In *MTM: Quality Television*, edited by Jane Feuer, Paul Kerr, and Tise Vahimagi. London: British Film Institute, 1984.
- "The Battle of the Sexes Is Over. Who Won? We Did." *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1967, 66+.
- Bauer, Gary L. "The Family: Preserving America's Future: a Report to the President from the White House Working Group on the Family," Washington, DC: The Working Group, 1986.
- Belkin, Lisa. "Bars to Equality of Sexes Seen as Eroding, Slowly." *New York Times*, August 20, 1989.
- Benjamin, Lois. "How to Be a Working Mother without Really Crying." *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1966, 101+.
- Benjamin, Lois, and Arthur Henley. "What Every Mother Owes Her Child and Herself." *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1966, 133+.
- Bennett, Tony. "Putting Policy into Cultural Studies." In *What Is Cultural Studies?*, edited by John Storey. London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996.
- Bergen, Candice. *A Fine Romance*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015.
- Bernard, Jessie S. *Women, Wives and Mothers: Values and Options*. Chicago: Aldine, 1975.
- Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

- Bertrand, Marianne, Claudia Goldin, and Lawrence F. Katz. "Dynamics of the Gender Gap for Young Professionals in the Financial and Corporate Sectors." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 2, no. 3 (2010): 228-255.
- Bianchi, Suzanne M. "Family Change and Time Allocation in American Families." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 638 (2011): 21-44.
- Bianchi, Suzanne M., John P. Robinson, and Melissa A. Milkie. *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006.
- Bird, Caroline. "Myths that Keep Women Down," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1971, 68+.
- Blackwelder, Julia Kirk. *Now Hiring: The Feminization of Work in the United States, 1900-1995*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1997.
- Block, Libbie. "The Two Sides of the Door," *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1973, 86, 120+.
- Block, Libbie. "Certain Secret," *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 1973, 104-110.
- Boeth, Richard. "Gloria Steinem: The New Woman," *Newsweek*, August 16, 1971, 51-55.
- "Bored? Ridiculous." *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1967, 8.
- Bost, Brent. *The Hurried Woman Syndrome: A Seven-Step Program to Conquer Fatigue, Control Weight, and Restore Passion to Your Relationship*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.
- Boston Women's Health Collective. "Defending Yourself against Rape, Our Bodies, Ourselves," *Ladies' Home Journal*, July 1973, 62.
- Boushey, Heather, and Ann O'Leary, eds. *The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2009.
- Bradley, Patricia. *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism, 1963-1975*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003.
- Breines, Wini. *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Breslin, Jimmy, and Tom Robbins. "Women We Love 1992." *Esquire*, August 1992, 79+.

- Butler-Bowdon, Tom. *The Literature of Possibility*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2013.
- Cage, Joan. "The Wallace Women." *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 1972, 98+.
- Calhoun, W. Rochelle, Jill Dolan, and Sanjeev Kulkarni. "Message to Students." Princeton University, July 8, 2016. <https://inclusive.princeton.edu/recent-events-072016>.
- Calvacca, Lorraine. "Forbidden Four." *Folio*, 15 (October 1993): 25.
- Cancian, Francesca M., and Bonnie L. Ross. "Mass Media and the Women's Movement: 1900-1977." *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 17 (1981): 9-26.
- Carson, Mary. "The Girl in the Miracle Room." *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1972, 70+.
- Carter, John Mack. "Editor's Diary," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1972, 9.
- Carter, John Mack. "Editor's Introduction." *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1970, 63.
- Case, Anne C., I-Fen Lin, and Sara S. McLanahan. "Explaining Trends in Child Support: Economic, Demographic, and Policy Effects." *Demography* 40, no. 1 (February 2003): 171-189.
- Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*. London: Hutchinson 1982.
- Chappell, Marisa. *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- Charen, Mona. "Sitcoms Treat Unwed Motherhood as Laughing Matter." *The Cincinnati Post*, October 3, 1991, 15A.
- Chira, Susan. *A Mother's Place: Taking the Debate about Working Mothers Beyond Guilt and Blame*. New York: Harper, 1998.
- Christopher, Karen. "Extensive Mothering: Employed Mothers' Constructions of the Good Mother." *Gender & Society* 26 (2012): 73-96.
- Cobble, Dorothy Sue. *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about

- Motherhood.” In *Representations of Motherhood*, edited by Donna Bassin and Margaret Honey. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Cook, Ellen Piel. “The Gendered Context of Life: Implications for Women’s and Men’s Career-Life Plans.” *Career Development Quarterly* 41 (1993): 227-237.
- Coontz, Stephanie. *Marriage, A History*. London: Penguin Books, 2005.
- Coste, Françoise. “‘Women, Ladies, Girls, Gals’: Ronald Reagan and the Evolution of Gender Roles in the United States.” *Miranda* 12 (2016): 1-17.
- Cowan, Connell, and Melvin Kinder. *Smart Women/Foolish Choices*. New York: Signet, 1986.
- Craigen, Katherine L. E. “Eating Disorder Pathology in First Year Female College Students: The Role of Self-Objectification, Thin Ideal Internalization, and the Superwoman Ideal.” PhD dissertation, Fairleigh Dickinson University, 2013. ProQuest 3573873.
- “Custody: Kramer vs. Reality,” *Time*, February 4, 1980, 77.
- Davis, Flora. *Moving the Mountain: The Women’s Movement in America since 1960*. New York: Touchstone, 1991.
- Dempsey, Kenneth C. “Increasing the Workload of the Overloaded Housewife.” *Journal of Family Studies* 4 (1998): 3-20.
- Desilver, Drew. “Women Have Long History in Congress, but Until Recently There Haven’t Been Many.” Pew Research Center, January 14, 2015. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/01/14/women-have-long-history-in-congress-but-until-recently-there-havent-been-many/>.
- De Vries, Hilary. “Laughing Off the Recession All the Way to the Bank.” *New York Times Magazine*, January 3, 1993.
- Diary of a Mad Housewife*. Directed by Frank Perry. 1970. New York: Goodtimes Video, 1987. Videocassette.
- Dolan, Mary Anne. “When Feminism Failed.” *New York Times Magazine*, June 26, 1988. <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/06/26/magazine/when-feminism-failed.html?pagewanted=all>.
- Dominick, Joseph R. “The Portrayal of Women in Prime Time: 1953-1977.” *Sex Roles* 5 (1979): 405-411.

- Douglas, Susan J. *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*. New York: Random House, 1994.
- Dow, Bonnie J. *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement since 1970*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
- Drucker, Susan J., and Robert S. Cathcart, eds. *American Heroes in a Media Age*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 1994.
- Duffy, J.P., and Alice Chao. "Family Research Council Applauds Pres. Trump's Executive Order Restoring Policy against Funding Foreign Abortion Groups." Family Research Council, January 23, 2017. <http://www.frc.org/newsroom/family-research-council-applauds-pres-trumps-executive-order-restoring-policy-against-funding-foreign-abortion-groups>.
- Dunn, Elizabeth. "The Incompetence of Candy." *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 1952, 44+.
- Economic Policy Institute. *Upper Tail Inequality Growing Steadily: Men's Wage Inequality, 1973-2009*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, May 11, 2011. <http://www.stateofworkingamerica.org/charts/view/192>.
- "Editors and Contributors." *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1965, 12.
- "Editor's Diary," *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1973, 4.
- "Editor's Diary," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1972, 9.
- "Editor's Diary." *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1964, 12.
- "Editor's Diary." *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 1971, 4.
- "Editor's Diary." *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1966, 6.
- "Editor's Note." *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1969, 93.
- "Editor's Note." *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1970, 82.
- Edwards, Lee R. *Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and Fictional Form*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara, and Deirdre English. *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women*. New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1979.
- Eilperin, Juliet. "Trump Picks Antiabortion Activist to Head HHS Family Planning Section." *Washington Post*, May 2, 2017.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2017/05/01/trump-picks-antiabortion-activist-to-head-hhs-family-planning-program/?utm_term=.c1cacb26801c.

Ellingson, Marnie. "Women's Lib, the Tooth Fairy, and Other Myths," *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1971, 116, 184-87.

Ely, Robin, Pamela Stone, and Colleen Ammerman. "Rethink What You 'Know' about High-Achieving Women." *Harvard Business Review* 92, no. 12 (2014): 101-109.

Eunson, Dale. "Tiger," *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1972, 123.

Eunson, Dale. "The Wise Child," *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1973, 56-61.

"Everything You Wanted to Know about Advertising and Were Not Afraid to Ask— Personal Report from Ms." *Ms. Magazine*, November 1974, 58.

Eyer, Diane E. *Motherguilt: How Our Culture Blames Mothers For What's Wrong with Society*. New York: Crown Publishing Group, 1996.

Fair, Marci. *TILT - 7 Solutions To Be A Guilt-Free Working Mom*. Lawrenceville, GA: Pacochel Press, 2014.

Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1991.

Farrell, Amy Erdman. "From a Tarantula on a Banana Boat to a Canary in a Mine: 'Ms. Magazine' as a Cautionary Tale in a Neoliberal Age." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 393-405.

"Feminist Forum." *Newsweek*, November 8, 1971, 104.

Feuer, Jane. "Genre Study and Television." In *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd edition, edited by Robert C. Allen. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

Fiske, John. "British Cultural Studies and Television." In *What Is Cultural Studies?*, edited by John Storey. London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996.

Fiske, John. *Media Matters: Everyday Culture and Political Change*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Fleming, Anne Taylor. "The Infertile Sisterhood: When the Last Hope Fails." *New York Times*, March 15, 1988.

- Fouhy, Beth. "A New Version of the ERA." *CNN*, August 25, 1999.
<http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/stories/1999/08/25/fouhy.maloney/>.
- "4-D or Not 4-D." *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1964, 6-8, 34-37.
- Frances, Evan. "How America Lives," *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1972–March 1973.
- Francis, Becky. "Is the Future Really Female? The Impact and Implications of Gender For 14-16 Year Olds' Career Choices." *Journal of Education and Work* 15 (2002): 75-88.
- Franzwa, Helen H. "Female Roles in Women's Magazine Fiction, 1940-1970." In *Woman: Dependent or Independent Variable*, eds., Rhoda Kesler Unger and Florence L. Denmark. New York: Psychological Dimensions, 1975.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1963.
- Friedan, Betty. "Have Housewives Traded Brains for Brooms?" *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1963, 24+.
- Friedan, Betty. "How Mrs. Gandhi Shattered the Feminine Mystique." *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1966, 100+.
- Friedan, Betty. "Woman: The Fourth Dimension." *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1964, 47-55.
- Friedman, Noah. "Ivanka Trump Defends Her Father's Relationship with Women during a Panel with Angela Merkel." *Business Insider*, April 25, 2017.
<http://www.businessinsider.com/ivanka-trump-defends-fathers-relationship-women-merkel-panel-trump-germany-g20-2017-4>.
- Frone, Michael R., Marcia Russell, and Grace M. Barnes. "Work-Family Conflict, Gender and Health-Related Outcomes: A Study of Employed Parents in Two Community Samples." *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 1, no. 1 (1996): 57-69.
- Frow, John, and Meaghan Morris. "Australian Cultural Studies." In *What Is Cultural Studies?*. Edited by John Storey. London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996.
- Gary, Romain. "Twilight of the Goddess." *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1965, 90-91.
- Gates, Bill, and Melinda Gates. "Our 2016 Annual Letter." The Gates Notes LLC, February 22, 2016. <https://www.gatesnotes.com/2016-Annual-Letter>.
- Gibbs, Nancy. "Making Time for Baby." *Time*, April 15, 2002, 48.

- Gibson, Gwen. "One Woman Can Make the Difference: A Blueprint for Day Care Action." *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1966, 62+.
- Gillespie, Rebecca, and Hollee Temple. *Good Enough Is the New Perfect: Finding Happiness and Success in Modern Motherhood*. Ontario, Canada: Harlequin Nonfiction, 2011.
- Gilroy, Paul. *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*. London: Hutchinson, 1987.
- Gitlin, Martin. *The Greatest Sitcoms of All Time*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2014.
- Glazer-Raymo, Judith. *Shattering the Myths: Women in Academe*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Goldin, Claudia. *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Goldin, Claudia. "The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family." *American Economic Review* 96, no. 2 (2006): 1-21.
- Goldin, Claudia, and Lawrence F. Katz. "The Cost of Workplace Flexibility for High-Powered Professionals." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 638, no. 1 (2011): 45-67.
- Goodman, Ellen. "A Decade of Change: From Supermom to Superwoman." *Boston Globe*, December 20, 1979, 19.
- Goodman, Ellen. "Supermother, Updated." *Washington Post*, May 7, 1976, A27.
- Goulden, Joseph C. *The Curtis Chapter*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965.
- Graham, Billy. "Jesus and the Liberated Woman." *Ladies' Home Journal*, December 1970, 40+.
- Grant, Toni. *Being a Woman: Fulfilling Your Femininity and Finding Love*. New York: Random House, 1988.
- Gray, Paul. "The Man Who Loved Children: Dr. Benjamin Spock (1903-1998)." *Time*, March 30, 1998, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,988061,00.html>.
- Greene, Richard. "Is Donald Trump Mentally Ill? 3 Professors of Psychiatry Ask President Obama to Conduct 'A Full Medical and Neuropsychiatric Evaluation.'" *Huffington Post*, 17 December 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-greene/is-donald-trump-mentally_b_13693174.html.

- Grigoriadis, Vanessa. "Baby Panic." *New York Magazine*, May 13, 2002, <http://nymag.com/nymetro/urban/family/features/6030/>.
- "G-20 Members Launch New Grouping to Empower Women for Economic Growth." *The Oslo Times*, September 6, 2015. <http://www.theoslotimes.com/article/g-20-members-launch-new-grouping-to-empower-women-for-economic-growth>.
- Guynn, Jessica. "Sheryl Sandberg: Four Years after 'Lean In' Women Are Not Better Off." *USA Today*, March 29, 2017. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2017/03/29/sheryl-sandberg-interview-lean-in-four-years-later/99749464/>.
- Halberstam, David. *The Fifties*. New York: Villiard Books, 1993.
- Hall, Stuart. "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular.'" In *People's History and Socialist Theory*, edited by Raphael Samuel. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981.
- Hall, Stuart. "Race, Culture, and Communications: Looking Backward and Forward at Cultural Studies." In *What Is Cultural Studies?*, edited by John Storey. London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996.
- Hamamoto, Darrell. *Nervous Laughter: Television Situation Comedy and Liberal Democratic Ideology*. New York: Praeger, 1989.
- Hanisch, Carol. "The Personal is Political." In *Notes From the Second Year: Women's Liberation*, edited by Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt. New York: Radical Feminism, 1970.
- Haralovich, Mary Beth. "Sit-coms and Suburbs: Positioning the 1950s Homemaker." In *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, edited by Denise Mann and Lynn Spigel. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- Hare-Mustin, Rachel T., and Patricia C. Broderick. "The Myth of Motherhood: A Study of Attitudes toward Motherhood." *A Psychology of Women Q.* 4 (Winter 1979): 114-128.
- Harp, Dustin, Ingrid Bachmann, and Jaime Loke. "Where are the Women? The Presence of Female Columnists in U.S. Opinion Pages." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 91, no. 2 (2014): 289-307.
- Harris, Mary B., and Sara D. Voorhees. "Sex Role Stereotypes and Televised Models of Emotion." *Psychological Reports* 48 (1981): 683-688.
- Hart, Kathleen, and Maureen E. Kenny. "Adherence to the Super Woman Ideal and Eating Disorder Symptoms among College Women." *Sex Roles* 36 (1997): 461-478.

- Harvard Kennedy School. "Gender Inequality: A Comparative View of the Challenges Ahead with Mary Brinton and Claudia Goldin." *Women and Public Policy Program Seminar Series*, podcast audio. November 20, 2015, <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/women-public-policy-program/id912437208?mt=2>.
- "Having It All: Postponing Parenthood Exacts a Price." *Boston Magazine*, May 1987.
- Hays, Sharon. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Herbert, Elizabeth S. "When the Homemaker Goes to Work." *Journal of Home Economics* 44 (April 1952): 257-259.
- Herrera, Ruth S., and Robert L. DelCampo. "Beyond the Superwoman Syndrome: Work Satisfaction and Family Functioning among Working-Class, Mexican-American Women." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 17 (1995): 49-60.
- Hershey, Lenore. *Between the Covers: The Lady's Own Journal*. New York: Coward McCann, 1983.
- Hershey, Lenore. "How Rose Keeps Growing." *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1972, 83-87.
- Hershey, Lenore. "The New Pat Nixon." *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1972, 89+.
- Hewlett, Sylvia Ann. *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*. New York: Hyperion, 2002.
- Hewlett, Sylvia Ann. "Executive Women and the Myth of Having It All." *Harvard Business Review*, April 2002, <https://hbr.org/2002/04/executive-women-and-the-myth-of-having-it-all>.
- Hewlett, Sylvia Ann. *A Lesser Life: The Myth of Women's Liberation in America*. New York: Warner Books, 1986.
- Hewlett, Sylvia Ann, and Ripa Rashid. *Winning the War for Talent: Why Women Are the Solution*. Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2011.
- Hickey, Mary C. "The Quiet Pain of Infertility: For the Success-Oriented, It's a Bitter Pill." *Washington Post*, April 28, 1987.
- Hidalgo, Louise. "Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care at 65." *BBC World Service*, August 23, 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-14534094>.
- Hochschild, Arlie. *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon Books, 1989.

Horowitz, Joy. "On TV, Ms. Macho and Mr. Wimp." *New York Times*, April 19, 1989, 1H.

I Love Lucy. "Job Switching." Season 2, Episode 1. Directed by Marc Daniels. Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, and Bob Carroll Jr. CBS, September 15, 1952.

I Love Lucy. "Lucy Raises Chickens." Season 6, Episode 19. Directed by William Asher. Written by Madelyn Martin, Bob Carroll Jr., Bob Schiller, and Bob Weiskopf. CBS, March 4, 1957.

I Love Lucy. "Men are Messy." Season 1, Episode 8. Directed by Marc Daniels. Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, and Bob Carroll Jr. CBS, December 3, 1951.

Institute of Women's Policy Research. "The Economic Impact of Equal Pay by State." *The Status of Women in the States: 2015*. <https://statusofwomendata.org/featured/the-economic-impact-of-equal-pay-by-state/>.

Institute for Women's Policy Research. "Women's Median Earnings as a Percent of Men's Median Earnings, 1960-2015 (Full-time, Year-round Workers) with Projection for Pay Equity in 2059." September 13, 2016. <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/iwpr-export/publications/Q056.pdf>.

Jagger, Alison M. *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*. Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983.

James, Caryn. "A Baby Boom on TV as Biological Clock Ticks Cruelly Away." *New York Times*, October 16, 1991, B1, B7.

Japp, Phyllis. "Gender and Work in the 1980s: Television's Working Women as Displaced Persons." *Women's Studies in Communication* 14 (1991): 49-74.

Jerome, Jim. "Murphy's Laws." *People*, December 2, 1991, 160-162.

"Jesus and Women: Readers Answer Billy Graham." *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1971, 80-81.

Johnson, Richard. "What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?" In *What Is Cultural Studies?*, edited by John Storey. London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996.

Jong, Erica. *Any Woman's Blues*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.

- Jordon, Eileen Herbert. "Beautiful, Beautiful Me," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1972, 199.
- Juhn, Chinhui, and Simon Potter. "Changes in Labor Force Participation in the United States." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 27-46.
- Kaiser, Kathy. "The New Women's Magazines: It's the Same Old Story." *Frontiers* 4 (1979): 14-17.
- Kalisch, Philip A., and Beatrice J. Kalisch. "The Image of the Nurse in Motion Pictures." *American Journal of Nursing* 82 (1982): 605-611.
- Kalisch, Philip A., and Beatrice J. Kalisch. "Image of Nurses in Novels." *American Journal of Nursing* 82 (1982): 1220-1224.
- Kantrowitz, Barbara. "America's Mothers—Making It Work: How Women Balance the Demands of Jobs and Children." *Newsweek*, March 31, 1986.
- Kates, Jennifer, and Kellie Moss. "What Is the Scope of the Mexico City Policy: Assessing Abortion Laws in Countries That Receive U.S. Global Health Assistance." Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, May 03, 2017. <http://kff.org/global-health-policy/issue-brief/what-is-the-scope-of-the-mexico-city-policy-assessing-abortion-laws-in-countries-that-receive-u-s-global-health-assistance/>.
- Kelly, Gwyneth. "Jimmy Carter's Most Important Legacy: Female Judges." *New Republic*, August 13, 2015. <https://newrepublic.com/article/122538/jimmy-carters-most-important-legacy-female-judges>.
- Kent, Druzilla C. "Homemaking in the Defense Decades." *Journal of Home Economics* 44 (April 1952): 13-18.
- Kessler-Harris, Alice. *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Khazan, Olga. "Tom Price: 'Not One' Woman Struggled to Afford Birth Control." *The Atlantic*, November 29, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/11/tom-price-not-one-woman-cant-afford-birth-control/509003/>.
- Kirchwey, Freda. "A Woman's Magazine and Why." *The Suffragist* 9, no. 1 (1921): 356.
- Kobler, John. "Here's Child Care for Every Working Mother." *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1966, 34+.

- Kramer vs. Kramer*. Directed by Robert Benton. 1979. Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures. Amazon Video.
- Kreps, Juanita M., ed. *Women and the American Economy: A Look to the 1980s*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976.
- Lachance-Grzela, Mylène, and Geneviève Bouchard. "Why Do Women Do the Lion's Share of Housework? A Decade of Research." *Sex Roles* 63, no. 11 (2010): 767-780.
- "Ladies' Home Journal Women of the Year 1973," *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1973, 67+.
- Leibman, Nina. *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995.
- Leo, John. "Bias, Bias Everywhere." *U.S. News & World Report*, March 16, 1992.
- Leo, John. "Toxic Feminism on the Big Screen." *U.S. News & World Report*, July 10, 1991.
- Leonard, John. "The Subversive Mary Tyler Moore," *Life*, December 18, 1970, 8.
- Lepore, Meredith. "10 Famous Women on 'Having it All.'" *Levo League*, May 24, 2013. <https://www.levo.com/posts/famous-women-having-it-all>.
- Levitt, Leonard. "She: The Awesome Power of Gloria Steinem," *Esquire*, October 1971, 88-90+.
- Levy, Ariel. *The Rules Do Not Apply*. New York: Random House, 2017.
- Levy, Sherry. "Meet the World's First Woman Rabbi," *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1972, 75.
- Lim, In-Sook. "Korean Immigrant Women's Challenge to Gender Inequality at Home: The Interplay of Economic Resources, Gender, and Family." *Gender and Society* 11, no. 1 (1997): 31-51.
- Lindzon, Jared. "There Are Now More Fortune 500 Companies with All-Male Boards Than in 2015." *Fortune*, March 28, 2016. <http://fortune.com/2016/03/28/fortune-500-all-male-board-2016/>.
- "Live Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Divorces: 1960 to 2007." U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2011, page 65.

- Long, Lori K. *The Parent's Guide to Family-Friendly Work: Finding the Balance Between Employment and Enjoyment*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 2007.
- Lopata, Helena Znaniecki. *Occupation Housewife*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Lydon, Christopher. "The Pro-Life View: 30 Years after Roe v. Wade." *The Connection, NPR/WBUR Boston*. Boston: MA. January 14, 2003.
<http://archives.wbur.org/theconnection/2003/01/14/the-pro-life-view-30-years-after-roe-v-wade.html>.
- Macko, Lia, and Kerry Rubin. *Midlife Crisis at 30: How the Stakes Have Changed for a New Generation—and What to Do about It*. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Mannes, Marya. "The Happiest Day." *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1964, 24+.
- Mansbridge, Jane J. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Marc, David, and Robert J. Thompson. *Prime Time, Prime Movers*. New York: Little, Brown, 1992.
- Marcos, Cristina. "115th Congress Will Be Most Racially Diverse in History." *The Hill*, November 17, 2016. <http://thehill.com/homenews/house/306480-115th-congress-will-be-most-racially-diverse-in-history>.
- "Marriages, Divorces, and Rates: United States, 1867-1967." U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, December 1973, page 22.
- Martin, Courtney E. *Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: The Frightening New Normalcy of Hating Your Body*. New York: Free Press, 2007.
- Mary Tyler Moore. "Love Is All Around." Season 1, Episode 1. Directed by Jay Sandrich. Written by James L. Brooks and Allan Burns. CBS, September 19, 1970.
- Maybe, Judith. "The Woman at the Keyhole: Women's Cinema and Feminist Film Criticism." In *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, edited by Mary Anne Doane, Linda Williams, and Patricia Mellencamp. Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1984.
- McCarthy, Mary. Review of *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood. *New York Times*. February 9, 1986.
<http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/03/26/specials/mccarthy-atwood.html>.
- McClam, Tricia, and Lynn M. Blinn. "Interpersonal Lives in the Future: Projections of Undergraduate Women." *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 66 (1988): 71-78.

- McGinn, Kathleen L., Mayra Ruiz Castro, and Elizabeth Long Lingo. "Mums the Word! Cross-national Effects of Maternal Employment on Gender Inequalities at Work and at Home." Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 15-094. June 2015.
- McGinley, Phyllis. "Wives and the Moonlight Adventure." *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1964, 30-32.
- McNeil, Jean C. "Imagery of Women in T.V. Drama: Some Procedural and Interpretive Issues." *Journal of Broadcasting* 19 (1975): 283-288.
- McRobbie, Angela. *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Mead, Rebecca. "Margaret Atwood, the Prophet of Dystopia." *New Yorker*, April 2017. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/17/margaret-atwood-the-prophet-of-dystopia>.
- Meehan, Diana. *Ladies of the Evening: Women Characters of Prime-Time Television*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1983.
- Mensingher, Janell, Deanne Bonifazi, and Judith LaRosa. "Perceived Gender Role Prescriptions in Schools, the Superwoman Ideal, and Disordered Eating among Adolescent Girls." *Sex Roles* 57, no. 7 (2007): 557-568.
- Mercer, Marilyn. "Gloria: The Unhidden Persuader," *McCall's*, January 1972, 68.
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2004.
- "The MetLife Study of Caregiving Costs to Working Caregivers: Double Jeopardy for Baby Boomers Caring for Their Parents." New York: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, June 2011.
- Meyerowitz, Joanne. "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958." *Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (1993): 1456-1457.
- Meyerowitz, Joanne. "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958." In *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, edited by Joanne Meyerowitz. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
- Michel, Sonya. *Children's Interests/Mothers' Rights: The Shaping of America's Child Care Policy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Miller, Harlan. "There's a Man in the House." *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1952, 11+.

- Milli, Jessica, Yixuan Huang, Heidi Hartmann, and Jeff Hayes. "The Impact of Equal Pay on Poverty and the Economy." Institute for Women's Policy Research. April 5, 2017.
- Milkie, Melissa A., Sarah M. Kendig, Kei M. Nomaguchi, and Kathleen E. Denny. "Time with Children, Children's Well-Being, and Work-Family Balance among Employed Parents." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72, no. 5 (2010): 1329-1343.
- "Mixed Messages." *USA Today*, May 20, 1992, 10A.
- "The Modern Task of Homemaking." U.S. President's Commission on the Status of Women. Report of the Committee on Home and Community. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 1963.
- Moen, Phyllis. *Women's Two Roles: A Contemporary Dilemma*. New York: Auburn House, 1992.
- Montague, Ashley. "The Natural Superiority of Women." *Ladies' Home Journal*, July 1952, 61+.
- Morris, Monica. "Newspapers and the New Feminism: Black Out as Social Control." *Journalism Quarterly* 50 (1973): 37-42.
- Morris, William, ed. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.
- Morris, Willie. "The Last of the Southern Girls." *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1973, 137+.
- Murphy Brown*. "Birth 101." Season 4, Episode 26. Directed by Barnet Kellman. Written by Diane English and Korby Siamis. CBS, May 18, 1992.
- Murphy Brown*. "Devil with a Blue Dress." Season 1, Episode 2. Directed by Barnet Kellman. Written by Diane English and Korby Siamis. CBS, November 21, 1988.
- Murphy Brown*. "The Strike." Season 2, Episode 12. Directed by Barnet Kellman. Written by Diane English, Gary Dontzig, and Steven Peterman. CBS, December 11, 1989.
- Murphy Brown*. "The Unshrinkable Murphy Brown." Season 1, Episode 19. Directed by Barnet Kellman. Written by Diane English, Sy Dukane, and Denise Moss. CBS, May 1, 1989.

- Murphy Brown*. "You Say Potatoe, I Say Potato." Season 5, Episode 2. Directed by Peter Bonerz. Written by Diane English, Gary Dontzig, Steven Peterman, and Korby Siamis. CBS, September 21, 1992.
- "Murphy Is Not Reality." *USA Today*, May 20, 1992, 10A.
- My Brilliant Career*. Directed by Gill Armstrong. 1979. West Hollywood, CA: Blue Underground, 2005. Videodisc.
- Myerson, Abraham. *The Nervous Housewife*. Boston: Little Brown, 1920.
- Nava, Mica. "Consumerism and Its Contradictions." *Cultural Studies* 1 (May 1987): 209-10.
- New York Magazine*. "Working Moms React to Ivanka Trump's Women Who Work." YouTube video, 01:55. Posted May 17, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHVU_06rGrI .
- New York Women's Collective. "Help Wanted: Female." *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1970, 67-68.
- New York Women's Collective. "The New Feminism." *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1970, 64-71.
- 9 to 5*. Directed by Colin Higgins. 1980. Beverly Hills, CA: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2006. Videodisc.
- Nixon, Patricia Ryan. "The Power of a Woman." *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1969, 93+.
- "Nobelist Yalow Refuses Sex-Rated Award." *The Decatur Daily Review*, July 8, 1978, 4.
- Nye, Francis Ivan, and Lois Wladis Hoffman. *The Employed Mother in America*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963.
- N.W. Ayer and Son's Directory: Newspapers and Periodicals 1952*. Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer and Son, 1952.
- 1972 Ayer Directory of Publications*. Philadelphia: Ayers Press, 1972.
- O'Connor, John. "The Liberation of the Virgin Mary," *Ladies' Home Journal*, December 1972, 75+.
- O'Connor, John. "Should the Pope Resign?" *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1973, 90+.

- Olen, Helaine. "A Truce in the 'Mommy Wars.'" *Salon*, March 15, 2006, http://www.salon.com/2006/03/15/mommy_wars/.
- Oppenheimer, Jess, and Gregg Oppenheimer. *Laughs, Luck... and Lucy: How I Came to Create the Most Popular Sitcom of All Time*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996.
- O'Reilly, Jane. "The Housewife's Moment of Truth." *Ms. Magazine*, Spring 1972, 54.
- "Our Readers Write Us." *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1964, 32.
- "Our Readers Write Us." *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1964, 12.
- Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Painter, Charlotte. "The Perfect Day-Care Home for Tommy." *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 1966, 72+.
- Parker, Kim. "Women More Than Men Adjust Their Careers For Family Life." Pew Research Center, October 1, 2015. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/10/01/women-more-than-men-adjust-their-careers-for-family-life/>.
- Parker, Kim, and Wendy Wang. "Modern Parenthood: Roles of Moms and Dads Converge as They Balance Work and Family." Pew Research Center, March 14, 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/03/14/modern-parenthood-roles-of-moms-and-dads-converge-as-they-balance-work-and-family/>.
- Parsons, Talcott, and Robert F. Bales. *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process*. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1955.
- Peirce, Kate. "Women's Magazine Fiction: A Content Analysis of the Roles, Attributes, and Occupations of Main Characters." *Sex Roles* 37 (1997): 581-593.
- "Percent of Total Population Living in Metropolitan Areas and in Their Central Cities and Suburbs: 1910 to 2000." In "Demographic Trends in the 20th Century." U.S. Census Bureau, November 2002.
- "Personal Report from Ms." *Ms. Magazine*, July 1972, 7.
- Peskowitz, Miriam. *The Truth Behind the Mommy Wars: Who Decides What Makes a Good Mother?* Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2005.
- Peters, Theodore. *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1964.

- Phillips, Susan D. and Anne R. Imhoff. "Women and Career Development: A Decade of Research." *Annual Review of Psychology* 48 (1997): 31-59.
- Poczter, Sharon. "For Women in the Workplace, It's Time to Abandon 'Have it All' Rhetoric." *Forbes*, June 25, 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2012/06/25/for-women-in-the-workplace-its-time-to-abandon-have-it-all-rhetoric/>.
- Pogrebin, Abigail. "How Do You Spell Ms." *New York*, November 7, 2011, 104.
- Pogrebin, Letty Cottin. "The Working Woman," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1972, 46.
- Pogrebin, Letty Cottin. "The Working Woman," *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1973, 62.
- Pogrebin, Letty Cottin. "The Working Woman," *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1972, 32.
- Pollitt, Katha. *Reasonable Creatures: Essays on Women and Feminism*. New York: Knopf, 1994.
- "The Power of a Woman: Women in the 70s: A Journal Panel Looks into the Future." *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1970, 54+.
- Press, Andrea. *Women Watching Television: Class, Gender, and Generation in the American Television Experience*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.
- Private Benjamin*. Directed by Howard Zieff. 1980. Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1997. Videodisc.
- Przybyla, Heidi M., and Fredreka Schouten. "At 2.6 Million Strong, Women's Marches Crush Expectations." *USA TODAY*, 21 January 2017. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/01/21/womens-march-aims-start-movement-trump-inauguration/96864158/>.
- Puglise, Nicole. "'Pussy grabs back' becomes rallying cry for female rage against Trump." *The Guardian*, 10 October 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/oct/10/donald-trump-pussy-grabs-back-meme-women-twitter>.
- Quadlin, Natasha, and Long Doan. "Sex and Gender More Important Than Income in Determining Views on Division of Chores." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association 111th Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, August 21, 2016. https://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2016-08/asa-sag081616.php.
- Ray, Lovelle. "The American Women in the Mass Media: How Much Emancipation and What Does It Mean." In *Toward a Sociology of Women*, edited by Constantina

- Safilios-Rothschild. Lexington, Massachusetts: Xerox Publishing Company, 1972.
- Reflect. "Scarlett Johansson's Speech at The Women's March on Washington." YouTube video, 08:33, posted January 21, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6ofCjjUz-Q>.
- Rhodes, Joe. "When Baby Makes Two." *TV Guide*, September 19, 1992, 6-10.
- Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: Bantam, 1977.
- Robbins, Jhan, and June Robbins. "One City that Cares Enough to Make Every Mother's Day Care Dream Come True." *Ladies' Home Journal*, July 1966, 71+.
- Roberts, Priscilla, and Peter M. Newton. "Levinsonian Studies of Women's Adult Development." *Psychology and Aging* 2, no. 2 (1987): 154-163.
- Robinson, John P., and Melissa A. Milkie. "Back to Basics: Trends In and Role Determinants of Women's Attitudes toward Housework." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60 (1998): 205-218.
- Rose, Elizabeth. *A Mother's Job: The History of Day Care, 1890-1960*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Rosen, Diane. "TV and the Single Girl," *TV Guide*, November 6, 1971, 14.
- Rosen, Ruth. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. New York: Penguin Group, 2000.
- Rosenblatt, Roger. "Candy Can." *Vanity Fair*, December 1992, 258.
- Rosenthal, Naomi Braun. *Spinster Tales and Womanly Possibilities*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002.
- Rowe-Finkbeiner, Kristin. "Oops, I Forgot to Have Kids." *Bust*, Summer 2002, 44-49.
- Rubin, Nancy. *The New Suburban Woman: Beyond Myth and Motherhood*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geohegan, 1983.
- Rubin, Theodore Isaac. "Dr. Rubin," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1972, 40.
- Rubin, Theodore Isaac. "Fantasies That Make You Happy," *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1973, 26.

- Rubin, Theodore Isaac. "What Women Don't Understand about Men," *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1973, 24.
- Ruggiero, Josephine, and Louise Weston. "Work Options for Women in Women's Magazines: The Medium and the Message." *Sex Roles* 12, no. 5 (1985): 535-547.
- Salholz, Eloise. "The Marriage Crunch: If You're a Single Woman, Here Are Your Chances of Getting Married." *Newsweek*, June 2, 1986.
- Sandberg, Sheryl. *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2013.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Search for a Method*. New York: Random House, 1963.
- Saxbe, Darby E., Rena L. Repetti, and Anthony P. Graesch. "Time Spent in Housework and Leisure: Links with Parents' Physiological Recovery From Work." *Journal of Family Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2011): 271-281.
- Schall, John. "Caregiving Is Forcing Women 50+ To Leave The Workforce." *Forbes*, October 10, 2016.
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2016/10/10/caregiving-is-forcing-women-50-to-leave-the-workforce/#6d4e38b9364d>.
- Scharf, Lois. *To Work and to Wed: Female Employment, Feminism, and the Great Depression*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- Schneider, Barbara, and Linda J. Waite, eds. *Being Together, Working Apart: Dual-Career Families and the Work-Life Balance*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Schulte, Brigid. *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time*. New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2014.
- Schwartz, Barry. "Emerson, Cooley and the American Heroic Vision." *Symbolic Interaction* 8 (Spring 1985): 106-107.
- Scott, Eugene, and Betsy Klein. "German Crowd Hisses, Boos at Ivanka When She Defends Her Dad." *CNN*, April 25, 2017.
<http://www.cnn.com/2017/04/25/politics/ivanka-trump-germany-hisses/>.
- "Scott Pruitt: Controversial Trump Environment Nominee Sworn In." *BBC*, February 18, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39010374>.
- Segal, Harry G., Debra K. DeMeis, Geoffrey A. Wood, and Heidi L. Smith. "Assessing Future Possible Selves by Gender and Socioeconomic Status Using the Anticipated Life History Measure." *Journal of Personality*, 69 (2001): 57-87.

- Seggar, John F. "Imagery of Women in Television Drama: 1974." *Journal of Broadcasting* 19 (1975): 273-282.
- Senator Patty Murray. "Murray, Senate Dems Demand GOP Drop Efforts to 'Rip Apart' Health Care System." YouTube video, 08:47. Posted January 9, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_Sq8aWXy9I&feature=youtu.be.
- Senior, Jennifer. *All Joy and No Fun: The Paradox of Modern Parenthood*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2014.
- Shaevitz, Marjorie Hansen. *The Superwoman Syndrome*. New York: Warner Books, 1984.
- Sharp, Margery. "Conversation on a Train," *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1972, 70.
- Sheehy, Gail. *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974.
- Sheff, David. "Candice Bergen." *Playboy*, December 1989, 62.
- Sherman, Helen, and Marjorie Coe. *The Challenge of Being a Woman*. New York: Harper, 1955.
- Significance Inc. "The American Male Opinion Index," I. New York: Condé Nast Publications, 1988.
- Silvain, Leonore. "Laughing Lucille." *Look*, June 3, 1952.
- "The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap." American Association of University Women. Fall 2016. <http://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>.
- Smith, Dorothy E. "The Standard North American Family: SNAF as Ideological Code." *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (1993): 50-65.
- Smith, Gregory A., and Jessica Martínez. "How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis." Pew Research Center, November 9, 2016. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/>.
- Spar, Debora L. *Wonder Women: Sex, Power, and the Quest for Perfection*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013.
- Sparks, Colin. "The Evolution of Cultural Studies." In *What Is Cultural Studies?*, edited by John Storey. London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996.

- “Spock at 65: Five Ideas That Changed American Parenting.” *Time*, July 14, 2011.
<http://healthland.time.com/2011/07/14/65-years-since-spock-five-ideas-that-changed-american-parenting/photo/baby-feet-mom-hands/>.
- Spock, Benjamin. “Should Mothers Work.” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, January 1963, 16+.
- Spock, Benjamin. “What’s She Got That I Haven’t?” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, October 1952, 195+.
- Stanton, Will. “A Walk in the Rain.” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, September 1972, 122+.
- “The Status Of Women in The U.S. Media.” New York: Women’s Media Center, 2015.
https://wmc.3cdn.net/83bf6082a319460eb1_hsr680x2.pdf.
- Steger, Manfred B. “Religion and Ideology in the Global Age: Analyzing al Qaeda’s Islamist Globalism.” *New Political Science* 31, no. 4 (December 2009): 529-541.
- Stein, Herbert. “Women’s Second Economic Revolution,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, October 1972, 28+.
- Steinberg, Salme Harju. *Reformer in the Marketplace*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.
- Steinem, Gloria. “Sex, Lies, and Advertising.” *Ms. Magazine*, July/August 1990, 19.
- Steiner, Leslie Morgan, ed. *Mommy Wars: Stay-At-Home and Career Moms Face Off on Their Choices, Their Lives, Their Families*. New York: Random House, 2007.
- The Stepford Wives*. Directed by Bryan Forbes. 1975. Hollywood, CA: Paramount DVD, 2004. Videodisc.
- Stone, Pamela. *Opting Out?: Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Storey, John, ed. *What Is Cultural Studies?* London: Hodder Headline Group, 1996.
- Strabel, Thelma. “Second Act.” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, January 1952, 80+.
- Sullivan, Sherry E. “Is There a Time for Everything? Attitudes Related to Women’s Sequencing of Career and Family.” *Career Development Quarterly* 40 (1992): 234-243.
- Swiner, Nicole. “How to Avoid the Superwoman Complex with Nicole Swiner, M.D.” *Your Health*, Chapel Hill, WCHL 97.9FM. August 8, 2015.
- Taylor, Alex. “Why Women Are Bailing Out.” *Fortune*, August 18, 1986.

- Tichi, Cecelia. *Electronic Hearth: Creating an American Television Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Thompson, Dorothy. "What Is Wrong with American Women?" *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1953, 74+.
- Thurer, Shari L. *The Myths of Motherhood: How Culture Reinvents the Good Mother*. London: Penguin Books, 1994.
- Toffler, Alvin. "What Husbands Think," *Ladies' Home Journal*, June 1964, 27-29.
- Tornabene, Lyn. "How America Lives: The Bored Housewife." *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1966, 97+.
- Traister, Rebecca. "Rereading The Handmaid's Tale, One Month into the Trump Era." *The Cut*, February 23, 2017. <https://www.thecut.com/2017/02/rereading-margaret-atwoods-the-handmaids-tale.html>.
- Trump, Donald J. "Presidential Memorandum Regarding the Mexico City Policy." The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, January 23, 2017. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/23/presidential-memorandum-regarding-mexico-city-policy>.
- Trump, Ivanka. *Women Who Work: Rewriting the Rules for Success*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2017.
- Tuchman, Gaye, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet, eds. *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).
- Tuchman, Gaye. *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: Press, 1978, 133-56.
- Tuchman, Gaye. "Women's Depiction by the Mass Media." *Sights 4* (Spring 1979): 530-31.
- The Turning Point*. Directed by William Dieterle. 1977. Beverly Hills, CA: Fox Video, 1993. Videodisc.
- "26 Exciting Parttime Jobs for Women." *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1968, 74+.
- Udall, Ermalee Webb. "The Home Is Not Obsolete." *Ladies' Home Journal*, July 1964, 32+.
- Uffalussy, Jennifer Gerson. "Policy-Makers Speak Out about Tom Price's Stance on Women's Healthcare." *Teen Vogue*, February 1, 2017.

<http://www.teenvogue.com/story/how-tom-price-is-troubling-for-birth-control-access>.

Up the Sandbox. Directed by Irvin Kershner. 1972. Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2003. Videodisc.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Household Data Annual Averages: Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population, 1940 to Date." 2009. <https://www.bls.gov/cps/aa2009/cpsaat1.pdf>.

U.S. Census Bureau. "Table FG1 Married Couple Family Groups, by Labor Force Status of Both Spouses, and Race and Hispanic Origin of the Reference Person." *America's Families and Living Arrangements. Current Population Survey. Annual Social and Economic Supplement*. 2011. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/cps2011.html>.

U.S. Census Bureau. "Table FG10 Family Groups." *America's Families and Living Arrangements. Current Population Survey. Annual Social and Economic Supplement*, 2011, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/cps2011.html>.

U.S. Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau. "Current Population Survey: Subject Definitions." Last revised August 25, 2015. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/subject-definitions.html>.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "American Time Use Survey – 2015 Results," Friday, June 24, 2016, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/atus.pdf>.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Labor Force Participation Rate of Mothers By Age of Youngest Child, 2013 Annual Averages." *Current Population Survey*. 2013. www.dol.gov/wb/stats/laborf_participate_rate_mothers_ychild_2013_txt.htm.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Labor Force Participation Rate of Mothers by Age of Youngest Child, March 1975-2015." *Current Population Survey*. Last updated July 2016. https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/facts_over_time.htm#labor.

U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. *Facts Over Time: Women in the Labor Force*. Last updated July 2016. https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/facts_over_time.htm.

Venker, Suzanne. *The Alpha Female's Guide to Men and Marriage: How Love Works*. Nashville, TN: Post Hill Press, 2017.

- Villani, Sue Lanci, and Jane E. Ryan. *Motherhood at the Crossroads: Meeting the Challenge of a Changing Role*. New York: Insight Books, 1997.
- Virginia Slims. "The 1990 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll." USRSPVASLIMS1989-943-082, Version 4. Produced by the Roper Organization. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. Distributed by RoperExpress.
- Volosinov, Valentin N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.
- Waldman, Elizabeth. "Labor Force Statistics from a Family Perspective." *Monthly Labor Review* 106 (December 1983): 18.
- Wallis, Claudia. "The Case For Staying Home." *Time*, March 22, 2004. http://academics.wellesley.edu/Polisci/Han/Pol199/Syllabus/Moms_Staying_Home.pdf.
- Walsh, Joan. "The Baby Panic." *Salon*, April 23, 2002. http://www.salon.com/2002/04/23/hewlett_book/.
- Wang, Wendy. "The 'Leisure Gap' Between Mothers and Fathers." Pew Research Center. October 17, 2013. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/17/the-leisure-gap-between-mothers-and-fathers/>.
- Waters, Harry F., and Janet Huck. "Networking Women." *Newsweek*, March 13, 1989, 49-52.
- Webster, Noah. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam, 1898.
- Wecter, Dixon. *The Hero in America*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1941.
- Weiss, Jessica. *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Weitzman, Lauren M. "Multiple Role Realism: A Theoretical Framework for the Process of Planning to Combine Career and Family Roles." *Applied & Preventive Psychology* 3, no. 1 (1994): 15-25.
- West, Morris. "The Pope and the Pill: A Modern Tragedy," *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1969, 94+.
- West, Laurel Parker. "Soccer Moms, Welfare Queens, Waitress Moms, and Super Moms: Myths of Motherhood in State Media Coverage of Child Care During the 'Welfare Reforms' of the 1990s." *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal* 25 (2002): 313-345.

- “What’s a Ms.?” *Ms. Magazine*, Spring 1972, 4.
- White, G. M. “Open House in New Hampshire.” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, January 1952, 103+.
- “White House Staff: Alphabetical List, 1981-1989,” Reagan Library Archives.
<https://reaganlibrary.archives.gov/archives/reference/whitehousestaffalpha.htm>.
- Whitney, Dwight. “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby,” *TV Guide*, September 19, 1970, 34-38.
- Whittington, Leslie, Susan L. Averett, and Donna Anderson. “Choosing Children Over Career? Changes in the Postpartum Labor Force Behavior of Professional Women.” *Population Research and Policy Review* 19 (2000): 339-355.
- Whitty, Monica T. “The Myth of the Superwoman: Comparing Young Men’s and Women’s Stories of Their Future Lives.” *Journal of Family Studies* 7 (2001): 87-100.
- “Who Are the Working Mothers?” Women’s Bureau Leaflet 37. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, October, 1970.
- Wiener, Jon. “Margaret Atwood: ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’ in the Age of Trump.” *Start Making Sense, The Nation*, podcast audio. April 26, 2017.
www.thenation.com/article/margaret-atwood-the-handmaids-tale-in-the-age-of-trump/.
- Wilde, Oscar. *Intentions*. Leipzig, Germany: Heinemann and Balestier, 1891.
- Williams, Joan. *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do about It*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Williams, Raymond. *Keywords*. London: Fontana, 1976.
- Willig, John. “Class of ’34 (Female) Fifteen Years Later.” *New York Times*, June 12, 1949.
- Willming, Cynthia, and Heather J. Gibson. “A View of Leisure and Patterns of Family Life in the Late 1990s.” *Society and Leisure* 23 (2000): 121-144.
- “Women Like You and Me in Politics,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, February 1952, 48+.
- “Woman of the Year,” *McCall’s*, January 1972, 67.

“Women Tending to Be Worker and Homemaker.” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 21, 1952.

“Women 20 Calls On G20 Leaders to Promote Women’s Economic Empowerment For Inclusive Economic Growth.” UN Women. October 22, 2015.
<http://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/10/w20-summit>.

A Woman under the Influence. Directed by John Cassavetes. 1974. Chicago: Home Vision Entertainment, 2004. Videodisc.

Woodward, Helen. *The Lady Persuaders*. New York: Obolensky, 1960.

Yalom, Marilyn. *A History of the Wife*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.

Yates, Alayne. “Issues of Autonomy in Adolescence: the ‘Superwoman.’” In *Female Adolescent Development*, 2nd edition, edited by Max Sugar, 157-168. New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1993.

Zuckerman, Mary Ellen. *A History of Popular Women’s Magazines in the United States, 1792-1995*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998.